

DUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR THE  
AFRICAN DISPORA: WHY AND  
HOW AFRICAN STATES CAN  
ENCOURAGE DIASPORANS TO  
RETURN HOME AS DUAL  
CITIZENS

By

Mr. Anthony Vincent Archer, JD.  
Prof. of Political Science and Government  
California State University -  
Dominguez Hills - Carson, California,  
USA. 90746

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(The African Diaspora Dual Citizenship Project Committee:  
Anthony V. Archer, Hon. Sonny Vincent Okobi, Zach Okoronkwo, Esq.  
Professor Cindy Italia Thomas Archer, Esq.)

## INTRODUCTION

Africa and its Diaspora are quickly approaching a critical time in history when the development of critical economic, political and social opportunities for African nations and citizens of African descent are not only a realistic possibility, but the opportunities for both are inextricably intertwined. The passage of policies which will allow *all* persons of African descent to return to their respective ancestral homelands as citizens, while maintaining their current citizenship status, is one of many steps that will make this development a reality. As a result of exponential advances in communication technology and global business transactions, social mobility is far more common and accessible in recent years. Accordingly, the economies of the world are becoming more interrelated and interdependent based on the model of globalization. Expert economists and political scientists agree that Africa's development is central to the development of any successful world economy. For African governments to fully take advantage of this opportunity to build out its society, it must first take advantage of the opportunity to integrate the power, capital and talents of its representatives abroad in the Diaspora. To do otherwise, would be a misguided and miscalculated step that will hamper Africa's ability to fully develop and integrate its societies.

This paper addresses not only the reasons why African states should adopt national and/or regional immigration policies to "re-naturalize" (reintroduce and adopt as citizens) its progeny in the Diaspora, but will also present

concrete alternatives for implementing the proposed dual citizenship policies. This paper does not attempt to address whether African states should allow their own citizens or “continentals” the right to become dual citizens, because many of them already allow this right<sup>1</sup>. Further, the authors of this proposal are not merely attempting to reignite the “Back to Africa” movement reminiscent of historic political movements in America and Europe.<sup>2</sup> Rather, this project’s goal is to merely present a realistic framework and environment in which African states may understand and work to implement a system of “re-naturalization” for its kith and kin who long to reconnect with their ancestral homeland.

As a result of the various Partitions of Africa, African colonization and forced emigration by the Transatlantic Slave Trade, many Diasporans were “forced” to see themselves as distinct and “different” from their continental kin, but through education and cultural exchange, this belief is changing. Not only are Africans in the Diaspora rediscovering and accepting their cultural roots, but many are likely to cling to them as a means for their own survival in this global environment. In short, this project envisions dual citizenship as being not only an asset for Africa’s development in the global age, but also an answer for those in the Diaspora who psychologically long for a connection to home.

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<sup>1</sup>See US OPM, Investigations Service, “Citizenship Laws of the World”, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The author recognizes that this current push for dual citizenship for Diasporans is based on the Pan African goals of such figures as Marcus Garvey, WEB Dubois, and Kwame Nkrumah to name a few, to which the spirit of this paper is written. However, the Back to Africa Movements were largely a result of the political disillusionment of Africans in the Diaspora especially those vocal in the US in the 1960’s advocating an abrupt return to the continent without a real consideration for the retention of their own non African citizenship, which during that time may have benefited them more, even in the segregated America society.

African dual citizenship could meet the many varied needs of the Diaspora that the “Back to Africa” movement could not. Indeed, while some recipients of dual citizenship may return “home” others may remain as global representatives of their home in the Diaspora. We envision three types of Diaspora participants: 1) Those for whom dual citizenship is a “Symbolic” connection, (i.e., non residents who make significant investments in an African nation); 2) Those for whom dual citizenship is a “Passive” connection (i.e., part year residents with substantial investments in an African nation); and 3) Those for whom dual citizenship is an “Active” connection). These three citizenship classifications could allow Diasporans to reconnect on a less formal or more formal basis depending on their desire to participate within a given society.<sup>3</sup> As fully discussed below, each of these citizens will not only have their individual need met but will bring a unique benefit to the continent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> These classifications will be discussed in detail later, but are the basis by which African states could grant dual citizenship to Diasporans. They are three ways to grant such rights and others obviously can be posited. The author believes that Diasporans should not have to become citizens through naturalization because of the manner in which they arrived in the New World.

<sup>4</sup> Other scholars of African descent have also sought to generally classify the members of the Diaspora. For instance, Paul Tiyamabe Zeleza has described four distinct African Diaspora groups: the Intra – African Diaspora, the Indian Ocean Diaspora, the Mediterranean Diaspora, and the Atlantic Diaspora. He has contended that “Diaspora Studies” have focused too much on the Transatlantic Slave Trade (implying that scholars have ignored other Diaspora dispersals, mainly the Arab Slave Trade in East Africa. Additionally, Marianna B. A. Ofori has commented on three distinct African Diaspora groups; Group 1 or Diasporans who are first generation skilled and unskilled migrants who remit parts of their income back home. Group 2 or “Afro-politicians” who are well educated and multicultural descendants of African migrants who bring an “African flavor” to their communities in the West. Finally, Group 3 are the citizens of the West who by and large have been assimilated into the European and American cultures, but who nevertheless have an affinity and love for Africa, and whom are descendants of Africans brought to the West as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. See *African Policy Journal*, Fall 2006, Volume 2.

Finally, this effort is being undertaken under the backdrop of four main assumptions. The first assumption is that the concept of full African unity is not a new one nor is the concept of dual citizenship original except as in the current case where we are discussing African descendents being re-naturalized.<sup>5</sup> Thus, there is no question that in the modern world, which is becoming increasingly free and democratic, Africans are looking for ways to become unified in this globally interdependent environment. Second, although this movement is concerned with tangible results with African states working toward policies to implement such a plan, the comments expressed herein are not meant to criticize the viability and/or successes of other political movements led by other organizations that have fought for African unity on a regional basis, or through global unification efforts like the creation of the African Union (AU) and NEPAD. Indeed, this movement seeks to address the natural consequence of all such movements to assist Diasporans to reclaim their true nationalities. The point is that the history of Africans is a shared one, and any struggles which have been undertaken to bring about a more viable world in terms of political rights for Africans is seen as a valid underpinning which support this effort. Reclaiming one's nationality also should mean reclaiming one's individual "sovereignty".

The third assumption is that African states along with Diasporan dual citizenship applicants must bare the lion share ownership in terms of

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<sup>5</sup> Ever since the publication of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, individuals and states have tried to find ways to identify and protect what they considered their true nationalities. This fact highlights the point that understanding one's nationality is significant, and is even more significant in understanding one's place in the emerging global economy.

monitoring the number of dual citizens which are registered, yet this is not a difficult thing to do.<sup>6</sup> These parties must recognize the power that dual citizenship has to offer, and understand that it has the potential to be more than just a remedy to heal the social fractures caused by the Transatlantic Slave Trade.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, there is an assumption that when we talk about the African Diaspora, we are talking about people of African descent who are native to lands outside of Africa and who have a desire to reconnect with their original homelands. As dual citizenship policies are developed to accept these re-naturalized citizens, the African governments must reach out to all Diaspora regions equally. Because this is a unique opportunity to fuel Africa's renaissance, policy-makers must be careful to understand that all sectors of the Diaspora should be welcomed home. While African-Americans have progressed much within the political system of the United States of America and bring opportunities for substantial economic investments to Africa, any proposed dual citizenship policies must reflect an effort to reach the entire Diaspora. The vast majority of Diasporans reside in the lower half of the Americas (Brazil) and these individuals must be considered in any plan that calls for dual citizenship, and so must Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Europeans, and Afro-Asians. To assume otherwise,

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<sup>6</sup> The US for example is one of the largest states in the international system which allows dual citizens, but which actually has no official mechanism to monitor the true numbers of dual citizens, at the same time the process is legal and constitutional. In fact, the US government does not keep track of the actual numbers of its own citizens who possess a secondary citizenship at all. See US Dept. of State website, [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

<sup>7</sup> China, India, Mexico, and Israel all recognize dual citizenship and its recognition of this status, has allowed these national economies to grow at a substantive rate over time. See National Review article by Jonathan Turley. "Citizen Hamdi", May 2002.

would again marginalize the concerns and potential political power of entire segments of the African community.

We, as Africans, can use this movement to come together instead of obdurate in highlighting the cultural and social variances that some have used as a wedge to divide people of African descent. In the final analysis, Africans throughout the world in both the public and private sectors have an opportunity to be “reunited” which will in turn foster greater social and economic cooperation and understanding that can be both a social and economic benefit for all Africans. Granting the right of dual citizenship to the African Diaspora is a core step to promoting and strengthening a foundation for further African unity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The author believes that international attempts at fostering African unity through the propagation of the OAU/AU and NEPAD is evidence that the concept of Diasporan dual citizenship is possible and that, at least, the African political environment will allow for these discussions to continue. The AU’s designation that the Diaspora is the 6<sup>th</sup> Region of the Africa, supports this position, yet dual citizenship is a concept that is walled to policies enacted by individual states. The author sees a distinction between a potential AU passport given to Diasporans and the actual granting of state citizenship to a Diasporan. The latter practice will actually connect the person to a nation-state and provide certain legal rights. Further “African Unity” means taking active steps to award citizenship and homeland rights to people in the Diaspora and to create a national political union of people who espouse a single “African” voice in international affairs.

## *Chapter 1*

### PAN AFRICANISM: THE ANTECEDANT OF AFRICAN DUAL CITIZENSHIP

In the modern political world, nation-states have allowed their citizens the right to dual citizenship because of the pragmatic benefits of this legal designation and the fact that it currently encourages trade and investment in the emerging global era. In terms of Africa, several nations currently allow their own (natural born) citizens the right to become citizens of other states, but as we will learn later, these rights are limited and the process of offering dual citizenship specifically to persons in the Diaspora, has never been fully adopted, except in one rare case.<sup>9</sup> Although this is not offered on a wide scale by African countries, this is not a new concept. The potential to grant such rights to Diasporans has always been a part of the various Pan African movements. This view has also been supported by Pan African leaders from the inception of the Pan African philosophy through the recent decree by the African Union that the Diaspora is the Sixth Region of Africa.

As the discussion of this topic broadens, African leaders and policy-makers can take refuge in the fact that any rights of dual citizenship granted to Diasporans, have their legitimacy traced to the Pan African movements which spawned the varied Pan African Conferences including the Fifth Pan African Conference held at Manchester, England in 1945; the 1963 African

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<sup>9</sup> Because of its history, the initial Liberian constitution allowed for citizenship or at least citizenship application by persons of “Negro” descent, including African-Americans. See 1839 Liberian constitution. See also generally, “Liberian Citizenship for Black Americans” by Elmer Nunn and Edmund Zar-Zar Bargblor, TLC Africa Magazine.

Summit held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which created and ratified the OAU charter; the OAU Conference that announced the creation of the AU in 2001; and the Leon H. Sullivan Summit programs, which have fostered further continental and Diasporan dialogue, including dual citizenship<sup>10</sup>. Most importantly, the fact that only a few of our mainstream political leaders on the continent and in the Diaspora have considered this agenda openly, does not mean that it: 1) was not a goal contemplated by our Pan African Founding Fathers, “Founding Fathers” , to be achieved at a later date; 2) should be addressed only as an ancillary or supplemental issue until the AU governance, and legislative proposal processes mature; or that 3) it will cause undue social burdens on the African social systems.

The Pan African movement, then and now, seeks to promote values that are the outcomes of traditional African civilization: Faith, Purpose, Unity, Cooperate Economics, Self Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, and Creativity<sup>11</sup> in its struggle against slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism<sup>12</sup>. Africans and enslaved Africans of diverse ethnic origins and their descendants found themselves the subject of depressed social and economic conditions shortly after their interaction with other racial groups classified as non-African. Unfortunately, some still do today in Africa and the Diaspora.<sup>13</sup> This treatment by non Africans toward

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<sup>10</sup> This item was addressed by several delegates to the Sullivan Summit VII in Abuja, Nigeria in July 2006 during several private caucus sessions at the Nicon Hotel.

<sup>11</sup> See Maulana Karenga's, The African American Holiday of Kwanzaa, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> See LeRoy Davis', The African Experience in Community Development: The Continuing Struggle in Africa and the Americas, 1984.

<sup>13</sup> See Darlene and William Hine's, The African-American Odyssey, 2007.

Africans helped to spawn this movement. But in their writings, the promoters of Pan Africanism set aside the politics of highlighting cultural differences and instead focused on the commonality of our “Blackness” to surmount a campaign of solidarity, and resistance to racism, discrimination and oppression.

For example, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, persons of African descent in Europe helped to develop this concept.<sup>14</sup> It is from these initial thoughts and writings that the possibility of real African unity sprung and it is there that African dual citizenship have its roots and antecedents. Indeed, the goal of Pan Africanism is to bring all Africans together in unity and harmony, and to teach them their history from an Afro-centric perspective.<sup>15</sup> If African states grant their children the right to return home as citizens, then these states would be the first in modern history to advance the goals of our Pan African Founding Fathers beyond the point of discussing general African

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<sup>14</sup> Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, an African in 18<sup>th</sup> century England was one of these individuals and espoused this view of resistance in his book, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*. He was a slave brought to England after being captured in a slave raid. This book was written with the assistance of another great Diasporan of African descent, Olaudah Equiano. See Cugoano’s *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*, 1787.

<sup>15</sup> See Edward William Blyden’s: *The Elements of Permanent Influence*, a sermon he delivered in Washington, DC, in which he discussed the role of Africans not only geo-politically, but in history by claiming:

"Everybody knows that the basis of civilization and literature of the present day was on the Nile and not among the Caucasian race- not on the Ilissus, the Tiber, the Rhine or the Thames, but on the rivers of Ethiopia. There were only two steps between Egypt and modern Europe- Greece and Rome. Greece took not only civilization and literature but even religion from Ethiopia. Such were the wonderful developments of civilization and literature and religion in that country that the early poets and historians of Greece, unable to understand such marvelous indigenous growth attributed it to the direct interference of the gods, who they affirm went every year to feast with the Ethiopians."

unity as a political construct. Early movement leaders anticipated the day that Africa and its Diaspora would mature and evolve into a super-state of nations, all separate, all distinct, yet unified in scope and in nature.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, when this issue is addressed by our current leadership, it must be considered in light of the goals of our Pan African Founding Fathers and what our current leaders are attempting to do with the further expansion of the AU and NEPAD<sup>17</sup>.

It is clear from our common history as an African people, that we must devise and sustain our own plans for governance and economic survival. This is true given our interaction with the rest of the world which has sought to exalt their political interest over ours, and subjugate our humanity and relative cultural worth to the lowest level<sup>18</sup>. As a result of this treatment, we find ourselves needing to synergize our thoughts on true Diaspora inclusion, and dual citizenship is a way to allow this process to occur. The push for African dual citizenship is a natural consequence of all things Pan African and must be considered as the next logical step in the process to link us all together. There is no doubt that our forced dispersal from Africa and the various African Partitions were craftily devised plans to thwart our efforts at unity and to thwart Africa's economic development,

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<sup>16</sup> See generally the writings of Haile Selassie, 1936 – 1963.

<sup>17</sup> The author supports all programs that modern Pan Africanists subscribe, but believes that similar to the movement that has been undertaken to deal with the advancement of “Reparations” for slavery, the same vigor should be placed behind supporting the dual citizenship project. This should be done not because one argument is greater than the other, but because total African liberation means that our people and our leadership must consider all options in the struggle for liberation and the necessity to bring us together, especially an option which is under our own control and can be implemented without the consent, negotiation or legal compromise of any non-African party.

<sup>18</sup> See Ralph Austen's, African Economic History, 1987.

but dual citizenship is a plan that will yield certain outcomes as well, because this was the intent of our Pan African Founding Fathers. These outcomes are political and economic integration and social reconciliation. These acts will serve as a basis for the African Renaissance.

Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore, Marcus Garvey, and WEB Dubois are among the heavyweights of Pan Africanism and are given credit for developing the Pan African philosophy. Although Dubois wrote prolifically on the topic of Pan Africanism, all four men espoused full rights and independence from Whites, and their writings imply and encourage the concept of dual citizenship for the Diaspora.

Dubois, the renowned African-American educator and historian wrote several books inspiring Africans to return to their roots by focusing on the political integration of Africa, and a potential return to Africa. In one of his most famous writings, The World and Africa, he discussed the necessity of Pan Africanism and the newly freed African states of Ghana and Nigeria and how persons in the Diaspora should aid in their development. In this work, he wrote the strongest defense for Pan Africanism and in doing so, implicitly stated that dual citizenship would create a stronger Africa:

“Pan Africanism should seek to develop a new African economy and cultural center standing between Europe and Asia, taking from each and contributing to each. It should stress peace and join no military alliances and refuse to fight for settling European quarrels. It should avoid subjugation to any ownership by foreign capitalists who seek to get rich on African labor and raw material....It will no longer consent to permitting the African majority in any African country to be governed against its will by a minority of invaders who claim racial superiority or the right to get rich at African expense. It will seek not only to raise but to process its raw material and to trade it freely with all the world on just and equal terms...Pan Africanism will seek the education of all its youth on the broadest possible basis without religious dogma and in all hospitable lands as well as in Africa and for

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an end of making Africans not simply profitable works of industry nor stoolpigeons for propaganda, but for making them modern, intelligent, responsible men and women of vision and character....Whatever the American Negro wants to do for Africa, let it be done out of reason and purpose, but not out of ignorance and fear, or to the selling of their souls to the devil”<sup>19</sup>

The sentiments of Dubois were later espoused further by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore, the Caribbean statesman and organizer, during the Fifth Pan African Congress held at Manchester, England which convened from October 15-21, 1945. This meeting was a momentous event because it was the first time that key Pan African stakeholders from both the continent and the Diaspora had come together to earnestly debate the issues of African unity. The conference topics included among other things, national independence, state sovereignty and citizenship. The Manchester Conference was so successful that it triggered other Pan African conferences, but these conferences took a back seat to the realignment of nations and the implementation of the Marshall Plan after the end of World War II.

Further, the spirit of dual citizenship gained momentum in 1958 when Kwame Nkrumah and then Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser organized the “Eight States African Conference” in an attempt to lay the ground work for an organization to link all of Africa.<sup>20</sup> Although this movement eventually led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity or OAU, before the inception of the OAU, two political factions

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<sup>19</sup> See WEB Dubois’, The World and Africa, 1965.

<sup>20</sup> See Erik Gilbert’s, Africa in World History, 2007. Quote by Kwame Nkrumah “We want to come together to link ourselves in a chain so that no other nation can pull one of us without having to cope with the rest of us.”

emerged on the continent: 1) the Casablanca Group, and 2) the Monrovia Group. Both groups although believing and holding to their Pan African and Diasporan beliefs, were forced to choose political sides with respect to the dividing lines of the Cold War. The Casablanca Group stressed non-alignment in the Cold War and the Monrovia Group supported political ties with its former colonies. For instance, Senegal's Leopold Senghor, a Monrovia Group leader, was conflicted about African political integration because of its strong ties to France, but espoused regional integration.<sup>21</sup> The importance here is that even during the Cold War period, African nations were still very much in the Pan African spirit, and this included heart felt concern about the condition of the Diaspora.

The progress towards African and Diaspora unity continued in the decades to follow. Most notably, as leaders in Africa were coming together to throw off the shackles of colonialism and exploitation, they forged ahead and created the Organization of African Unity in May 1963 at the African Summit conference under the leadership of Ethiopian leader Haile Selassie. At the conference, Selassie went out his way to declare and demand African unity in ways in which Pan Africanists or its movement had never articulated before on the world stage. His words and the impassionate speeches by delegates during that event not only have shaped African policy since, but it laid the ground work for further ideological development for Pan Africanism. His words and the words of the other visionaries at that meeting, parallel the remarks given by the drafters of the US Constitution in 1787, and articulated clearly the need for Diaspora inclusion. Selassie and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Gilbert, p270.

others were able to galvanize support for discussions on unity and a potential continental government that the earlier Founding Fathers had longed contemplated and desired to achieve.<sup>22</sup>

On the concept of African Unity, Selassie wrote:

We know that unity can be and has been attained among men of the most disparate origins, that difference of race, of religion, of culture, of tradition, are no insurmountable obstacles to the coming together of peoples. We stand today on the stage of world affairs, before the audience of world opinion. We have come together to assert our role in the direction of world affairs and to discharge our duty to the great continent whose two hundred and fifty million people we lead. Africa is today at mid-course, in transition from the Africa of Yesterday to the Africa of Tomorrow. Even as we stand here, we move from the past into the future. The task on which we have embarked, the making of Africa, will not wait we must act, to shape and mold the future and leave our imprint on events as they pass into history.

We seek, at this meeting, to determine whether we are going and to chart the course of our destiny. It is no less important that we know whence we came. An awareness of our past is essential to the establishment our personality and our identity as Africans.

This world was not created piecemeal. Africa was born no later and no earlier than any other geographical area on this globe. Africans, no more and no less than other men, possess all human attributes, talents and deficiencies, virtues and faults. Thousands of years ago, civilizations flourished in Africa which suffer not at all by comparison with those of other continents. In those centuries, Africans were politically free and economically independent. Their social patterns were their own and their cultures truly indigenous.<sup>23</sup>

Contemporary African-American leaders then began to emerge and to espouse the rights of all Africans, not just African-Americans. In the spirit of Garvey and Dubois, Malcolm X, a minister within the Nation of Islam and later the leader of the Organization of African American Unity, rose to prominence within America and later the world community, and was aligned with the Black Power movement in America and the larger world-

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<sup>22</sup> See generally the writings of Haile Selassie, 1936 -1963..

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. The writings of Haile Selassie, 1936 -1963.

wide Pan African movement.<sup>24</sup> In 1964, he traveled extensively throughout Africa and the Middle East and met with officials, as well as spoke on television and radio in Africa. But his meeting with Nkrumah in Ghana was most profound: “We discussed the plight of Afro-Americans and the unity of Africans and peoples of African descent. We agreed that Pan-Africanism was the key also to the problems of those of African heritage.”<sup>25</sup> Before his death by assassination, Malcolm X began to make connections with persons in Africa and the Middle East, and even spoke during an ordinary session of the OAU in 1964 regarding the need for unity between African-Americans, the Diaspora and Continental Africa.

Moreover, Dr. Leon H. Sullivan was one of the most influential African-American and world leaders who espoused the concept of Pan Africanism, and specifically called for African dual citizenship.<sup>26</sup> A man of faith, purpose, and vision, Dr. Sullivan like Selassie, took the Pan-African movement in the US to higher heights through several initiatives that he led. Sullivan was the first person of African descent to occupy a seat on the corporate Board of automobile giant GM, and led the charge with others to force US corporations to divest from South Africa because of Apartheid. Second, he was responsible for the creation of the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation which operates several initiatives in Africa for the benefit of

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<sup>24</sup> Elijah Muhammad is generally considered a type of Founding Father as well for his efforts to convince the US government to reserve government lands for African Americans and his leadership of the “Black Muslims” or Nation of Islam in America.

<sup>25</sup> See Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, 1966.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Leon Sullivan in the 1995 at the Summit in Senegal urged African governments to adopt dual citizenship policies, by claiming that he was already a citizen of Gabon, The Gambia, and The Ivory Coast. See Reuters, “Africa-American summit urges dual citizenship for U.S. Blacks”, News and Observer (Charlotte), 5/6/95.

continental Africans. These initiatives include agricultural and educational programs of upliftment. Third, Dr. Sullivan authored the “Sullivan Principles” which are principles which corporations voluntarily adopt, that pledge to insure good governance and good citizenry for the company operating or doing business in any county. Next, he was also the initiator of substantial Pan African dialogue by creating the Sullivan Summit, which brings together a diverse cross-section of the African community to discuss relations between Africa and the Diaspora. Then Sullivan set the dual citizenship mandate before the delegates at the 1995 Sullivan Summit in Ghana along with then Ghanaian President JJ Rawlings. As a result, the government of Ghana enacted a law fostering a “right to abode” with eventual citizenship rights for Diasporans who abode for approximately 7 to 10 years. His ability to mobilize and organize the continent and the Diaspora were phenomenal, and the Foundation currently operates in his vision, and the spirit of the Founding Fathers.

The idea and ideals of Pan Africanism have always been a part of our historical discussion of liberation both in the Diaspora and on the continent. In our African history, several of our most well known and well respected scholars have advocated for Diasporan dual citizenship rights. While some have not emphatically called for immediate dual citizenship rights because of a recognition that the international order and the African political institutions had a more prominent agenda to address, continental unity has always been a policy agenda item, and dual citizenship goes hand in hand

with continental unity.<sup>27</sup> The early Pan Africanist writings although profound, were way ahead of the time that these arguments were posited. These arguments still ring true today and have cogent meaning and clearly support the social construct of African unity and specifically dual citizenship for persons of African descent.<sup>28</sup>

The writings of our Founding Fathers and others like Dr. Sullivan serve as a foundation and a heritage from which to justify African dual citizenship, and this justification spawned from our Founding Fathers' vision in seeing us as one "united" people. Because of their effort in the struggle for liberation, scholars and policy-makers alike can today have a good faith basis for discussing these issues knowing that the basis for African dual citizenship is a natural outgrowth from the overall Pan African movement, and has already been contemplated. Since the basis of the Pan African movement is moral, legitimate and justifiable, it then flows that the implementation of dual citizenship for Africa's Diaspora is also moral, legitimate, and justifiable for persons of African descent.

Now that we are freer politically in the international system, and have created our own political institutions and standards of review, we must consider fully all of the advantages that dual citizenship has to offer African governments and persons in the Diaspora seeking to apply for them. To do

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<sup>27</sup> Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore, Edward Wilmot Blyden and Marcus Garvey were the Founding Fathers of Pan Africanism and were all men who espoused a radical change in the African political environment to accommodate the spirit of true African liberation, as the first world nations were emerging, and envisioned a separate and distinct political system for people of African descent outside of what Europeans had envisioned for Africans.

<sup>28</sup> See generally the history of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

otherwise would hamper our development as a people and place a cloud over our Founding Father's vision for political and cultural unity for all of us. Indeed, African dual citizenship is a part of our Pan African tradition, and is really a culmination of it. Because of our current place in history, we are at the vanguard of a new frontier in Africa's development. We must realistically consider the African dual citizenship process in any relevant union government proposals to be discussed.

## *Chapter 2*

### WHAT IS DUAL CITIZENSHIP?

Dual citizenship is not a unique concept but is a legal status provided by many nations around the world in various forms. To fully understand the benefits of and implications of dual citizenship to Africa's growth, it is important to define the legal concept being proposed.

Dual citizenship status is triggered when a person possesses two or more citizenships, for example, one from Ghana, and one from the United States or Brazil. The concept itself recognizes that a person will have legal rights and can exercise those rights in both sovereigns. In basic terms, this means holding multiple passports and being subject to the laws of the state wherein the citizen "resides" and perhaps where one does not reside, but is a citizen nevertheless. These rights may also include the right to live, reside, work, contract, vote, marry, and educate oneself in a particular state. Overall, and in a purely democratic sense, it means the right to pursue rights related to the natural or divine law, and as Thomas Jefferson espoused, the right to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness".<sup>29</sup>

While dual citizenship status is extended in many nations today, there was a decline in the extension of this right during the Cold War era when nation-states were concerned about the movement of their citizens because of the need to protect their state secrets from interception from other nations

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<sup>29</sup> See Thomas Dye, *Politics In America*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2007.

involved in the arms race, and sought to develop intelligence systems that could detect those who could pose as dual citizens for espionage.. Today, these concerns have almost completely diminished not only because of the likelihood that war between the West and former Soviet Bloc countries is more unlikely, but because all nations are moving towards economic integration which is forcing nations to open their borders to the possibility of dual citizens. Even in the age of terrorism post 9-11, nations including the United States have encouraged citizens to enter into business transactions and travel that foster social and economic integration. The United States is requiring its own citizens to have national passports by January 2009, but has not prohibited its citizens from holding two passports or becoming dual citizens.<sup>30</sup> If this is the case and it certainly appears to be, then why have persons of African descent, who live in places like the United States and the West, not considered fully, the benefits of such classifications?<sup>31</sup>

In discussing dual citizenship, we must keep in mind that in the United States, like in most democratic and pluralistic societies, one can become a dual citizen in several ways. First, taking the US for an example, a person can be born in the US to immigrant parents (from Ethiopia), note that all

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<sup>30</sup> See the United States Supreme Court Case of *Afroyim v. US* (1968). In that landmark case the US Supreme Court held that US citizens could not be denied the right to explore in a legal context what their true nationality is, explaining that America itself is a nation of immigrants and various nationals. In the 1986 case of *Afroyim v. Rusk*, the court held that the US could not renounce the citizenship of one of its citizens, (including a dual citizen), and that the burden shifted to the US government to demonstrate that a designated act had been performed both voluntarily and with the specific intent to renounce US citizenship. See also, Stanley A. Renshon, "Dual Citizenship and American National Identity", 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

persons born in the US are citizens regardless of the legal status of their parents. This is known as the rule of “Jus Soli”. Second, a person could be born outside of the US to a parent who is a US citizen and whose other parent is a citizen of another country, (Zimbabwe). This is known as the rule of “Jus Sanguinis”. Another example is of a child born to an American citizen and a Cameroon citizen in Yaoundé. Under this scenario, the child would be a citizen of both countries. Fourth, a person can become a naturalized citizen of the US, even if he is a citizen of Algeria, born in Algiers.

Moreover, another trend is occurring in the international system in which some countries have executed compacts with other countries which support and foster dual citizenship or dual nationality. For instance, some Latin American countries recognize dual citizenship (nationality) with Spain, as Guatemala does with other Central American countries. These newly emerging compacts and the emerging EU citizenship classifications are being called “Block Multiple Citizenships”<sup>32</sup>

Whatever, the classifications, the reality is that dual citizenship is being embraced by countries and persons around the globe, with little or no thought about the concerns related to any “oath of allegiance” requirements, even though the world is becoming increasingly multi-polar. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many national immigration laws have been

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. See Renshon, quoting Jones Correa, 200- p 6.

smoothed to accommodate this process, and have faced little resistance by nation-states.<sup>33</sup>

Applying these standards to a future dual citizenship process for the African Diaspora should mean that African governments must study and review carefully the citizenship standards of the US, the EU member states, and states that offer “Bloc Multiple Citizenships”, to determine the quickest and easiest route for the Diaspora to return home to assist African countries in continued nation building. Further, in terms of Diasporans who seek to return home permanently, they can help rebuild the social relationships, and of course foster social reconciliation, which was destroyed because of slavery. Because of these factors and the rapid emergence of the AU, NEPAD, and the historic AU meetings in Accra in 2007, regarding African political integration, now is the time to reintegrate Diasporans into the continental social stratification because they have much to contribute and much to invest.

Diasporans should be welcomed to the continent not only as citizens, but as potential trading partners. Indeed, both the governments of China and India have taken great strides to foster trade and growth in the African markets. It is no surprise then that some of these individuals have been

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<sup>33</sup> In the US there has been fierce debate between Dr. John Fonte and Professor Peter Spiro regarding whether dual citizenship in any form erodes national identity and culture. Fonte believes dual citizenship is the basis for state disintegration, and Spiro claims that dual citizenship is merely a consequence of the evolution of our political environment because of globalization. See Peter Spiro’s “Embracing Nationality”, 2002 and John Fonte’s “Dual Allegiance and Immigration Reform”, 2005.

awarded citizenship because of their ties to the continent.<sup>34</sup> At the same time that African governments are welcoming investors from China and India to the continent, some African leaders are concerned about the potential that these new alliances could produce a new push toward colonization or a new form of colonialism itself.<sup>35</sup>

If China has been allowed to invest earnestly into African markets, it should logically follow that Diasporan capitalists from the US, European and other countries that espouse the ideals of capitalism should be courted for investment purposes as well. Indeed, Diasporans who reside in the West should lobby their own democratic governments to make investment in Africa a top priority among their administrations, just as they made divestment in South Africa a priority before the demise of the Botha and DeKlerk regimes. Suffice to say that Diasporan public opinion has been taken seriously previously and has caused dramatic political change on the continent. The Diaspora must recognize that it can again change the African political environment by calling for more and consistent Western and democratic investment, at the same time pushing for the development and acceptance of a dual citizenship process that is inclusive of all Africans.

In sum, dual citizenship is a process that can afford the people of African descent an opportunity not only to reconnect to their cultural past, which was intentionally destroyed through the processes and ramifications of

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<sup>34</sup> See Foreign Affairs Magazine, March/April 2008, Harry Broadman, "China and India Go to Africa".

<sup>35</sup> See Sharon T. Freeman's, "African Leaders Reach Out to the Africans in the Diaspora", 2004, citing President Thabo M. Mbeki, p.41.

slavery, but it certainly is a way in which all Africans can cooperate to economically develop Africa and the Diaspora, which will in turn place Africa at the front of the world's economic powers. Dual citizenship is the last best hope to heal our cultural wounds, and to develop ourselves economically in order to compete with the other common markets which now dominate the world's economy. Africa and its children must use this time to fully reintegrate themselves into Africa before the powerful winds of globalization take hold to further divide Africa's children such that they will never understand the need to reintegrate, and destroy any "thoughts and hopes" of seeing themselves as "African". To achieve this, African governments must adopt policies that promote dual citizenship, democratic governance, political and legal accountability, and governmental transparency. They must push forward with a proposed federal union which still allows for state sovereignty, yet recognizes regional state power sharing in the new system.

Finally, leaders on the continent and in the Diaspora must create a campaign of re-education for the need for such a program, as well a Diasporan educational standard which can be promulgated in which policy-makers, citizens, students, and indeed the youth can understand our common and varied African history, which will allow ourselves and posterity to be "re-orientated" to this new way of thinking. This new way of thinking will allow all of us to go beyond the destructive psychological thoughts and behavioral consequences that have endured and have festered because of our common past of social, political and economic exploitation.

This new way of thinking will finally propel us to see ourselves as “Africans” and to work together to build the continent and the Diaspora into an economic power which will alleviate the issues of poverty and despair that entraps many of us.<sup>36</sup> We know and have documented well how racism has hampered our prospects for global unity, but now is the time to use that reality to re-educate ourselves on why supporting each other economically is just as important in the emerging global markets.<sup>37</sup> In the end, all of us who are truly concerned about African development must re-orientate ourselves, and practice the belief that although lacking uniform infrastructure development and well-endowed in unexploited natural resources, Africa must be developed by Africans and those that are concerned about its history, citizens and the protection of the environment, and not as just an opportunity to make a profit. We must re-teach ourselves and our youth that relocating outside of Africa is not the answer to solving Africa’s problems, and that “remittances” back to the continent only act to “supplement” the welfare of continentals, but does not go far enough to redevelop the continent. We must come together and do more for ourselves.

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<sup>36</sup> See generally the historical writings of Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, Dr. Chek Anta Diop, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, and Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

<sup>37</sup> Since the US Census of 2000, African-Americans who represent the 7<sup>th</sup> largest economic trading block in the world, are having to assess their own economic prospects in America, since they are now the second largest minority group, behind Hispanic-Americans. Because of the social and culture divide between these groups, African-Americans must think about ways to trade their GDP and GNP for their own survival in America. Dual citizenship would allow this group to reinvest its capital skills and talents in a region that would welcome it and where it would have a greater impact, rather than just generating capital to “consume” goods in and for America’s economy. In sum, whether we realize it or not, we have been forced, and must now look back to Africa for ways to mature as capitalists in this global economy for our own long term economic growth and survival.

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*Chapter 3*

PROSPECTS FOR DUAL CITIZENSHIP: BEYOND THE SIXTH  
REGION DESIGNATION - WHY AFRICAN NATIONS SHOULD  
ACT NOW TO INCLUDE DIASPORANS AS NATIONAL  
CITIZENS

When the AU designated the Diaspora as the Sixth Region of Africa, this designation was momentous to say the least.<sup>38</sup> What the declaration did not include unfortunately, was an affirmative statement on the legal status of citizenship for Diasporans wanting to return home to the continent. The declaration clearly reflects that the Diaspora is inclusive of nations regardless of nationality and whether Diasporans were born on the continent. What was also not made clear by the declaration was what rights and duties go along with this inclusion as the 6<sup>th</sup> region. As dual citizenship is being considered, processed and addressed by the various AU governing mechanisms, a larger question looms: How can citizenship be granted to Diasporans? The designation as the Sixth Region does recognize the millions of persons who reside outside of the continent, but as persons from the North, South, East and West of the continent are legalized citizens of the various African states, the designation of the Sixth region, raises the issues of how far do African states intend to go in social reunification efforts directed at Diasporans. Whatever their intent is, Diasporans should participate within the AU functions as spelled out in the Sixth Region Designation to legitimize their claims to AU status, but they should not be prohibited from obtaining citizenship and other ancillary rights related to their ancestral homelands and the nations to which they can trace their heritage.

Other regions of the world and the international political system have embraced the concept of dual citizenship to foster greater cooperation among persons native to their lands for economic, political and social

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<sup>38</sup> See Peter Hawthorne, "All for One, One for All", Time Magazine, 2002.

reasons. These nations have done this not to address a social fragmentation caused by a political partition or because of a humanitarian crisis like slavery, but because it makes sense. If other nations-states have adopted dual citizenship policies without much fanfare and without the concerns of political partitions of the abolishment of slavery, then why haven't the great leaders of our continent and in the Diaspora developed a plan to specifically naturalize Diasporans born in and outside of Africa, who are currently naturalized in other states? The easy answer to this hard question is that many in our leadership have believed far too long and continue to believe, that any process to do this would be too rigorous for analysis, and too complex given the diversity of the African nations. Many also argue that social integration may very well pale in comparison to other issues that need to be addressed and are just as important: clean water, healthcare, education, democratization, and infrastructure development. But as we will see, dual citizenship will allow Diasporans to return home to help solve and eradicate these problems, instead of these persons causing a "burden" on the African social system.

Nation-states much smaller than many countries in Africa have adopted dual citizenship policies as rules of law. Mexico, Spain, Israel, Canada, India, Ireland, Australia and the US are a few examples of nations which have progressively supported this as a common practice. The authority on which these laws were written is certainly constitutionally mandated or was

promoted through immigration policy, but they were also legitimized through the Hague Convention of 1930.<sup>39</sup>

In 1998, Mexico passed its “Nationality Law” to strengthen links among Mexicans at home and abroad. This law allows for Mexicans to keep their nationality (citizenship) after adopting another one from a foreign country, and it will in return give individuals who may have lost their citizenship, an opportunity to recover it (Similar to slaves sent to the New World). Most importantly, these reforms provide for Mexicans a protection that they will not “forfeit their nationality” because of the movement of their own Diaspora, wishing to preserve ties with Mexico. Specifically, through adoption, the Mexican government has granted a series of rights based on this law. Among these are that citizens can travel to, work and live in Mexico whenever they desire. They also have the right to buy land in Mexico without restrictions, payment of taxes to the state wherein they reside (including the sending state) and earn income. There is no required military service, except potential registration with the host country. These rights fall short of the grant of the right to vote, but the Mexican legislature is considering adding this right. This process is completed through registration and is comprised of approximately eight procedural steps which does not pose an undue burden on the sending government or the one which registers dual citizens.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). “Dual Nationality – Citizenship in a Changing World”, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> See Oscar Avila’s “Benefits Lure Many to Eye Dual Citizenship”, Chicago Tribune, July 7, 2002.

Furthermore, Ireland is another country which has also adopted a policy based on the concept of ancestral descent to confirm the right of dual citizenship. Currently, any person of Irish decent who can prove that they are at least related to a great grandparent who was born in Ireland may apply and become an Irish citizen. This was not the case previously, and similar to what Mexico and other progressive countries have done, Ireland is interested in reaching out to its Diaspora to encourage social ties and encourage trade and tourism. The application process like Mexico's, is done through verified application at any Irish embassy of the sending nation. Most importantly, the Irish government in passing this law, clearly promulgated a law allowing for dual citizenship through descent<sup>41</sup>

Australia has adopted an extensive immigration and naturalization program that supports dual citizenship, and provides a model by which African states could use to assess the issues of reintegration of the Diaspora nations. The Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Act of 2002, which took effect that same year, is expansive and allows Australian citizens to acquire another citizenship without losing their own. Before these changes were promulgated, the Australian legislature heard arguments from both sides of the debate. In granting the right to dual citizenship, the government declared that the nature of its citizenship laws was out of step with the trend of granting dual citizenship throughout the world and that the nature of citizenship had changed since the ending of WWII or the Cold War.

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<sup>41</sup> See [dublin.usembassy.gov](http://dublin.usembassy.gov)

In pertinent part, the legislature decided to change Section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act of 1948 because of the following reasons: First, there were no perceived adverse effects in terms of national cohesion or security in allowing a dual citizenship policy. Second, the government believed that the world was becoming more interconnected and mobile because of globalization and personal mobility. Third and as a result, Australia was unable to maintain a fair “economic” market share in the world through globalization. Fourth dual citizenship was offered because Australia had seen a historic rise in “permanent departures” from Australia (this is similar to Africa’s Brain Drain). It is important to note that because Australia recognized the needs of its diaspora and considered the opinions of the citizenry, it passed the law and has thereby aligned its immigration laws regarding dual citizenship with other progressive nations in the world.

Finally, Canada is also a nation that has adopted a clearly defined dual citizenship policy. Its 1977 law is specific and permits Canadian citizens to retain their Canadian citizenship if they acquire another foreign nationality. It does not prevent one from becoming a dual citizen whose descent may be non-Canadian. Its geopolitical counterpart to the south, the United States, allows for dual citizenship and its Supreme Court has ruled that a person’s nationality can never be taken from them through arbitrary government action. African-Americans and Afro-Canadians could therefore apply to the African states for citizenship without the threat or reprisal of ever losing their original “political” nationality.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See *Afroyim v. US* 1968.

These examples show that some of the larger First World states have contemplated and considered the advantages and disadvantages of dual citizenship and have come to the conclusion that, at least in this ever increasing multi-polar, global world, dual citizenship is a progressive policy that reflects the benefits of the movement of persons and goods across international borders. What's most interesting is that all of the nations listed above passed laws because they sought to retain the social, economic and political power of its Diasporans! It is for these same reasons that African nations should work and include its own Diaspora as dual citizens.

Moreover, in analyzing how African states have encountered these immigration issues, one must view the prospects for dual citizenship through a different prism, especially where there is a discussion that involves the Diaspora. Currently, there are several African nations that allow some form of dual citizenship for its own citizens; however, no state currently has a specifically designed policy that addresses dual citizenship for the Diaspora, except for Ghana and Liberia. Even then, the legal history only addresses the incidental rights associated with full citizenship.

As was noted earlier, Liberia is the only African government whose original constitution included provisions for full citizenship for 'Negro people' or persons of African descent. Since Liberia is Africa's first republic and was organized and founded by the American Colonization Society (ACS), full citizenship was available at sometime to African-Americans.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See the Liberian Constitution of 1839.

Currently, there is some confusion over whether the Liberian constitution allows for such rights, given the change in the 1986 Liberian Constitution and the social stratification of the country, and there have been no legal cases that have clarified the Liberian law. Notwithstanding the apparent rifts between the “founders” of Liberia and their descendants, and the continental groups who already occupied the land before the “Americo-Liberians” got to Liberia, Liberia stands as an example and precedent of a Diaspora community coming home to resettle. There is also an argument to be made that more persons of African descent did not try to emigrate to Liberia during the time of its founding because the US government who sponsored the program with the ACS, was more interested in sending “freedman” and educated Blacks back to Liberia, to prevent a revolt amongst bond servants in the states, which could have sparked an earlier end to slavery in America. Further, after the slave period in the US, and the silencing of voices like Marcus Garvey, through the harassment by the US government, African-Americans did not see themselves returning to Africa in measurable numbers until the late 1960’s when their psychological levels of “Black Consciousness” was pricked by the world Pan African movement. Even if people in the past saw themselves emigrating to Liberia, this fact has always been questioned until recently as Liberia has been perceived as an unstable war torn country which lacked the social capacity to attract and retain Diasporans, and economic investment.<sup>44</sup> This view has changed since the recent election of President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

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<sup>44</sup> In the West, Africa is largely portrayed as a backward, poor and war torn continent incapable of fending for itself. Many images that persons in the West see of Africa highlight these negative images and as a result, many people believe these images as true without doing any further research. Copyright 2007, by Anthony Vincent Archer, Cerritos, California USA. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without the express written consent of the author/publisher. All rights reserved to the author, Anthony Vincent Archer.

In the case of Ghana, as a result of the efforts of the administration of President JJ Rawlings, Ghana has passed an updated immigration policy which gives Diasporans the “right to abode” but falls short of citizenship unless the Diasporan remains domiciled in Ghana for an extended period of time.<sup>45</sup> Although the “right to abode” exists, it falls short of Rawlings’ goal of full citizenship for Africa’s children dispersed abroad. US President Bill Clinton supported this idea, but soon after he and Rawlings left office, the fervor to grant such rights, especially for African-Americans diminished for the lack of a state sponsor.<sup>46</sup> Today, however, there is a growing number of Diasporans who have moved not only to Ghana, but to other parts of Africa as well, including South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria.

Because of the re-education efforts that have been made in the Diaspora in understanding why Africa needs the Diaspora and why Diasporans should return to Africa, African governments should study carefully the precedents set in Liberia and Ghana, and create effective citizenship policies for the Diaspora to return home. To celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> year of independence, Ghana sponsored an initiative seeking to attract Diasporan participation in Ghana for the celebrations through its “Joseph Project”. This initiative focused on the impact of the slave trade in Ghana and the economic impact

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investigation outside of what the news media portrays. Two recent examples of negative portrayals of Africa and its people are the motion pictures entitled, “Blood Diamond” and “The Constant Gardener”, which won mass theatrical acclaim in the West.

<sup>45</sup> See Ghana Nationality and Immigration Act of 1971, amended in 2002. (Dual citizenship and the right to abode (Diasporans)).

<sup>46</sup> See Bryan Mealer, Associated Press News, “Some black Americans returning to Africa”, 2005. Note that in a 1999 speech in Harlem, NY, while addressing an audience of African-Americans, President Rawlings and President Clinton discussed this issue before the press and President Clinton endorsed the idea.

it had on the region. Similar to the name given to the project, the Biblical persona of Joseph was a man carried off into slavery, who eventually returned to the land from which he was captured. He was later reconciled to his family and worked with his brothers to build a better society in which he and his entire family would benefit. The story of Joseph is not just a “nice Bible story” but points more directly to the condition in which the continent and the Diaspora find themselves. However, as the story suggests, reunification and social healing can only occur if the continent and the Diaspora are ready and willing to accept healing through this process. Thus, through the Joseph Project, Ghana has made some gradual steps to address the dual citizenship and social reconciliation aspect of our varied African past and our social fragmentation as a people. The government and citizens of Ghana should be commended for these efforts at reunification, albeit localized and mainly contained to the West African region.<sup>47</sup>

More specifically, there are a myriad of reasons as to why African states should allow its Diaspora to return home notwithstanding the Pan African historical arguments and the rationale related to the fact that other states allow this as a matter of law. These reasons are based on the social, economic, and the political necessity which supports them.

Without being too simplistic or too complex, the social rationale for dual citizenship is rooted in the fact that human beings are social creatures who interact and enjoy the companionship and social interaction with persons

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<sup>47</sup> It should be noted here also that the nation of Benin has considered this issue seriously as well, and has a national yearly event focused on and dedicated to social reconciliation between its nation and the Diaspora. This is an annual event which takes place in the summer months.

who share their same view (culture). Africans of all nationality are the same way-they enjoy companionship with their kith and kin. Thus, although Diasporans have built and at the same time have assimilated into societies in the West, these communities were intentionally cut off from each other during the various slaves trades. Because of this disconnect, hundreds, perhaps thousands of nations were forced to give up or deny their cultural heritage and nationality and were forced to suppress their culture in order to survive in the New World.

Our common history has shown us that we were dispersed abroad by the European nations in order to build a society for them, which has dominated the world stage ever since. The nations to which we were dispersed have never apologized nor compensated us for the hundreds of years of free labor to which we supplied them and continue to supply them.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, in a social sense, and in the sense of the “Joseph Project” we owe it to ourselves to foster our own social reconciliation because of the history and legacy of slavery. Indeed, before slavery, all Diasporans were a part of a distinct African nation and culture.<sup>49</sup> We should not be prevented from rediscovering and reclaiming our “African” true identities.

Further, because none of the slave trading nations then and now have provided for a real social means for us to reconnect, we must embrace the vision of Dr. Leon Sullivan in our attempts in building a social bridge back home. To be sure, the road will be difficult because the road which we

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<sup>48</sup> See Randall Robinson, The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> See Ivan Van Sertima, They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America, 2003 (latest edition)

traveled through expatriation was difficult; we cannot now, as free persons in this emerging global system be afraid or apprehensive in discussing this sensitive issue without taking action. If we believe this, and if we believe recent anthropological findings, we are all one. And if we are all one, we owe it to our ancestors to bridge this social divide that Dr. Sullivan's legacy, and indeed the legacy of our Founding Fathers suggest that we do – come together for the greater good of Africa and gain understanding of our diversity, yet celebrate the qualities and strength that is uniquely African. Allowing dual citizenship is a way to make this connection.

Another social reason which supports dual citizenship for Diasporans is that the allowance of dual citizenship by African states will counteract the prevalence and the effects of the African “Brain Drain”. The Brain Drain started with the institution of slavery in which some of the best and brightest intellects were taken from the continent and offered up to the New World as servants.<sup>50</sup> These persons were never able to reach or to maximize their God given purpose and potential for occupational skills and for leadership.

Today, the “Brain Drain” means that many highly motivated and talented students, graduates and professionals “voluntarily” leave the continent to seek employment, high pay and a “better life” in Europe and in the United States<sup>51</sup>. It is unfortunate that the governments of Africa have not had

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<sup>50</sup> Robert W. Harms, The Diligent, 2002. Quoting from the King of the Congo to the King of Belgium regarding human resources taken by the Belgian during slavery, including (Congolese) African royalty.

<sup>51</sup> 2008 LA Times article regarding the larger numbers of Ethiopian physicians in Chicago, than in Addis Ababa.

enough time to devise a plan to counteract these occurrences or that there does not exist a stable cultural or public opinion about Africans reinvesting themselves in their own continent or in their own communities. This view can undoubtedly change through a vigorous re-education program targeted toward our youth about the benefits of staying at “home” and government and private businesses actually working with these effected groups to place them in the best possible employment positions before they ponder leaving the continent. Youth in the Diaspora must also be properly taught the real history of Africa and how we must invest our time, energy and efforts in Africa’s upliftment, through our travels there and our ultimate return.

Moreover, the influx of Diasporans to the various African states will reverse the effects of the “Brain Drain” because educated Diasporans will replace those voluntarily leaving and will have the same skills, if not enhanced ones, to fill government and private sector jobs which were targeted towards the groups that have been leaving Africa. This is true because the statistics show that Diasporans who leave their country of origin, and who seek to build Africa and participate in the African Union, demonstrate that they have a long term commitment to Africa, and do not have just a short term “fleeting” thought about participation in the continent. Once dual citizenship laws are enacted, Africa will see an increase in these types of citizens, and they will see a social rebuilding of its society, and persons who will contribute to the economy and Africa will begin to thrive.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Lynne Dukes, “Mr. Coffee” a story about David Robinson’s settlement in Tanzania and other Afro-Americans making a long term investment in Africa. Washington Post, July 2005

Yet another social reason why African states should extend citizenship to its Diaspora is that newly confirmed citizens from places like Europe, Brazil and the United States will bring their various skills and talents to the continent to assist continentals in nation-building in all parts of Africa. Specifically, it is common knowledge that Africa is in dire need of subject matter experts or (SME's) in the fields of Agriculture, Education, Healthcare, Government/Law, Water and Sewage, Construction, Engineering and Infrastructure Development. One only need to look at the skills and talents of the African Diaspora in the United States to see the ray of hope that can be shed on the dimmest parts of African society to help it prosper, not through a "handout or a moral obligation" as some see the needs and plight of Africans in the West, but as a familial or social help, a type of reconnection to make Africa the efficient and necessary power that it has to become. Africans from around the globe are known as hard and diligent workers and fierce competitors in the market place, just like their continental cousins.

The social reasons for creating dual citizenship laws are obvious because of our shared genetics, history and culture. But as we grow and develop as Africans and as the AU matures and is further legitimized, the social reasons currently preventing us from coming together through dual citizenship will continue to wither away and erode. The social reasons to advance dual citizenship are easy to achieve because the continent and the Diaspora have to a large degree achieved political self determination. If we have achieved this, and we are moving towards freer and freer societies and governments in Africa based on the African Millennium Goals, we must address these

social reasons head on and “force” ourselves to become “reacquainted” with each other without fearing that we will not connect, but with a hope and a purpose that every conversation or every business transaction, whether private or public, has the ability to make us firmly connected. The granting of dual citizenship to the Diaspora will foster stronger cultural understanding and cause assimilation to occur for those coming into Africa without the traditional African society losing its own identity. Indeed, its identity will be enriched because these new “African” citizens will invest in the social fabric of the various countries.

Moreover, remittances and other “give backs” to people on the continent from the “Immigrant African Diaspora” amount to one type of economic benefit from allowing dual citizenship, but they are not the only type. Although remittances are growing in the number of payments being made to families on the continent, they in no way represent the prospects for growing other capital and investment for sustainable growth on the continent. To be clear, these payments usually are ear-marked for private necessities like the payment for food, clothing, and shelter.

True economic benefits flowing from the expansion of dual citizenship to the Diaspora means those small, medium and large businesses in the Diaspora can be transplanted to Africa to grow businesses there and to expand further. This process if successful would continue to attract similar foreign direct investment from the Diaspora and all African entrepreneurs in the various African states. As the world has witnessed during the last 10 to 15 years, both India and China have made substantial headway into the

African marketplace through both public and private foreign direct investment. Although this is helping to assimilate African capitalists into the larger world economy, this investment is coming with strings attached, especially if these nations do not accept African goods into their own markets by decreasing or rewriting their own protectionist laws. Thus, the issue becomes one of fair trade and balanced trade. If African countries allow the Diaspora to return as citizens, then these nations will foster foreign direct investment because it will be easier for these new citizens to conduct business because they are citizens. Thus, the “red tape” of being a non-citizen business owner is removed. The result of this is that they are likely to keep the capital within the continent because they have a “stake” in the continent, and in a specific community in Africa.

Although the motives of China and India are admirable in seeking to invest in Africa, the reality is, they recognize the economic potential and growing market that Africa is becoming, and they seek to be a part of this vast capital growth. Consider this for example, Africa’s exports to China increased at an annual rate of 48 percent between 2000 and 2005, two and a half times as fast as the rate of the region’s exports to the US and four times as fast as the rate of its exports to the EU over the same period. Further since 1990, both Africa’s exports to Asia and its imports from Asia have grown more rapidly than either its exports to or its imports from any other region between 1990 and 1995 and by 20 percent between 2000 and 2005; imports grew by 13 percent annually between 1990 and by 18 percent between 2000 and 2005.

Meanwhile between 2000 and 2005, the EU's share of exports from Africa dropped by half - so that Asia now buys the same size share of Africa's exports as does the US or the EU, which are Africa's traditional trading partners. As a result of this, both the EU, Chinese and Indian markets are booming because of foreign direct investment into African countries.<sup>53</sup> If India and China can make headway into the African markets, how much more can tactical and strategic planning and investment from the Diaspora help Africa given the potential economic boom? Also, if Chinese and Indian firms are at the vanguard of the integration of Africa, why can't the Diaspora be there also? The bottom line is that it is our continent and we should control the flow of goods and services both within and outside of African borders for the benefit of African development. This prospect will increase as African states allow for dual citizenship, and we force ourselves to trust one another and develop a sense of "partnership" as Africa has done with India and China.

One of the strongest political arguments in favor of instituting an Africa dual citizenship program is that Africa stands to gain more political legitimacy in the international system if other regions see Africa reach out to its descendants and actually bring them home. The effect of this would likely be more psychological, yet at the same time political. If there is ever to be "Union" government on the continent as is in Europe, America, and to some extent in Asia with the further expansion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), then dual citizenship will help bring us all together just as many of the Eastern European states did after the collapse

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Foreign Affairs Magazine.

of the Berlin Wall. As a result of this, the German people were reunified, and so was the rest of the European ethnos in 1992 under the Maastricht Treaty. It is clear that both China and India, and to some extent the EU has a structured policy to normalize relations with the continent. However, from a political standpoint the US government has not developed a consistent policy to address these issues. This is not new or surprising, it just means that private citizens from the Diaspora regions should begin to think in ways that will bring the potential for realized social unification and economic enterprise to the continent and stop depending on governments to lead the charge. Moreover, to be sure, the African-American lobby should press the US government to invest in Africa, if not for purely strategic reasons, to counteract the new power which the Chinese government wields on the continent through its varied investments.

Further, Africa will have a better “Reputation for power” if it allows its children from the West to come home to foster the democratic process on the continent and to make African leadership accountable for the fulfillment of the African Millennium Goals. As the numbers of Diasporans return home, this process will begin to spread the liberalizing effects of democracy and freedom throughout Africa whereby one day, Africa will be democratic, free, and able to conduct its military and intelligence affairs in a cohesive, unified and comprehensive fashion that will put other nations and regions on notice that Africa is on the rise and it is serious about its future role in world affairs. It has the potential to be a world economic leader based on its undeveloped economy and raw materials alone. What are we waiting on?

Also, these new citizens will be able through the use of their various talents and skills, work together with continentals to create a federal system of government which will be efficient, pro-active, protective of the “African Rule of Law”, propagator of justice, and is committed to a program of constitutionalism. These changes will not happen rapidly to be sure, but what is sure is that the influx of Diasporans from western and democratic states will cause agents of positive change to erupt in the villages, cities, and nations within Africa and begin to alter the entire political culture and landscape of our beloved continent. In doing this, Africa will become one of the leading world powers because it will be able to draw strength from its diversity, yet marvel in the fact that these new agents of change have created a centralized unified federal government. When this change occurs, Africa will take its rightful place as a world power under the AU banner.

## *Chapter 4*

### CONCERNS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION

The successfulness of any project or program is a clearly defined goal and includes a well defined tactical and strategic plan which is scoped. In terms of the African Dual Citizenship Project, the project plan and goals for implementation can be achieved in two primary ways.

First, any African country which deems that the goals and outcomes of the project align with its national vision regarding its policy toward the African Diaspora, can support this project by acting as a “state sponsor” by working with private humanitarian groups like the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation and other Diaspora centered groups to draft policy to be presented as referendum, executive agreement or through legislative modification within any African country or the AU. When one African state takes the lead to sponsor the legislation, it is likely that others will follow. To this end, in researching the topic for briefing, the research committee identified and targeted several states which it believes are both historical and modern stakeholders in this debate, and also currently has laws in place which would support dual citizenship. These states are included, but are not limited to: Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Angola and Swaziland.

Secondly, the AU could serve as an “early adopter” of the project by creating a mechanism to promulgate a specific union policy on the reintroduction of Diasporans under the Sixth Region Designation. This could be achieved by calling for specific country proposals on how this could be implemented. Countries which have the closest ethnic connections to the Diaspora should lead this charge. For example, recent DNA testing shows that the vast majority of African-Americans have descent based on Nigerian and Cameroonian ancestry.

One last option in the implementation of this plan, would call for the signing of international agreements between African nations and Diaspora sending nations, which would be brokered and maintained by the governments involved with the assistance and oversight of the various Diaspora groups who are stakeholders or those who have a vested interest in the dual citizenship debate. This process would be similar to the process that Spain has invoked to monitor its dual citizens coming from various Latin-American countries into Spain, who have “block multiple” citizenships.<sup>54</sup>

To be clear, a dual citizenship policy can be enacted and monitored at a very low level without causing an undue burden on a state’s pre-existing governmental duties and functions. Even the US, which has passed drastic measures to counteract the effects of 9/11, and which still has some legitimate security concerns about non US citizens being within its borders, still guarantees its own citizens the right to apply for dual citizenship and

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Stanley Renshon.

does not in any official or regulatory way, monitor its dual citizens or those Americans hold two or more passports.<sup>55</sup> African states should follow the lead of countries like the US and Mexico in allowing its Diaspora to become dual citizens, because African states are less likely to be the targets of terrorist attacks from its own Diaspora which is seeking to be a part of problem resolution on the continent, and which has not posed a security risk to the overall African regions.

As was discussed previously, there are many ways for people who are born within a particular country or whose parents were born within that country to also become citizens of that state or another state based on their “connection” to that sovereign. When we begin to think about the ways the Diaspora can return home to Africa, we must consider how they can be tied back to a specific country with the process being legitimate and lawful. There is no debate that very few persons born in the Diaspora can make a direct familial connection to the lands or peoples of Africa, although some have done so through genealogical research or tracing their family history in the most basic ways.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, in considering the legal basis to adopt such a plan, African states must decide whether this can be done through the process of “Registration Based on Descent” (RBD) or through the use of “DNA Testing” (DNA), amongst other potential methods.

Registration Based on Descent (RBD) means that similar to the immigration practice in Ireland, when someone from the Diaspora would like to make an

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. US Dept. of State website.

<sup>56</sup> Alex Hailey, Roots: The Saga of An American Family, 1976.

application for dual citizenship with any country in Africa, the only proof they need to show is that they are descendants of slaves or an African family who left the continent long ago en route to the New World. Thus, this process relates only to persons of African descent and should only be utilized to grant one citizenship outside of his own Diasporan citizenship. As we shall see later, this is the type of application that would tie directly to those seeking, “Symbolic Citizenship” or a connection to a specific country without providing proof of DNA.

Secondly, the right to obtain dual citizenship could also be based on the various DNA testing which is now available through labs worldwide and can link a person back to a specific country.<sup>57</sup> This means that if a Diasporan’s DNA sample matches him with the same or similar genetic makeup of a group or country, then this would provide the individual and government with the basis for granting official citizenship. There are many people in the Diaspora who are now taking these tests in order to prove that they are not only of “African origin” but also because they want African citizenship.<sup>58</sup> As DNA testing becomes more uniform and commonplace throughout the world, and as Diasporans re-educate themselves about who they are in terms of their “African” heritage, there will be a great surge in dual citizenship applications being submitted to African government.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, the citizenship based on DNA testing should be sufficient

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<sup>57</sup> Rick A. Kittles, “Genetic Ancestry and the Search for Personalized Genetic Histories”. *Nature Reviews Genetics*. 5(8):611-618, 2004

<sup>58</sup> See [www.africanancestry.com](http://www.africanancestry.com)

<sup>59</sup> The author completed DNA or genetic testing which identified him with three groups who reside in the nation state Cameroon along the Nigerian border. See generally Rick Kittles and Gena Paige of African Ancestry.

enough to determine an individual's "sincerity" in wanting to return home, but government standards should fall outside the scope of current naturalization requirements for those who do not wish to submit to DNA testing, which some suggest raise privacy concerns.

To create any other avenue for Diasporans to return would frustrate the entire plan and purpose under this system, and would likely amount to a series of revised "immigration" policies throughout Africa which would not meet the specific needs of persons who want to become citizens. Although the process to grant African dual citizenship must be legal and legitimate, it should not be so burdensome that it would discourage the average Diasporan from even thinking that he could ever become a citizen because of the bureaucracy involved. The goal of the project is to create a viable process and conducive environment that fosters an "easy" return for Diasporans without creating a sense of xenophobia for continentals which could manifest in discrimination against "foreigners" when the Diaspora returns.<sup>60</sup> Thus, African governments must go out of their way to include Diasporans as "real citizens" just like Israel has included our brothers and sisters, the Falasha, as citizens into their society.<sup>61</sup>

Once a connection to a specific country is made through RBD or DNA, or by another uniform means to be presented by the AU, the question then arises as to how these citizens should be classified, and what rights and

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<sup>60</sup> Some continental Africans consider persons not native to their lands as "foreigners", including persons in the Diaspora.

<sup>61</sup> The Falasha are Ethiopian Jews who immigrated to Israel during the famine period of the 1980's and who are now citizens of Israel.

privileges of citizenship should be afforded to them. One way for African governments to view this is to group potential Diaspora dual citizens into three specific classifications. Note, all classifications would be afforded different levels of citizenship and their rights would be certainly greater than awarding them a mere visa or passport. These classifications of citizenship would be termed, “Active Citizenship, Passive Citizenship, and Symbolic Citizenship”.

Active citizenship means that the applicant intends to actively participate in the building of the society by emigrating to the country and establishes roots. This person would be considered a type of permanent resident. Their intent is further understood by their desire to sign an “oath and affirmation” statement regarding their intent to partner with the government, private sector or NGO to volunteer time in utilizing their skills to help build the nation. This classification is reserved for persons who have a sincere desire to return home and help build Africa’s infrastructure.

Passive citizenship means that the applicant intends to live in an African country less than half of the year, but will travel to and from the state several times of the year and will be a capital investor. Similar to how retirees in the US are seen as “snow birds” who spend the summer months in the northern tier states and in the fall and winter months, reside in the warmer southern US states, passive citizens will split their time between their sending nation and their newly selected African nations to which they have a connection.

Symbolic citizenship means that the applicant does not intend to permanently live or reside in Africa, but only intends to travel to the region for tourism and/or trade. Their annual residing time in the state will be less than six months. Furthermore, this classification should be reserved for Diasporans who wish to “select” their nation of choice because of their political association or religious affiliations with a particular country, and can’t, and is not based on DNA testing.<sup>62</sup>

Whatever the classification, all applicants will be afforded a passport and will pay the applicable fees to the accepting country. This plan assumes that Diasporans who participate in the application process will only be allowed to apply to one country unless they can clearly establish a connection through any means to another country through the process of RBD or DNA. Further, this plan calls for passports to be initially issued by individual states, not the AU. These first Diasporan citizens will still retain their original political citizenship and “nationality” if they so choose. The next step in this process will be to determine what rights these new citizens should have. Unfortunately there has been much discussion and concern over time with African governments about the historical protection of basic human rights for persons who are already African citizens. Persons coming from mature Western democracies like the US, Britain, and France would expect to be treated the same or even better by their newly adopted government. Equal and fair treatment and the consistent practice of open and participatory government would initiate further Diaspora interest and

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<sup>62</sup> Many Jamaicans identify with Ethiopia because of their Rastafarian religious beliefs which they trace to Haile Selassie.

development because Diasporans would feel as if they have a stake in the evolving democratic government. This is currently why we see many Diasporans permanently residing in places like Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania and desiring citizenship, because these countries are considered stable societies.<sup>63</sup>

Ideally however, Diasporans would expect the following rights: 1-The right to reside in the country. 2-The right to own land. 3-The right to have and contract for employment. 4-The right to travel within and outside of the countries borders. 5-The right to practice religion freely and without government interference. 6-The right to participate in fair legal proceedings. 7-The right to protected speech. 8-The right to privacy or the right to be left alone by the government. These are basic rights every Diasporan citizen desires in order to make a stake of claim for African heritage and citizenship.

More specifically, in terms of the suffrage right, this right is almost a sacred right for Diasporans in the West, and this right should be reserved only for those persons who hold Active or Passive citizenship as outlined above. This right could be exercised through direct or absentee balloting. Some nations already allow their dual citizens to vote, amongst other rights granted.<sup>64</sup> Again, whatever rights the traditional citizens have in the hosting

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<sup>63</sup> On a continent of 50 plus nations, Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania have maintained a great level of stability over time.

<sup>64</sup> Dan Eden, "Dual Citizenship: Loyalty to Whom", Viewpoint Magazine, 2008. This article discusses how many Jewish persons who are American citizens also hold citizenship with other countries (Israel) and who are involved in military service and who hold public office in other countries but nevertheless, remain US citizens.

nations, the same rights should apply to the newly admitted citizens. Further, there is an argument that can be made that if the right to vote is extended to all classes mentioned above, it would spark government participation which would in turn, make politicians and the government more accountable to the people. This is something that many African countries have lacked, but something which dual citizenship could foster because of the many persons who would apply for citizenship, and would demand legitimate government.<sup>65</sup>

Conversely, we must keep in mind that there is a probability that some persons would not exercise these rights in any form because of political apathy whether they were given the right to vote or not. The point is that these new citizens should have the “option” to participate politically if they so desire, just like they have in the West. Why should these rights be restricted anyway? If they were restricted, would it not be similar to the situation that we were under during colonial rule in which we had no political rights whatsoever? We cannot be afraid to open our continent up to the real possibilities of change by fostering participatory and humanitarian government on the continent. We have nothing to lose except a reputation for political ineffectiveness and political stagnation.

The official application process for African dual citizenship could be similar to the process that the government of Mexico has set up. The Mexican government requires all individuals who are seeking to petition the

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<sup>65</sup> One only needs to understand the current election turmoil in Zimbabwe to understand that the right to suffrage should be a basic guaranteed fundamental right that all citizens should enjoy. Indeed, participatory democracy allows for a decentralization of power.

government for dual citizenship to complete the necessary immigration forms in the country wherein they reside, or in Mexico. When the form is completed, the necessary fee is attached, and the applicant is notified of his or his new designation, along with an overview of the rules regarding such status. This process works for Mexico, and if enacted for the participating African countries, it would work there also. This process is not a labor extensive process, but one which would amount to registration and inclusion of the applicant's information into the government database, and the payment of a registration fee. Indeed, the burden would fall on the applicant to provide the necessary information and payment of the fee which would need to be verified. Again, this process would be similar to the current process in place to obtain a travel visa in terms of working with the consular.

Theoretically, this process could be assisted through the AU and its sanctioned, "Diaspora Africa Forum Missions" which are apparently an outcome of the Sixth Region Designation, and which currently has an office in Accra, Ghana which was opened in June of 2007. Also, African nations could share the "dual citizenship" status information with the sending nation through a monthly download of its immigration data to that nation's consular office. Whichever way the accepting countries design the registrant form, the process to monitor the numbers of Diaspora dual citizens will not pose an undue burden on the sending or receiving nation.

One requirement that should be clearly stated on the proposed dual citizenship registration form, is a "Declaration and Oath" provision that,

similar to the definition of what the AU has defined the Diaspora to mean that each applicant declare intention to “help rebuild Africa and help the AU” in its goals to achieve union government on the continent. Further, a declaration should be required that one pledge their allegiance to the AU even if they are “symbolic” citizens who intend to remain in the Diaspora. This pledge will not be a “renunciation” of their first citizenship, but it will act as a public declaration to support the interest and politics of the AU in the Diaspora regions. This pledge would be a political statement and would not be construed to overcome one’s religious beliefs or practices. The modern trend is that the sending country does not take away one’s citizenship if one takes an oath of allegiance to another country to which they have an ethnic identity.<sup>66</sup>

If, on the other hand, DNA results are the basis for the application, the receiving African government should have a copy of these results along with the birth certificate of the applying party to verify their ethnic and national origin. For applicants that do not submit to or cannot produce the DNA testing that verifies one’s ethnic and national original, then other sources of personal identifying documentation could be submitted to the government in order to process the application under the RBD process. The applicants who do not submit to DNA testing should only be allowed to register as a dual citizen of one country as a “symbolic” citizen, especially where they desire multiple citizenships, yet cannot by other extrinsic means prove a “specific” African identity or nationality. The African nations who participate in this process must understand that this process as applied to

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. see Eden.

Diasporans seeking citizenship is much different from the normal “naturalization process” to which other “immigrants” are subjected to. They must keep in mind that our identities were stolen and “mixed” when we were taken to the New World as “Black Gold”. Now is the time to ease naturalization standards in African countries so Diasporans can return and assist our continental brothers and sisters in rebuilding our homeland.

Those who do not support the African dual citizenship concept raise three essential arguments: 1-That dual citizenship may create a situation where the dual citizen will have conflicting “loyalties” if the sending and receiving nations were at war. 2-Dual citizenship may bring unwanted changes to practices and beliefs held by the original citizens of the country/region 3-The laws of each country may be in conflict concerning issues like taxation, civil status, inheritance, etc.

Although in a general sense, there is some logic to these arguments, when viewed in terms of the unique history of Africa and its Diaspora, they appear to be faulty especially when viewed in terms of Africans trying to come home. For example, these arguments might hold true if we were in the pre-Cold War era where nation-states were concerned to a greater degree about dual citizens who could potentially pose as double intelligence agents. This possibility has almost been completely eliminated due to the advances in technology where all persons can be tracked through GPS systems, and their whereabouts known. This technology is ironically available to private citizens, which renders these security concerns as bogus and distracting arguments. The point is that governments can now track

the whereabouts of just about anyone who travels internationally or domestically because of the current technology that enables this to happen. Therefore, they can likely anticipate movement of individuals who might pose a threat to national security, and apprehend them. Therefore, the granting of a second citizenship or passport does not cause security concerns in this “New World Order”.

Further, if two countries are at war and they share a citizen in common, international law prevails and dictates that the state wherein the person resides has jurisdiction over the citizen. Even so, the states that have the largest number of Diasporans; the United States, Brazil, the Caribbean Islands, England, and France have rarely if ever, engaged in combat in modern times against an African nation to which a Diasporan could claim citizenship. Therefore, this argument carries less weight when speaking about African dual citizenship. Further, the prospectus for peace between these countries and Africa is a bright one given the creation of NEPAD and the AU, which seeks to create more stability in the international political culture, and seeks peace and harmony between nation states.

Finally, the argument that dual citizenship may bring unwanted changes to the practices and beliefs held by the original citizens of the country is similarly unfounded. If we take the US for example, a country founded on democratic principles, the original citizens believed in constitutional democracy, liberty, and freedom of religion. Over time, the US has become a world cultural “melting pot” of people and although many nations make up the citizenry of America, each nation has been assimilated to accept the

traditional cultural mores mentioned above, yet they have been able to hold on to their own unique nationality.<sup>67</sup> In the African context, there is much less chance of a traditional African society being changed by Diasporans, because every since our exodus from Africa in terms of slavery, people of African descent have tried to find or maintain whatever “African” traditions they brought to the New World. Indeed, dual citizenship for Diasporans would cause these accepting countries to be more culturally unified, and promote a sense of naturalization and integration, instead of causing strife and disunity.

The process to accept Diasporans as citizens is already in place in other states around the world and African governments should review these practices and set-up policies which will allow for Diasporans to return home through the least restrictive means. There will be both an economic benefit for the accepting country and a long sought after social benefit, in terms of social healing for the Diasporan seeking to get back home and reconnect with his roots. In sum, there must be a distinction made between a new process needed to encourage and accommodate Diasporans to return home as dual citizens, and the current immigration policies African governments already have in place to handle “traditional” immigration issues.

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<sup>67</sup> African-Americans see themselves as “Black” or of African descent, even though they were part of the founding of America, they have never been given full credit for their contributions to the American society and many remained skeptical about race relations in America. Thus, although Americans, the vast majority of African-Americans see themselves as “African”.

## *Chapter 5*

### CONCLUSION: AFRICAN DUAL CITIZENSHIP – THE KEY TO CONTINUED AFRICAN UNITY AND ASSISTED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The world is currently witnessing a large number of persons claiming a legal right to dual citizenship or dual nationalities. This fact has ushered in a new era of nationally enacted laws which seek to protect the citizenship status and “nationality” of persons so affected. Both large and small states alike have embraced this concept because of the emergence of global markets and the need of persons to travel to secure their business transactions and investments in this environment or to merely tour the world. As a result, the world is getting smaller and smaller, and nations are passing laws to foster dual citizenship to make their own economies grow and to also foster relationships with their own diaspora which they know is likely to lead to certain economic benefits for them.

Many states in Europe and the Americas allow this right because they also understand the potential increase in citizens means a potential increase in state revenues, and it also gives their own dual citizens a chance to discover and reconnect to his or her own identity within another country. Because of this new era of globalization, African states are in a position to benefit even more from offering dual citizenship to its vast Diaspora because it has much to gain. Specifically, because its implementation will mean a reversal to the continent’s “brain drain” and the inclusion and resettlement of skilled, semi-skilled, and un-skilled labor will succor Africa’s further

development, and at the same time, it will allow persons in the Diaspora to reconnect to their true identities which were erased as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

African dual citizenship was an implicit statement and vision that our Pan African Founding Fathers had for all of us, and it is a vision that has been promulgated in recent times by the late Dr. Leon H Sullivan who envisioned a “bridge” between Africa and the Diaspora, linking us all together socially, politically, and economically.

As we contemplate the outstanding contributions that these great human beings made in keeping and making us an African people, and for forging our cultural and political stakes in this world’s cruel and violent political ground, we must come to a decision now to unite for the sake of all of Africa. Africans and no other group or government is responsible for the upliftment of our continent, and this is especially so in the new age of globalization and potential union government, in which nations are “playing for keeps” in terms of increasing its population density and its GNP/GDP relative to its labor force being competitive in the global economy.

It is clear that Africa has untapped economic potential, but it is also clear that the Diaspora is in a position to help bring healing and reconciliation to Africa in terms of economic, social and political assistance which will cause the continent as a whole to become more stable democratically and more economically viable for investment. Thus, we must think about ways to come together to solve these types of African problems and dual citizenship

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is one way that we can help ourselves become more unified, and at the same time correctly assess and solve other systemic problems that plague the continent. When we become unified through this process, there will be no governmental power greater that can stop us in achieving social reconciliation, economic prosperity, and political union for our beloved continent. We must, all of us, who love Africa, consider how the African society will change for the better when our African governments permit dual citizenship. The time is now for African leaders to sound the clarion call for its children to come home. There is much work to be done, and much money to be made in our collaboration as an African people in rebuilding Africa. We must work together in unity and partnership now, or we will ultimately perish together as fools in this cold and hostile world.

In the final analysis, as with the story of Joseph, we must not be afraid to understand and remember our common past, but we must also realize that all of us are connected and can have a bright future if we are not afraid to trust one another and partner for the greatest good of Africa. It is true that we were at one time dispersed and separated from each other as an African people. However, as Joseph was separated from his family through slavery, he was later reunited with his brothers and they all prospered. Prosperity did not happen however until Joseph and his brothers decided to be reconciled. Therefore, we must begin now our trek on the road towards national and social reconciliation. In doing this, we will reconcile ourselves one to another and complete that connection that Dr. Sullivan and our Founding Fathers so desired us to achieve. We must act now and this

reconciliation can be accomplished through the implementation of African dual citizenship by African governments.

“Africa heal yourself, your children want to come home”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See Bob Marley, musical artist, lyrics.

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