

## **MFAIC Remarks: Global Diaspora Ministerial Forum Geneva 18-19 June, 2013**

- *I join others in Welcoming the re-election of Mr. William Swing as IOM Director General. The organisation has prospered under his able leadership*

Mine will be a brief account of our vision and approach to the issue of Migration and Development. I will also state what we expect from this august forum.

### **Tanzania Vision on Migration**

To Tanzania **migration is now a reality**. It is a reality that historically presented a challenge and a sense of loss; as growing number of Tanzanians who went abroad for studies never came back. Meanwhile, others trained and already serving in key professions left the country for ‘greener pastures’. Some of the push factors that led many to leave Tanzania have been cited as the lack of employment opportunities, salary differentials and disparity between professional competence acquired through education and job dissatisfaction.

However, there was one positive aspect; these Tanzanians **maintained and enjoyed** a healthy relationship with their country at all levels. On the one hand, Tanzanians abroad always maintain ties with their country of origin. On the other hand, whenever Tanzania leaders travel abroad, meeting and engaging Tanzanians in the Diaspora has been one of the priority functions. This relationship constitutes a very important factor in our engagement drive.

### **Diaspora and Tanzania Development**

Through the above interaction Tanzania noted the resources both financial and skills that the Diaspora developed over time, which could contribute to development. We mutually established that Tanzania needs the Diaspora and the Diaspora need the country. Therefore, for Tanzania, the global approach linking Migration with Development is a term that serves to best describe what the Government had embarked upon to raise the above relationship with its Diaspora to a higher level.

In 2005 as the Government of President Kikwete was voted into Office, a firm decision was taken to turn what we had regarded as a loss into opportunity. A policy objective was thus declared to ensure the recognition of Tanzania Diaspora and to put in place, mechanisms that would enable them to contribute to the development of their country of origin. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation under my leadership has the lead on this key objective of my country.

Hitherto, the thrust of our overall Diaspora engagement strategy has been to build on the relationship described above observing a critical balance between Diaspora interests and needs. We have to facilitate their welfare and growth in the country of destination as we create and secure opportunities for them in Tanzania. Tanzania is aware that for this dual approach to succeed, close collaboration between our Government and destination countries is an important prerequisite. Our goal is to strike partnerships that will

empower our Diaspora maximising their potential to contribute to the development of their country of destination and origin. **A triple Win situation.**

#### **Steps taken to Engage the Diaspora**

As a first step towards a structured Diaspora engagement, Tanzania set up a Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate other stakeholders in the public and private sector. We then conducted a reach-out campaign in major destinations of our Diaspora (UK, US, Canada, Oman etc) mainly through conferences and workshops. In other countries, including the five in the East Africa Community, we maintain steady dialogue via visits and other correspondence. As part of the campaign, we encourage and assist the Diaspora to organise themselves in formal associations to facilitate contact and communication. The Diaspora on their part raised two key issues;

- i. a request for the government to allow *dual citizenship*; and
- ii. enabling environment at home to allow them to better contribute to development – give back to Tanzania.

In response, the Government has and is undertaking other broad interventions as follows:

#### ***Dual Citizenship***

The Diaspora reach-out campaign and the best practice learnt elsewhere confirmed the crucial role of citizenship laws. Dual Citizenship is central for a successful engagement process as it has positive multiplier effects in addressing the Diaspora needs abroad and at home. For example, in the country of destination, only dual citizenship and related laws can effectively address the issues of access to education, adequate health services, insurance, loans and decent employment. These are lifeline needs, lack of which impedes Diaspora growth and contribution.

Countries like Oman, Canada, and Australia provide a good example. Tanzanians in these countries are thriving and contribute in multiple ways; the major common factor we note is citizenship laws in those countries. Another country where Tanzanians are well established is Botswana but for reasons other than citizenship. Given this reality, spearheading the issue of dual citizenship is one of the top priorities in Tanzania's Diaspora engagement.

Tanzania has just published a first draft of a new Constitution. My Ministry is championing this issue to ensure that the views and needs of the Diaspora are well reflected in the final document of the Constitution. Apart from Dual Citizenship, there is also the right for Tanzanians abroad to vote.

#### ***Other policy areas***

Tanzania also acted on the imperative to mainstream Diaspora related issues into the implementation of existing and future development plans in line with Tanzania's vision 2025. In this context, in revenue mobilisation, the First Five Year Development Plan (2011/2012 – 2015/2016) recognises Tanzania Diaspora as one of the latent development potential and credible new sources of external funding. The Plan is targeting instruments such as Diaspora bonds as alternative to external borrowing from the international capital market.

To harness this potential, Tanzania is conscious of the need to create conducive environment through the adjustment of investment and financial policies and legislation affecting the Diaspora. A number of banks have products/accounts specially designed for the Diaspora. However, Central Bank policy intervention is necessary to address the problem of the cost of funds transfer among others

Moreover, in 2010, the Parliament passed a Public Private Partnership Framework which provides a platform for the Diaspora to participate in Development as part of the private sector.

#### **Skills/knowledge transfer programmes**

Skills are one of the strong points of Tanzania's Diaspora. With the unfolding economic opportunities in the oil and gas sector, the country needs to tap into the skills of its nationals abroad. Moreover, the health sector and advances in education as a result of the implementation of the millennium goals has also presented challenges that could benefit from skills from the Diaspora.

The Government has been in discussion with various stakeholders, particularly the UNDP to find the best modality to enable Diaspora experts to provide the needed skills. We have been advised that some form of circular migration for our Diaspora would be most effective. The renowned UNDP led programme – Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) is a case in point. Through this programme, the Diaspora will be able to come and work temporarily in a field of their expertise and return abroad. The Government has also declared its disposition to regulate the relevant labour laws as well as salaries in order to maximize the impact of skills and knowledge transfers.

In order to capture all these initiatives, and to optimise the contribution of the Diaspora for economic development, a project is underway to put in place a Diaspora Policy Framework with Diaspora responsive policies and legislation. These policies are designed to serve Diaspora needs and cater for Tanzania's development objectives. Tanzania looks forward to learn from countries that have put in place effective Diaspora engagement policies.

#### **Tanzania's interest in the Ministerial Forum**

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the fact that engaging Tanzania Diaspora for development is a major policy objective of our government; and therefore one of our foreign policy pillars. I have provided an overview of our vision in Diaspora engagement. I have also outlined the steps and interventions that Tanzania has taken to realise such a vision. With the task ahead of my country, I am delighted to see that stronger collaboration between countries is one of the envisaged outcomes of this forum. This is a critical link that we need to firmly secure. Why?

Tanzania has come this far in the process of Diaspora engagement, thanks to collaboration and support we enjoyed from different organisations including IOM. IOM-Tanzania worked closely with my Ministry especially in our initial stage of bringing on board stakeholders both national and international. A Diaspora Stakeholders

Coordination Forum is one of the outcomes of this collaboration which has proved to be an important tool that provides the sharing of views among varied groups. Diaspora institutions established in the five countries of the East African Community are one of the beneficiaries.

Tanzania's experience underscores the fact that collaboration both bilateral and multilateral is an absolute necessity. Therefore, only coordinated global initiatives will guarantee a more sustainable Diaspora engagement process. To this effect, Tanzania will continue to forge partnerships with successful Diaspora institutions in other countries to bring global best practices to Tanzania.

**Thank you**