

The Launch of a Continental Diaspora Engagement Framework Programme

Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum
(IMRF)
Friday, 20 May 2022 (Virtual)

Summary of Discussions

**Rapporteur: Solomon Hassen Tegegne, Policy and Liaison Officer,
IOM Special Liaison Office to the AU and UNECA,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

The African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AUC-CIDO) and the government of the Republic of Senegal in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organised a side event to introduce the Joint Framework on Diaspora Engagement. The Side event seeks to use the IMRF as an opportunity to present the context and the rationale of why the Joint Framework programme was developed for the Continent of Africa and to build a better understanding on the current state of Africa's diaspora engagement initiatives and processes.

The Global Compact on Migration (GCM) recognises the contributions of migrants and diaspora to development, specifically in its objectives 19 and 20. The aim of the proposed joint framework programme directly contributes to both – the SDG Agenda and the GCM, bringing together the key institutions for the promotion of the African diaspora and harnessing their resources for development.

The IMRF Side-event aimed to:

- Present the four main pillars of the continental diaspora engagement framework which has been developed jointly by AUC, IOM and UNDP

- Showcase some of the tools which the three agencies will make available to the AU MS when working on economic capital, human capital or on diaspora engagement in times of crisis.
- Use the IMRF as an opportunity to present the context and the rationale of why the Joint Framework programme was developed for the Continent of Africa
- Develop a better understanding on the current state of Africa's diaspora engagement initiatives and processes.

Key Recommendations:

Below are the key recommendations presented by panelists throughout the IMRF Side event with regard to the continental diaspora engagement framework program, which falls under the following GCM objective:

GCM objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.

- When it comes to diaspora engagement for economic development, AUC highlighted the importance to look beyond remittances and target diaspora savings and explore how diaspora invests in the continent with a focus on innovative and optimal use of African Diaspora resources for inclusive development in the continent.
- With the Global Market place the AUC wants to promote innovative entrepreneurship and looks at connecting Diaspora with business on the continent so as to scale up these businesses to the benefit the youth in the continent and the Diaspora.
- For AIR the first step to make remittance impactful is to know better the people who receive remittances and to empower them through trainings and financial inclusion. To achieve this, African countries need to build trust with their diaspora and the beneficiaries.
- UNDP highlighted the importance to integrate diaspora in the national development planning, to integrate diaspora strategies with the financial strategy of any given country in order to contribute to national development priorities, to ensure that diaspora plays a key role in monitoring and review of the budget allocation, of the expenditures, of how public investment is undertaken in the country; and in the coordination and governance systems for the SDG financing.
- Regarding Diaspora engagement for humanitarian purposes and human capital, Shabaka pointed out the important role that technology plays increasingly in diaspora engagement, not least because of Covid-19, when all assistance had to be delivered virtually (utilization of online platforms to share information and skills)
- Furthermore, it was emphasized that Diaspora engagement needs to be designed with diaspora, rather than having diasporas merely as recipients of products and services.

Summary of Added Values of the Continental Diaspora Framework: Ms. Tanja DEDOVIC

Building on their knowledge, expertise and mandate, IOM, UNDP, CIDO and AIR joined hands to set up the Continental Diaspora Engagement Framework.

The Framework will guide the already existing number of projects, initiatives, programmes and tools on Diaspora engagement of Member States, through tools, advice, and best practices in their diaspora engagement.

The Framework will bring together and convene key international stakeholders through a whole-of-society approach, with the mandate and expertise of working on diaspora engagement matters, to create synergies and complementarities, working on broader development issues as well as finance, investment, and planning.

It will test and enhance tools, methodologies and networks developed for diaspora engagement and start creating synergies and scale at both international and country levels.

It will also support and benefit Member States through a tailored piloting on a selected number of countries where the consolidated tools will be rolled out.

Key Messages from Panel Discussions



Ms. Tanja Dedovic, IOM Senior Regional Thematic Specialist on Labour Mobility & Social Inclusion

Discussions were held in line with the following guiding questions:

- **Guiding question AU:** Can you please briefly elaborate about the steps taken so far by AU on harnessing diaspora for economic development?
- **Guiding question AIR:** How is the African Institute of Remittance working to make remittances more impactful?
- **Guiding question UNDP:** INFF: making diaspora investment and remittances as one possible source of financing for development?
- **Guiding question Shabaka:** key learnings from past few years on how diaspora has managed to address challenges in Countries of Origin but also in their host countries during times of crisis?

◆ **The steps taken by AU in harnessing diaspora for economic development**



***Ms. Angela Naa Afoley Odai, Acting Head,
Diaspora Division, Citizens and Diaspora Directorate***

- The different steps taken by the African Union (AU) to harness Diaspora economic development include:
- The **African Diaspora Finance Cooperation (ADFC)** and the **African Diaspora Global Market Place (ADGMP)** both of which are the AU Legacy Projects, launched in 2012 to engage the diaspora for the socio-economic development of the Union and the continent.
- The **ADFC** targets diaspora savings and explores how they invest in the continent with a focus on innovative and optimal use of African Diaspora resources for inclusive development in the continent.
- The **Global Market place** on the other hand, refers strictly to innovative entrepreneurship and looks at connecting Diaspora with business on the continent to scale up these businesses to the benefit the youth in the continent and the Diaspora.

◆ **How is the African Institute of Remittance making remittances more impactful?**



***Mr. Amadou Cisse, Executive Director, AU
African Institute of Remittances (AIR)***

- The reason why remittances have not been impactful despite the huge size of the flow is the absence of **specific continental programmes** to leverage the benefit of remittances.
 - The first step to make remittance impactful is to focus on **the beneficiaries of remittances** and empower them to have an impact by providing training, mainstreaming their needs in national financial inclusion strategies and existing programs, as well as encouraging them to make savings, to crowdfund businesses and create jobs in their communities.
 - The overall objective therefore is to empower individuals who receive remittances. To achieve this, African countries need to build trust with their diaspora and the beneficiaries.
 - International Organizations together with Diaspora networks can play a buffer role. To this end, AIR is working at proposing specific strategies for African Member states to help them harness the potential benefit of remittance for socio-economic development.
 - It is important to look at Diaspora funds beyond remittances and look at **savings**. When focusing on savings, a return (ROI) for the diaspora must be central, as remittances are generally given with no expectation of return or minimal return.
 - There are powerful tools that exist, however information about those who receive remittances and what they do with that is lacking. With this information we can address the needs of the people on the ground.
- ◆ **INFF: making diaspora investment and remittances as one possible source of financing for development**



Ms. Orria Goni, SDG Finance and South-South Cooperation Regional Advisor, UNDP Africa

- **The Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF)** is an integrated approach to financing for development, which was born out of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- INFF is about integrating public and private actors behind the national development priorities. The Diaspora is a key interlocuter to the national development process. Therefore, it's important to make sure that diaspora engagement strategies are prepared

for and developed by diaspora; and that these stakeholders are integrated into the national development plan and the financing strategies of the national priorities.

- The INFF is supporting African countries to harness diaspora engagement for sustainable development from four different angles:
- First, it is using Development Finance Assessment ([DFA](#)) to collect data on remittances and FDIs, as well as the SDG Investors Map to gather intelligence on investment opportunities that are aligned with national development priorities. There are currently twenty-two countries that have completed their DFAs on the African continent.
- The second entry is the financing strategies, through which we integrate reforms on the public and private finance, including Diaspora policies and strategies on remittances and diaspora investment that can contribute to national development priorities.
- The third aspect is about setting up systems for monitoring and review of the budget allocation, of the expenditures, of how public investment is undertaken in the country, where Diaspora has a key role to play.
- The fourth element is about coordination and governance systems, which particularly looks at dialogue platforms around SDG financing, where diaspora is involved.

◆ **Key learnings from past few years on how diaspora has managed to address challenges in Countries of Origin but also in their host countries during times of crisis**



Dr. Bashair Ahmed, CEO Shabaka

- A growing body of evidence shows diaspora organisations are crucial actors in humanitarian action and development work through their financial and non-financial contributions. The launch of the Continental Diaspora Engagement Framework, is therefore a testament to that acknowledgement.
- Key learnings from our work with diaspora communities:
 - **Motivations to participate:** Moral duty based on ‘leave no-one behind’ and an understanding of (and connections to) the situation in the country of origin. The younger, second and third-generation diaspora remains a relatively untapped

resource for engaging with their communities of origin. Thus, it is critical to understand their needs and how to maintain links.

- **Technology is becoming a critical vehicle for diaspora engagement:** The pandemic made it difficult for the diaspora to volunteer in person in countries of origin due to travel restrictions. We saw a marked increase in the utilization of online platforms to share information and skills.
- **Genuine collaboration:** Diaspora engagement needs to be designed with diaspora, rather than having diasporas as recipients of products and services.
- Also, diaspora do not distinguish between **development and humanitarian action (the development-humanitarian nexus)**, and the strategic framework is critical in highlighting and facilitating this understanding more broadly.

◆ **Concluding Remarks:**



Amb. Amr Mohammed Aljowaily, *Special Advisor to the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC*

- The AUC is devoting particular attention this year to Diaspora issues, as part of celebrating the tenth-year anniversary of the Johannesburg summit, and is also in parallel launching, operationalizing, and institutionalizing the Decade of the People of African Descent, 2021-2031 that is led by the Republic of Togo. We have a stocktaking exercise of the last ten years and a forward-looking exercise underway for the coming ten years.

Relevant Documents

- UN General Assembly Resolution 73/195. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195): [AR](#) / [FR](#) / [EN](#)
- IMRF Roadmap and Annexes: [AR](#) / [FR](#) / [EN](#)