

## Organisational restructuring and goodbye

Dear Colleagues, dear friends, dear all

RE: Organisational restructuring and goodbye

June 25 this year marked the 10th anniversary of the African Diaspora Forum (ADF), which was formed on this date in 2008.

Formed on the ashes of probably the worst ever episode of xenophobic violence to have hit South Africa, the ADF has come of age.

It has been a long, bumpy road for all of us – a rollercoaster of a ride and one that when we look back, evokes some bittersweet experiences. On one hand, it gives us shivers, reminds us of regrettable scenes such as the wanton destruction of property and the flowing of the blood of our fellow African brothers and sisters, who have over the years become victims of the hate crime called xenophobia.

On the other hand, we take pride in the wonderful work we have done thus far – together with government and other stakeholders, to try and stop hate crimes and build unity among Africans through dialogue, input on policy changes and a number of other activities. Key among our signature events is the annual Africa Week Carnival, which draws together 5000 - 15000 Africans of various nationalities to one Pan-Africanist event and celebration of their pride in being Africans and foster social cohesion.

Due to the nature of our work as an organization that seeks to protect migrants and their rights and bring back the migrants' dignity, while also balancing that with the interests of locals, things do admittedly heat up sometimes. It therefore comes as no surprise that during the course of our work, we have created and probably continue to create ourselves a number of enemies, but positively, we have also made a number of good and worthy friends, most notably the CCFD-Terre Solidaire, Foundation for Human Rights, Lawyers For Human rights, MSF, J M Busha, the Panafrican Business Forum, the Embassy of France, the Carnival Company of South Africa, the Gauteng Provincial Government, most of the African communities based in South Africa. We have managed to establish ADF-Togo, ADF-Malawi, and we are projecting to establish ADF in at least 20 African countries the next 12 months. This will help create a very good civil society network to advocate for African citizens.

This unforgettable mixed bag of experiences will always linger in my mind and it is therefore, with a heavy heart that I write this statement to announce my immediate relocation from South Africa to France. I have formed the African Diaspora Forum (ADF) and will always hold it so dear in my heart.

Due to my research with Aix-marseille University, and some personal and family related reasons, I will now be based in France. I still continue my research with the University of Johannesburg, therefore a very strong link with Mzansi.

I have left yesterday June 27th, 2018. I will remain in touch with both the ADF and all the stakeholders we worked with as an organization to ensure that this noble cause we started

together does not come to naught. My positioning in Europe should be seen as a strategic move to even strengthen our efforts in Africa. I will remain the ADF Chairperson for the next six months pending the next Annual General Meeting, so I am not yet completely gone and I will continue to come to South Africa regularly.

The destination we want to reach as Africans – our Canaan, is still far from our immediate reach, but I still believe that our vision, our energy, our determination, our unity and the support from our stakeholders will eventually get us there.

I will continue to participate in and follow the work of the ADF and where possible, assist the organization with whatever I can. The ADF has a permanent place in my heart and Africa is my permanent home and whatever effort is needed of me to contribute to a better life for all Africans, I will render without the need of an extra push.

Allow me to announce that to further strengthen its resolve and improve capacity as a monolithic organization representing the rights of our African brothers and sisters continentally, the ADF recently made a number of changes to its executive committee through both dealing with internal strife and injecting new blood that will help the organization soar to the dizzyest of heights that it has always sought to reach.

To be able to move forward, the organization has, following its National Executive Committee meeting last week, suspended its Secretary, Mr. Medard Abenge Yega Buswata for one year, for conduct that has brought the organization into disrepute. The suspension is with effect from June 22 2018 and is set to run till June 21, 2019. The decision to suspend Mr. Abenge was sad but was taken to save the ADF from further embarrassment and self-destruction, following Mr. Abenge's character of fighting with his colleagues willy-nilly, especially during crucial meetings with high-level diplomats, stakeholders and journalists, is something that has previously cast the organization in bad light and cost it dearly on a number of times. Two months ago, Mr Abenge received a warning but unfortunately the fight continued. As we speak Mr Abenge has physically fought with 11 colleagues for no good reasons.

The decision to immediately suspend Mr. Abenge was taken with the interest of the organization at heart, as no one individual is either indispensable or bigger than the ADF.

More positively, the ADF has appointed Dr Ur Koumba as its Deputy Chairperson. Dr Koumba, is the Chairperson of the Gabonese Community in South Africa and a renowned academic at the University of Johannesburg. He is immediately taking over as the ADF Acting Chairperson for the next six months, during which I will be away and pending the next Annual General Meeting that is set to appoint a new executive committee.

Other new additions made, include the following:

Mxolisi Ncube, was appointed to the position of Deputy Secretary and takes over as Acting Secretary following the suspension of Mr Abenge.

Nkanyenzi Star Ndlovu becomes the Office Administrator.

Kennedy Khabo Mabe, who has served as the Chairperson's Chief Advisor for months, becomes the new ADF spokesperson, filling the void left by our hero Johnson Emeka, who passed on recently.

Cyprian Ikani becomes the new Office Manager.

Claude Kabambi, becomes the Secretary of the ADF's Disciplinary Committee and the representative of ADF-Cape Town.

The road ahead will always be slippery, full of potholes and sudden bends and uphill struggles, but our focus and determination will take us there. I urge us all to have just one goal in mind as we continue to engage and chat the way forward – one united Africa that respects and protects the vulnerable within its shores and it is only a focused and united ADF that can help build that. Let's join hands and build a continent which can be proud of itself.

**Yours Faithfully,**

**Marc Gbaffou**

**African Diaspora Forum (ADF)**

**Chairperson**

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