

Reach Africa in Foundation in collaboration with the office of the Alderman of Economic Affairs, City of The Hague organised a two day conference from 21st to 22nd October 2003 with the title, "Towards promoting Unity and the role of Diaspora Africans in the Netherlands, Europe and Africa."

The conference attracted a cross section of the African community with representatives from African Embassies in the Netherlands and Belgium.



Chairman of the foundation, Chief T.A. Osuji

Ms. Pamela Matinde chaired the conference which had other key speakers as the Mayor of The Hague, Drs. W.J. Deetman who was represented by Drs. B. Lagerwaard, Head, and International Desk.

Reach African Foundation organizes two-day conference on promoting unity among Africans in Diaspora.

The chairman of the foundation, Chief T.A. Osuji welcomed participants and pledges his foundation commitment towards



Some participants at the conference

ensuring that Africans in the Diaspora are united in bringing a common front to many of the African issues affecting them in the Netherlands.

He expressed some disappointment at turn out of the various African embassies invited to the occasion but did not show up. He is determined to go ahead with everything within his power to reach Africans.

Professor Mohammed Salih, (ISS) who spoke on, 'Conflating NEPAD and the Millennium Goals: A quest for ownership. He touched on the subject of NEPAD, although controversial as he may sound but he was of the view that the people should made NEPAD their project to enhance the chance of Africa in a global world; Professor C. Rath

of the Institute of Immigration Studies, University of Amsterdam, spoke on the subject, 'the role of African businesses in promoting trade between the Netherlands and Africa.' He noted that the percentage of Africans in the Netherlands is quite small but there is a progression of more involvement of the Africans in the past ten years in the business sector of the Dutch economy; Ms. Matsepo Ramakoae from Lesotho talked on the contribution of Diaspora Africans in capacity building in Africa using her country as a case study of where Africans in the Diaspora could contribute to socio/economic life of the people back in Africa.



Dr. B. Lagerwaard



Professor Salih



Charge d'Affaires of Nigerian Embassy, Mr. Y.D. Bala

The Charge d’Affaires of the Nigerian Embassy, Mr. Y.D. Bala delivered well prepared and research paper on the relations between Diaspora Africans and Africans in the continent. His paper could not be completely delivered because of time constraints but copies were later distributed to participants. His conclusion was that each of the two is interwoven and need each other in the development of the African continent.



Women participants at the conference

Other speakers included Mrs. Helen Osaro-Ekhaton, the Director of Black & Beautiful, Den Haag, she spoke on ‘empowerment of Diaspora African women: problems and prospects’. She used herself as an example, starting with nothing but determination to succeed and willingness to integrate into the Dutch community helped her. She studied the Dutch language and she went back to school to get the proper training and today, she is a proud owner of two departmental stores in the city of The Hague. Many of the participants were interested in her speech as she was asked many questions during the interactive audience session. Ms. Romana C. Maumbu, a training specialist spoke on the Diaspora Africa and Cultural Identity: Beyond Nostalgia.

After all the papers were presented, the audiences were given the chance to make contributions or ask the speakers’ questions and it became very interactive. Nearly all the participants who spoke to the Voice magazine agreed that there is urgency need for Africans in the Diaspora to unite as those in Africa are hoping to take leadership from them. The participants were later entertained with a nice reception in preparation for the African cultural day where at least 500 participants were expected. The following day was to showcase the rich African music, dance, arts, paintings, sculptures, clothes, fashion, models and of course food. In all, the two day conference was a huge success as captured by our Photo Editor, Fatai Badmus for the Voice magazine.



Some members of the Reach Africa Foundation