



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENT

SOAD LAW 009
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

December 21, 2025

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PREAMBLE

The purpose of this law on International Cooperation is to define the terms of reference within which the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) operates in this field. Being by nature a State without borders, SOAD necessarily and constantly works in the field of international cooperation. It may be stated that most of SOAD's activities is geared towards international cooperation. Yet this intense diplomatic activity is the fruit of a history, which deserves to be recalled, in order to better perceive the current stakes as well as future perspectives.

Africa has always been an area of commercial, cultural and intellectual exchange. These exchanges not only enabled Africa to shine throughout the world, but also demonstrated the strength of international cooperation, long before the arrival of the colonial powers. In ancient times, Egypt established links with Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome and even India, while remaining connected to other African peoples, notably in the Nile Valley and beyond, facilitating the exchange of goods, knowledge and technology. The famous incense route linking southern Arabia to Egypt illustrates the intensity of these commercial and diplomatic relations.

On the coast of present-day Tunisia, Phoenician settlers founded Carthage in the 9th century B.C. and established a powerful maritime empire that extended over much of North Africa, as well as several Mediterranean islands (Sicily, Sardinia, etc.). Carthage traded with other Mediterranean powers, such as the Greeks, Romans and Etruscans. Carthage was a key player in maritime trade, exchanging resources such as ivory, metals and grain, but despite brilliant leaders like Hamilcar and Hannibal, the city was razed to the ground by the Romans during the Punic Wars (-146 BC).

North Africa was also linked to sub-Saharan Africa. Caravans crossed the Sahara (which was not always a desert) to trade gold, ivory, textiles and spices. Berber kingdoms and desert nomads played a key role in these exchanges, which intensified later with the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, but whose beginnings date back to antiquity.

The kingdoms of sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Kingdom of Kush, and the kingdoms of Mali, Ghana and Songhai, established commercial, diplomatic and cultural networks with other regions of the world, far beyond African borders. The trade in gold and spices from Mali and Ghana, in particular, extended far beyond African borders, reaching Europe, the Middle East and Asia. This international trade fostered not only the exchange of material goods, but also intellectual flows that enriched different civilizations with scientific, philosophical and medical knowledge.

Another striking example of pre-colonial international cooperation is the story of the Mali empire and its famous ruler, Mansa Musa, who demonstrated the extent of diplomacy and economic cooperation at the time during his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. Mansa Musa, rich in Malian gold, established relations with the great commercial and intellectual centers of the Islamic world, such as Egypt, Arabia and Persia. While in Egypt, he made lavish gifts to local rulers, strengthening diplomatic and commercial ties between West Africa and the Islamic world.

International cooperation was also a prominent feature of the medieval kingdom of Zimbabwe, with the city of Great Zimbabwe, whose remains bear witness to a civilization that established trade links with regions as far-flung as India, and possibly China. Exports of precious minerals, such as gold and copper, facilitated profound and mutually beneficial exchanges with Asia and other parts of Africa.

However, from the late 15th century onwards, the arrival of the Europeans profoundly altered the dynamics in this area. At the beginning, the relationship took the form of peaceful cooperation. In 1490, King Nzinga Mbemba sent ambassadors to Portugal, led by a Congolese nobleman named Ngbanda. The purpose of this mission was to establish formal relations between the Congo Kingdom and the Portuguese court. In response, Portugal's King John II sent a priest and missionaries to support the conversion of the Congolese people to Christianity. The Congo kingdom exported ivory, palm oil, metals and other products, while the Portuguese exported European goods such as weapons, cloth, glass and religious objects.

However, from the early 16th century, Portugal began to take an interest in the slave trade. In 1526, the King of Congo complained to the King of Portugal, John III, about the capture of

slaves in his kingdom by the Portuguese. In Ghana, Elmina, the colonial office of the mine, founded at the end of the 15th century, first became famous for its gold trade, but soon became a major hub of the slave trade. Gradually, land routes were replaced by sea routes: caravels took the place of caravans. At the same time, Europeans relied on certain peoples to combat others. Any rivalries that may have existed were skilfully exploited to subjugate everyone, according to the classic motto: divide and conquer.

Increasingly, Europe used in Africa cannon diplomacy: after the merchants and missionaries, the military. Some peoples were defeated and enslaved, others were forced to cooperate with Europe to avoid the same fate, but many others resisted European incursions and slavery. Among the most striking examples are the Ashanti Empire and its wars against the British, and the revolts of the Zulu Empire, led by Shaka Zulu, which succeeded in resisting early colonial encroachments in the early 19th century.

The high point of this period was, of course, the Berlin Conference which, in 1885, led to the partition of Africa between the colonial powers. During and after colonization, struggles for independence demonstrated the importance of international cooperation in the quest for freedom and self-determination. The pan-African movements that took shape in the early 20th century are shining examples of cooperation between African states and the Diaspora in the struggle against colonial and racial oppression.

Figures such as Kwame Nkrumah, W.E.B. Du Bois and Julius Nyerere understood that pan-African unity and solidarity were essential to guarantee the dignity and prosperity of the continent's peoples. In 1931, the famous meeting in Paris between Aimé Césaire, from Martinique, and Léopold Sédar Senghor, from Senegal, created de facto informal international cooperation, which led to the creation of the Negritude movement. Similarly, the "Back to Africa" movement led by Marcus Garvey testifies to a desire to create connections and cooperation that had been shattered by the tragedies of history. Many leaders of Africa and the Diaspora came together at the beginning of the 20th century at Pan-African congresses, and the Diaspora lent its support to Ethiopia when the country was attacked by Mussolini.

One of the most significant milestones in this international cooperation was the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, a powerful symbol of the will of African countries to unite in defense of their independence and development. The OAU also played a key role in accompanying the struggles of African peoples still under colonial domination, and in the fight against apartheid in South Africa. The support of African countries and also of the Diaspora, which launched communication and international boycott operations, was crucial in exerting pressure against the apartheid regime, and enabled post-apartheid South Africa to take a new place within the international community.

In the Diaspora, the Caribbean states organized themselves and in 1973 created the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which facilitated international cooperation in the region. Gradually, CARICOM established links with Africa, in a spirit of reparation, as Afro-descendants had been uprooted from the continent by slave deportation. In 2012, Haiti was admitted as an observer of the AU. Mr Laurent Lamothe, Prime Minister of Haïti, even

applied for full membership, saying: “Haiti is Africa in the Caribbean”. But the application was unsuccessful.

However, diplomatic ties between the West Indies and Africa remained strong. Thus, in 1975, at the request of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, Cuban forces successfully intervened in Angola against troops supported by the apartheid regime in South Africa. Cuba also intervened in support of liberation movements in countries such as Congo-Brazzaville, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

Since the 1990s, most Latin American countries have incorporated the theme of pluralism or multiculturalism into their Constitutions, including Nicaragua, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. In so doing, they have recognised in their national identity not only the indigenous components, but also the African origins of their populations.

In 2003, Brazil, which has put in place policies to promote racial equality and recognize African roots in Brazilian culture, developed an initiative for South-South cooperation, which strengthens ties with Africa. At the same time, many countries such as Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina and Mexico are forging closer diplomatic ties with Africa. In Colombia, Panama and Nicaragua, Afro festivals and associations multiplied, fostering dynamic international cooperation at the level of civil society.

Today, Africa and its diaspora are at a crossroads in their history, in a globalized world where common challenges transcend borders. The continent, with its natural resources, dynamic youth and historic links with its diaspora, is ready to reinvent its international cooperation. This cooperation between Africa and its diaspora must be based on the lessons of the past, on the solidarities that enabled our ancestors to overcome challenges and build bridges between peoples, beyond borders. Africa has been great and strong when it has overcome its internal divisions, and when it has been able to integrate its diaspora. It is therefore essential that future generations strengthen these connections: this is the aim of the State of the African Diaspora in general, and of this bill in particular.

CHAPTER I: DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

This law establishes a framework for the State of the African Diaspora and its Ministry of International Cooperation. It provides guidelines for the international cooperation of SOAD with nations, regional organizations, and international institutions and other relevant entities, for the betterment of the Pan-African communities in Africa and the Diaspora.

Article 1: Definitions

1. **International Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts with other nations, regional organizations, and international bodies.
2. **Diplomatic Relations:** Formal interactions and agreements between the State of the African Diaspora and other entities.
3. **International Organizations:** Global bodies such as the United Nations or the African Union.
4. **Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements:** Agreements with individual nations or multiple parties, respectively.

Article 2: Principles

1. **Pan-Africanism :** The SOAD vision of international cooperation is based on pan-Africanism, which means for our State the necessity to reinforce Africa through the Diaspora, and the Diaspora through Africa.
2. **Mutual Respect:** All interactions shall be based on equality, sovereignty, and mutual benefit.
3. **Solidarity:** Strong ties with African countries and the global African Diaspora to promote unity.
4. **Human Rights:** Advocate for universal human rights and justice, especially for marginalized groups.
5. **Peace and Security:** Support global peace initiatives and conflict resolution efforts.
6. **Sustainable Development:** Prioritize environmental responsibility, economic growth, and future well-being.
7. **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensure public oversight and responsible governance in international engagements.

CHAPTER II: OBJECTIVES OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Article 3 : Objectives

The State of the African Diaspora shall pursue international cooperation with the following objectives:

1. Strengthening global solidarity among peoples of Africa and African descent, and fostering political and economic empowerment.

2. Promoting human rights, peace, security, and sustainable development in alignment with global agreements such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Facilitating economic partnerships, trade agreements, and investment flows to promote economic growth and development.
4. Promoting cultural exchange, educational cooperation, and the sharing of knowledge and expertise across borders.
5. Advancing the global Pan-African agenda, particularly in relation to addressing historical injustices such as slavery and colonialism, which need to be redressed.

CHAPTER III: THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Article 4 : The Ministry

1. The Ministry shall consist of a Minister appointed by the Prime Minister, and such staff as necessary to carry out the functions outlined in this Act.
2. The Ministry shall work on international cooperation with its partners, under the authority of the Prime Minister.
3. The Ministry shall represent the State of the African Diaspora in international conferences, summits, and forums.
4. The Ministry shall ensure the implementation and monitoring of international agreements entered into by the State of the African Diaspora.
5. The Ministry shall advise the Parliament and the Executive on international policy matters.

Article 5 : Relations with Other Ministries

The Ministry of International Cooperation shall:

1. Work under the authority of the Prime Minister.
2. Work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Department in particular.
3. Work with all the other ministries, like the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministry of Transports or the Ministry of Health, for example, whenever the cooperation is about these particular areas.
4. Not have the monopoly of international cooperation, as many other Ministries may also be involved in international cooperation in their sector of activity.

Article 6 : Staff, Ambassadors and Special Envoys

The Ministry shall work with :

1. Its own staff, recruited in compliance with the Policy issued by the Government in October 2024.

2. The Ambassadors of SOAD (Residing, Roving, Youth Ambassadors), who may bring assistance to the Minister.
3. The Special Envoys, who shall have to be introduced to the residing Ambassador of the country where they are sent to, in line with Policy S-009.1-ka, adopted in December 2024.

CHAPTER IV: COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

Article 7: Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

1. The State of the African Diaspora shall enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements with other nations, international organizations, regional bodies, companies or NGOs, in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, equity, and national interest.
2. These agreements may be done directly through the Government, or indirectly through a company, a special purpose vehicle or an NGO, created by the State.

Article 8: Diplomatic Missions and Embassies

1. The State of the African Diaspora may establish diplomatic missions, embassies, or consulates in foreign countries, in line with Policy S-008.1-ka adopted in January 2024. They shall be under the dual authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Department, and further, they shall also interact with the Ministry of International Cooperation.
2. Diplomatic missions shall be responsible for representing the interests of the State of the African Diaspora and ensuring effective diplomatic communication with foreign governments.

CHAPTER V: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SPECIFIC FIELDS

Article 9: Economic Cooperation

1. The Ministry of International Cooperation shall actively pursue trade agreements that foster economic growth and encourage investment in key sectors, such as infrastructure, technology, agriculture, and manufacturing.
2. The Ministry of International Cooperation shall also seek to establish economic partnerships with international financial institutions to secure funding for developmental projects.

Article 10: Health, Education and Cultural Exchange

1. The Ministry shall promote health, educational exchanges, scholarships, and training programs that benefit citizens of the State of the African Diaspora and partner countries.
2. Cultural exchange programs shall be established to celebrate the history and diversity of the African Diaspora and facilitate the sharing of artistic, intellectual, and cultural traditions.

Article 11: Human Rights, Environmental Rights and Social Justice

1. The Ministry of International Cooperation shall advocate for the protection and promotion of human rights and environmental rights across the globe, particularly for marginalized communities, with a focus on addressing the legacies of slavery and colonialism.
2. The Ministry of International Cooperation shall work in partnership with international human rights and environmental rights organizations to monitor and address potential abuses.
