

CONFERENCE DEBATE

The state of democracy and development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Montreal, July 24, 2010

CONGOLESE DIASPORA OF CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE POLITIC AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRC: PRETENTION OR REAL ROLE?

By: J. Mbaya Kankwenda

- * Protocols
- * Acknowledgements
- * Structure

1. The Congolese Diaspora of Canada and the potential of its contribution to the DRC

The DRC has invested heavily in education, so that the harvest in terms of availability of national expertise is abundant. But in reality these skills developed do not obey to the power of logic of developing human resources for the development of the DRC. The trained officers are indeed an unintended result of the dynamics of promotion by the school, established since the colonial regime.

Since long the state behaves as if he did not need this overflow skill (professional and skilled workers in general), which in addition, beginning to question the logic of political systems and how they work. Until the late eighties, few senior Congolese thought emigrate. They most had confidence in their future at home. The years of rapid economic growth (1966-1974) had also contributed to this belief and this hope. Despite the crisis that followed this period, the skilled Congolese believed strongly in the bright future of their country and their own future in the country.

The political, economic and social crisis, the bankruptcy of large enterprises, the very low level, called "pittance" of salaries with the purchasing power continued to decline, unemployment of senior officers as well as other skilled workers, officials recklessness, the general feeling among executives to be underutilized and underpaid as they are needed elsewhere, the lack of promising prospects for the Congolese and skills ignored, the climate of insecurity and violent conflict all this combined to gradually push the Congolese on the roads of emigration to other lands.

It has thus developed in the DRC a large migration to Europe, North America, Africa and the movement that now extends to Asia, Australia and even Latin America. The DRC is currently in a position as an exporter of labor in general, and its expertise in particular. Can so now speak of a true Congolese Diaspora? moreover increasingly growing, representing the fields and levels of skill that can make a difference in the reconstruction and development of the country, if indeed they are effectively put to work in a dynamic that enhances their knowledge and expertise.

Whatever the host country, the Congolese Diasporas, like other African Diasporas in fact, still trying to organize to address the constraints and challenges to their survival and their integration into the host society. It also seeks to organize to keep the umbilical cord with his homeland: the Congolese nation. And she actually does in different ways: individually or by group or at the familial level, local level, regional level, national level, political level, economic and socio-cultural level, etc.

In addition to the concerns of individual and collective integration into the host society - Canada - it has

much to organize themselves as citizens of the DRC and abroad, with an eye toward the future and the progress of homeland, and this round of problems, issues and challenges political, economic, social and cultural rights as faced by their fellow citizens back home.

Although based outside the country, and most do not share the daily problems of citizens and peoples of the Congo, organizations of the Diaspora have a thorough knowledge and strong for having lived the realities of the country since the crisis, they have ongoing contact with this reality through domestic travel, media and relationships with families, friends, etc.. and especially for their interest in them on the future of their motherland.

Because they are able to provide the latter with the richness of their observations, knowledge and experience of the realities and rules of politics and democracy in the West and Canada in particular, the role and activities of the State of private sector and various components of civil society. They can therefore play a significant role in the socioeconomic and political development of the DRC.

2. The traditional roles of the Congolese Diaspora of Canada (CODICA) in development and democratic change in the DRC

There are four roles: traditional or classic Congolese Diaspora in general and one of Canada in particular, plays and can play in contributing actively to the strengthening of democracy and peace, and promoting sustainable development in the DRC.

(i) Individual Investment or by group

The experience of Mali in France, the Ethiopian and Eritrean in U.S., African and United States Natives, Cape Verdeans in Portugal, in the United States and in Senegal, Burkina in Ivory Coast, Nigerian in England, in U.S. and in South Africa, to name just a few examples as succeed cases of diasporas that have managed to organize themselves individually and collectively to transfer regular funds, and invest in their countries. These examples may well be sources of inspiration for the initiatives of CODICA and its components. Beyond the individual transfers to help families, the majority of funds are targeted to individual investments: construction of houses, productive investments, etc. In the case of collective investment, it requires a minimum of organization of CODICA as an important first step, which must be securely realized in particular through Congolese community organizations by city or province. Get together and organize themselves cannot be limited to demonstrations of solidarity and mutual aids on site.

We must go beyond and organize ourselves as a force of civil society to play our role and take our place in the collective investments of socioeconomic development in the country. It can be done by the investment service or production and assembly enterprises consistent, investment in social and cultural sectors: health centers, schools and training centers, community radio and other media, etc.

But it also requires that there be in these Congolese organizations in Canada, a minimum of consensus and commitment to common goals shared at national, regional, local or sector to contribute to the promotion of joint investment and economic development. The investments made contribute to the strengthening of peace and social progress of people back home because they are part of efforts to reduce tensions and existential anxieties, while adding a touch of development of citizens and communities concerned.

(ii) Transfer of know-how and skills

The CODICA is full of varied skills, rich and varied levels. It is full of arms and brains otherwise qualified for the moment, are export in this country in their own way they contribute to sustainable development of Canada. This means they are unavailable for their native land, however, has done much for them, so they are tradable and useable because demand on the external labor market.

Through his professional experience, his social life, its ability to observe the political, economic and social dynamic in Canada, CODICA has enriched its competence and expertise. It can make a difference to the reconstruction to sustainable development in the DRC, the transfer of his knowledge, his know-how, and practical lessons of his life there.

This means that this important source of labor power can be involved by the will and the organization of its members. But we know why she also organized to take stock of the Canadian experience in particular areas, discuss and see how it can serve the national cause in the efforts to strengthen democracy, reshaping of the Congolese state, reconstruction, and socioeconomic development.

This transfer can be done through actions such as: support to existing institutions in the short or medium term, launching individual initiatives or collective sabbaticals to help strengthen capacities of institutions and organizations specific training workshops actors of civil society and grassroots communities and the country, demonstrations projects that can be replicated by local actors, final returns for country activities in this direction, etc.

(iii) Advocacy and mobilization of outside opinion

The other role that CODICA or other Congolese Diaspora can play, is to be an advocate of Congolese civil society, citizens and communities with Congolese partners in Canada, whether in government, political parties, forces of civil society, NGOs and humanitarian or development of employer associations and the private sector in general, but also to the Canadian public. It will identify and approach these different forces with messages carefully prepared.

The first is to properly inform, to educate and mobilize them if possible in favor of consolidating peace, strengthening democracy and respect for human rights, especially the reconstruction of national development sustainable and well-being of the Congolese people. The mobilization of domestic opinion plays an important role in efforts for peace, democratization and reconstruction, and this, in combination with the internal action of the Congolese people. In this regard, Canada is one of those voices heard on the global stage, mobilizing its forces and opinions with one stone two birds engage a partner who can provide support and make another lawyer the cause of democracy and development of the DRC worldwide.

(iv) Mobilization of human resources, financial, technical and political

Under this other role, and following the precedent, the CODICA can help the country in mobilizing external resources for development. These may be those of its members or those of other Congolese Diaspora elsewhere. They may be also those of partners and other political, economic and social identified in Canada.

From the perspective of the nature of these resources, they may be financial, technical (equipment), physical (consumable and non consumable), human (knowledge and know-how) or even political. They can be mobilized through donations and humanitarian aid or development, as foreign investment in the DRC or as political support for strengthening democracy and the rule of law. But in each of these categories, CODICA should have the capacity for mobilization to convince both its members and partners, Canadian forces, initiatives and projects are well articulated and documented, judicious choice of potential partners to approach in the field, mode institutional organization to implement, guarantees of success, involvement of local bodies including beneficiaries, etc.

3. The new roles of CODICA in development and democratic change in the DRC

(i) Reconstruction and promotion of political and democratic governance

The political dynamics of this country is rich in lessons, with particular weaknesses as strengths. Canada

is a country which if not multi-national is at least a cultural mosaic of communities, living as a nation in unity in diversity or diversity in unity. The Congo can learn from this model of state and nation building in the process of peace building, implementation and strengthening the culture of democratic values. And he may do so through the CODICA held for that purpose.

An African proverb says, the visitor is a (observer) spy. The CODICA has to play the role of this visitor spy, who cannot afford to live and enjoy his presence here flatly. What lessons does the CODICA and its components can be drawn from this trend in Canada to contribute to the process of consolidating peace and strengthening democracy in the DRC, and to avoid or circumvent the difficulties that may arise on this path the specific context of the Congo? If so, can the CODICA through its members, engage in the politics of the country.

(ii) Reconstruction and Promotion of Good Governance for Development

It is here that the four functions specified in the category called "traditional" should fully play their role, especially at institutional level. The government and the private sector are the major actors of development in Canada. But they are no longer the only players and officials. Somehow civil society now has a significant role in this respect because after all sustainable development is first in the national interest, therefore citizens. The CODICA as external force of Congolese civil society is therefore an important player to contribute in this direction.

Rich experience in Canada, the CODICA, whose members are involved and are privileged observers, can make the reconstruction process for the development of the DRC, the various positive and negative lessons they draw from the design process, formulation and implementation of policies and economic and social programs. These lessons are also on the articulation and the institutional division of responsibilities between local, provincial and national levels. While this document is based on the program of work of the CODICA, and its priorities for action at home. The CODICA can she be prepared and she will?

(iii) Reconstruction and promotion of corporate governance

The combination of organized efforts of the Congolese state and the private sector can make the Congo a major pillar of African development. It can also make the DRC as China and India to Africa because of the immensity of its natural and human resources. Is there in this country - Canada - modes of organization, niche carriers quickly, ways of mobilizing capital, technology and skills they can learn in the interest of governance companies in the DRC so they are able to play the role which is theirs in the construction of an emerged Congo?

What strategy to promote Canadian investment in the DRC honest, and as such, what kind of promoting partnership between Canadian and Congolese entrepreneurs and employers' organizations or between two countries? So many questions, some may be on the agenda of the CODICA in conjunction with Canadian partners, certainly, but also in dialogue with the business of the DRC.

(iv) Role in the change of corporate leadership

The change of leadership in terms of systems and / or nature of political regimes as well as in terms of strategies and action policies have taken mainly by the actions of internal forces determined and organized accordingly. In most cases, these changes are organized in conjunction with actions of external forces, not only foreign but also national. As such, the CODICA can be a significant player in the promotion of leadership (political) development at all levels of Congolese society.

The initiatives suggested in this presentation may stimulate CODICA to draw on his Canadian experience, and fully play its role in promoting political leadership, democratic and developmental level political bodies, private sector and society Congolese civil.

Conclusion

playing a role in the political development of Congo is to say the entrenchment of democracy and the rule of law, and in the socioeconomic development of the DRC is not an idle claim for CODICA. It is a duty and a real possibility. Even should it be that in CODICA has the legitimate ambitions, and it is organized accordingly.

In all cases, whether called civil society to contribute actively in strengthening democracy and the rule of law, the overhaul of the state, reconstruction and development of Congo or its component CODICA known to contribute to the same roles, they may do so effectively only if they have the technical and institutional capacity.

They may do so more effectively if they have the moral and social qualities required by any collective work like this. More humility and less arrogance towards the people and its various components. More listening and less pretension and lessons to give to others. There are no more knowledgeable than the people themselves. They can do so effectively if they finally have the will, determination and commitment to advance the cause of the nation.

Thank you!

Dr. J. Mbaya Kankwenda
Professor