

No. 22

INTERNATIONAL  
DIALOGUE  
ON MIGRATION



DIASPORA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
International Conference Centre Geneva  
18–19 June 2013

**DIASPORAS AND  
DEVELOPMENT:  
BRIDGING SOCIETIES  
AND STATES**



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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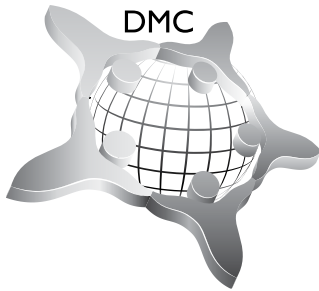
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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
D2D	Diaspora to Development
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DMC	Diaspora Ministerial Conference
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUROMED	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
HLD	High-level Dialogue
ID	Identification
IDM	International Dialogue on Migration
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
JMDI	Joint Migration and Development Initiative
KNOMAD	Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development
LLRC	Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa Programme
MPI	Migration Policy Institute
MRCs	Migration Resource Centres
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCPs	Regional Consultative Processes
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
WEF	World Economic Forum
WMR	World Migration Report



# Foreword

It is a rare occurrence for 55 ministers and minister-level officials from all parts of the world to sit together for two days and discuss an issue that is not an immediate political or economic global crisis. The growing global diaspora and the contributions they bring to development have warranted such high-level attention.

Back in 2012, when I shared with Member States our plan to convene a Diaspora Ministerial Conference (DMC) as part of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) series, I could not have anticipated that a first event of this kind would generate such intense support and interest from all stakeholders. It was an experiment for IOM and the Member States. But from the outset, we had the unqualified support of our Members, and encouragement from various other stakeholders as well. This strengthened our resolve to pursue the conference.

Discussions on and with diaspora are by no means new. This year alone, several major conferences are competing for global attention on various aspects of the relationship between diasporas and society. The second UN High-level Dialogue (HLD) on Migration and Development planned for October 2013 has also sparked a myriad of global events around migration and development, including on diasporas.

IOM thought to add value to that already crowded agenda by inviting the highest level of policy- and lawmakers from countries around the world – ministers, State secretaries and heads of commissions – dealing with diaspora issues to take these issues to the next level of political debate.

We wanted to give high-level attention to an issue that has been amply discussed by scholars, international organizations and government policymakers, but less so by the politicians. In this regard, we simply responded to the actions many States are already taking in designating a minister or similar-level government official to strengthen the dialogue and relationship between diaspora communities and their countries of origin or heritage. This includes second- and third-generation diasporas.

The diaspora theme is also not new to IOM. For over six decades, we have moved millions of people to new homes – for resettlement and/or for work – and played a major role in building diasporas in immigration countries. In the early days, however, little attention was paid to how temporary workers from Southern Europe or refugees from South-East Asia would become major diaspora members, and the migrants themselves were probably more intent to simply “make it” in their new home countries than on considering how their links with the places of origin could benefit development.

This has changed, as more diasporas have become secure in their new lives abroad and turned back to their countries of origin, and with more knowledge about the huge social and financial contributions they can bring to both countries. The global debate on migration and development has also matured to include diasporas in a comprehensive way, in part due to the efforts of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) since 2007.

Thus, while it may have been unthinkable to hold this kind of meeting 10 years ago, or even at the time of the first UN HLD in 2006, diasporas are now at the top of many countries’ migration and development agenda. Many of the diaspora-oriented entities represented at the DMC were only established in recent years. In many of these cases, IOM has assisted States in creating the institutions and strategies to adapt to the new realities of a transnational world.

IOM is well equipped to deal with diaspora issues in view of: (a) its long-standing experience in working with governments and migrants at both sending and receiving ends; (b) its global network of offices across the origin-host country spectrum; (c) its three-pillared strategy to “enable, engage and empower” transnational communities as agents for development; and (d) the handbook on diaspora, which it co-produced on the margins of the GFMD last year.

This first IOM high-level dialogue on diasporas was an experiment, which, by all accounts, has been successful. It has demonstrated the growing interest in diasporas by political leaders, and indeed the growing political voice of the diaspora themselves.

The richness of the debate and the outcomes of the conference reflected in this report should enable us to inform the HLD in October, and ensure that migrants and diasporas are part of the international development agenda.

IOM is indebted to all Ministers and government officials for contributing to the conference and sharing their invaluable insights and thoughts towards smarter governance of migration and diaspora issues.

I am also deeply grateful to the donor countries that made this event possible, and I am now looking at how best to ensure a suitable follow-up to this event.



**William Lacy Swing**

Director General

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

at the opening session of the

Diaspora Ministerial Conference

Geneva, 18 June 2013





# Introduction

In a world characterized by increasing mobility and interconnectedness, diasporas have assumed a new importance in the global dialogue on migration. The last century of migration has seen growth in numbers, diversity and activity diasporas in the social, cultural and political lives of their countries of origin and host countries.<sup>1</sup> In many parts of the world, diasporas are increasingly recognized as key actors not only in national, bilateral and global affairs, but also in the migration–development nexus. Their potential as “bridges” between societies and states is widely acknowledged, and the many facets of this potential have been highlighted in various international forums, from the first UN HLD in 2006 to the GFMD, among others.

At the national level, over the past decade, a growing number of countries have established government bodies with responsibility for diaspora engagement and taken measures to facilitate this engagement. These measures vary from the creation of intergovernmental and parliamentary committees to coordinate actions on both the executive and legislative fronts to the establishment of legislative and regulatory frameworks to facilitate diaspora engagement and programmes that target diasporas as development actors. Among these countries, more than 30 have established ministries in charge of policies relevant to their diasporas.

Taking stock of these initiatives, IOM decided to reshape its 2013 International Dialogue on Migration into the first-ever global conference of ministers and high-level officials in charge of diaspora policies. The Diaspora Ministerial Conference on Diasporas and Development: Bridging Societies and States took place in Geneva on 18 and 19 June 2013. Its uniqueness and importance lie in the fact that it provided an international platform for sharing experiences and thoughts on diaspora engagement, policies and programmes between governments at high political levels. Fifty-five cabinet-level speakers and an audience of more than 600 participated in the event, confirming not only the increasing interest raised by diaspora but also the timeliness of this conference.

<sup>1</sup> The term *host country* is used in this report to denote the country where expatriates are residing, either temporarily, for the long term or permanently.

The timing was indeed strategic within the overall global migration and development agenda, shortly before the UN High-level Dialogue (HLD) in 2013, the follow-up to the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 2014, and the review of the Millennium Development Goals and planning of a post-2015 global development agenda.

The conference also marked a milestone in IOM's engagement with diasporas. Since the 1970s, IOM has been facilitating the interaction between diasporas and development through such programmes as the Return of Qualified Nationals, initially implemented in Latin America, and later in Africa and Asia, and its successor, the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme, as well as through research and mapping of diaspora communities aimed at providing governments with evidence-based policy options. Drawing on this long-standing experience, IOM devised a strategic approach to diaspora development based on 3Es, namely *engage*, *enable* and *empower*. This followed the conviction that:

1. *Engaging* transnational communities in development necessarily relies on a sound knowledge of diasporas and their organizations, as well as their willingness to participate in development initiatives and the means to reach out to and communicate with them. Knowledge about diasporas is not sufficient to foster collaboration; the foundation of effective engagement strategies is trust-building.
2. The engagement of diasporas requires an *enabling* environment. Diaspora members spontaneously develop networks and transfer resources and knowledge back and forth. However, in order to develop their full potential, policies related to integration, social protection, citizenship, right to vote, and also to return and the possibility to build partnerships between countries of origin and destination, are essential in facilitating engagement.
3. Diaspora members who wish to engage in development greatly benefit from programmes aimed at *empowering* them, by facilitating the conditions that allow communities and individuals to strengthen their links and utilize the resources generated through human mobility to empower themselves, to decide about their own priorities and to contribute to their own well-being.

The conference offered a unique opportunity to challenge and test this strategy with the experiences of the highest-level champions of diasporas in government. These were shared over the course of four sessions: (a) diasporas and societies; (b) diasporas and states; (c) diasporas and development; and (d) diasporas and crisis.



The commitment of the panelists in sharing their experiences and points of view enabled the conference to be an important political event to showcase the relevance of diaspora engagement within the global policy agenda. It also offered a platform for exchanging policies, practices, issues and challenges facing governments and their partners in engaging with diasporas.

This first IOM ministerial conference on diasporas opened the way for governments and their partners to explore, in a more inclusive and holistic manner:

- the relationships between diasporas, host societies and countries of origin, and the important role played by transnational communities in linking these societies;
- the advantages of transnationalism for countries of migrant origin and destination, as well as the policies and best practices to enable diaspora engagement;
- the potential for diasporas to engage in development, as well as the policy and programmatic options to maximize this potential, and
- the potential for diaspora engagement during and after crisis situations, and the conditions to facilitate this engagement.

Many of the participants saw the conference as potentially the first in a series of such fruitful high-level dialogues, also to follow up on the recommendations put forward by the conference.

This report synthesizes the major issues and outcomes of the conference. It does not seek to be exhaustive in covering the event, but reflects the selective discussions of the panels and the key messages delivered for further consideration by IOM and the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in October 2013, as well as by any post-2015 development agenda that includes migration.

A background paper, available to participants in advance of the conference, outlines the principal concepts, definitions, policy challenges and areas of focus along IOM's three pillars of "engage, enable and empower" diasporas for development. The paper is available on the conference website. The conclusions of the discussions were presented at the end of the two-day deliberations in the form of a Secretariat's Summary, which is enclosed in this report.





# Deliberations and recommendations of the conference

The following five areas capture the main foci and outcomes of the two-day conference:

- a. Diasporas *build bridges* between societies and create transnational communities of mutual development benefit to the host and origin countries.
- b. *States can engage, enable and empower* diasporas for development purposes through appropriate communication, outreach and partnership policies and actions at home and abroad.
- c. *Diaspora resources*, both financial and non-financial, can leverage family, community and national development efforts in host and origin countries, if there are incentives and mechanisms to support this.
- d. *Strategic partnerships* between states, international organizations, civil society and the private sector provide a framework to engage diasporas and empower them to share and transfer their resources.
- e. Diasporas can play a critical role in *crisis situations* by applying their knowledge, experience, skills, networks and links to support and assistance both during and after the crisis.





# Chapter I.

## **Diasporas build bridges between societies and create transnational communities of mutual development benefit to the host and origin countries**

As the immense diversity and scale of human movements across borders have changed traditional notions of “migration,” people resettling in countries away from their origins or heritage have changed the face of societies. Communities the world over are today more diverse, multicultural and interlinked, in large measure because of the diasporas. For example, Cape Verde has more nationals living abroad than at home, but is also hosting ever more migrants from elsewhere; Bosnia and Herzegovina has a third of its population abroad; India has 10 million nationals working in the Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states; in Switzerland, every fourth employee has no Swiss passport; Russia has 11 million foreigners on its soil and the numbers are growing; and in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), non-nationals account for more than 80 per cent of the population.

Diasporas preserve their links to their countries of origin or heritage, and in many cases, even maintain a legal identity and a socioeconomic existence in a number of countries. This can have hugely beneficial multiplier effects for global business, trade, cultural exchange and diplomatic relations. It also challenges governments to take account of their diaspora in the national development plans and agendas.

In the words of the Luxembourg delegate, migration is the human face of globalization, and diasporas are the human links between countries. The way members of a diaspora interact with each other and with their host and origin societies, for example, through family ties, “hometown,” alumni or other associations or clubs, can establish a basis of trust and engagement for various forms of transnational cooperation. As observed in the first GFMD meetings in Brussels and Manila in 2007 and 2008, respectively, diasporas and their community networks can offer local solutions for global challenges.

Conference participants brought a wide spectrum of experience in the migration and diaspora field, ranging from countries like Morocco and the Philippines, with many decades of interaction with their diasporas, to countries like Namibia, which is in the process of drafting a migration policy to take account also of its diaspora; or the Congo, which has a strategic framework and is looking to map the diasporas and encourage their return to and reinvestment in the country.

The conference sought answers to questions about how people can migrate to another country and integrate into the host society while maintaining links to the countries they came from and transfer those links to the next generation. Is there a contradiction between loyalty to the new country and developmental support to the country of origin or heritage?

## Defining “diaspora”

There is no universally accepted definition of *diaspora*. Concepts differ widely, but in general the conference participants were guided by the broad working definition proposed in the handbook *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries*, compiled by IOM and the Migration Policy Institute in 2012:

“Emigrants and their descendants, who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective (emotional) and material ties to their countries of origin.”

The African Union offered a more development-focused definition of the African diasporas: “Any person of African origin living outside Africa who wishes to contribute to the development of Africa.” Many countries simply do not operate with the concept of diaspora. France, in a recent Paris meeting on diasporas, expressed its preference for the term “national communities residing abroad.”<sup>1</sup> Australia has no official diaspora policy but includes non-citizens, immigrants, foreign-born, and second- and third-generation immigrants in its migrant settlement policies and treats them as an integral part of the host society. India observed that no country has just one diaspora, but multiple diasporas requiring different policy approaches. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas exists to support all Filipino expatriates abroad, regardless of whether they are short-term or longer-term residents.

<sup>1</sup> The Ministerial conference on national communities based abroad in Paris on 17 June 2013, was organized on the initiative of the Minister Delegate for French Nationals Abroad, Government of France.

All these angles on diaspora were considered, and added to the richness of the discussions. The conference brought to light the fact that traditional diasporas – who were once viewed as extraordinary, often disenfranchised groups that fled persecution and longed to return to their original habitat – today are seen as all those who live away from their countries of origin or heritage but continue in some form to identify with them, regardless of whether they are naturalized foreign citizens, expatriate residents, students, migrant workers, exiles or asylum-seekers.

Most, if not all, countries today are sources and hosts of such diasporas, and the numbers are increasing. For example, Cape Verde today is also host to some 20,000 immigrants from neighbouring West African countries; and France has doubled its own expatriate community abroad in recent years, mostly comprising young and tertiary-educated French nationals.

### **Diasporas can “globalize” development agendas**

The role of migrants and diasporas in society can be an important factor for development in both country of origin and host country. They create diverse societies that can be dynamic, innovative and open to global trade, investment, skills and knowledge. Given their familiarity with the host country and country of origin, they can act as facilitators, middle persons and cost savers for both.<sup>2</sup>

For the country of origin, they can open doors to global labour markets, trade, business, cultural exchange and diplomacy, and often bring home new ideas, skills and financial assets. For the host country, they can strengthen trust between different cultures, values, beliefs and political systems on which to build business, trade, and cultural and diplomatic partnerships. For the private sector, they can gain access to new markets, establish new offices, access requisite skills and conduct business across borders.

For Bangladesh, Mauritius and the Philippines, labour emigration is critical to their national development efforts. Bangladesh treats its non-resident citizens as commercially important persons in their home country. The Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina is designing diaspora-based projects to be implemented with 10 municipalities, which will mainstream migration and diasporas into local development. The Philippines has devised a flagship programme called Diaspora to Development or D2D, which offers skilled expatriates a variety of options and incentives to re-engage with development initiatives in the Philippines. The United Republic of Tanzania and other countries of origin are integrating diaspora issues into their national development agendas.

<sup>2</sup> See also the background paper for Roundtable 1.2 at the 2012 GFMD Summit meeting. Available from [http://www.gfmd.org/documents/mauritius/gfmd12\\_mauritius12\\_rt\\_1-2-background\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://www.gfmd.org/documents/mauritius/gfmd12_mauritius12_rt_1-2-background_paper_en.pdf).

For host countries such as Australia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America, among others, immigrants are not only critical for the economy, but also bridge language and cultural gaps and open the way for transnational public-private cooperation, including mutually beneficial development aid partnerships. Luxembourg is looking for ways to integrate its diaspora communities into its new policies on overseas development.

## **Diaspora networks, IT and social media**

Diasporas create their own networks and transnational communities at the familial, social, business and trade levels. For China, the Comoros, El Salvador, India, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria and many other countries, family ties are strong, and in many cases are the foundations of trust for other forms of cross-border interaction. Diasporas help penetrate foreign markets and create reliable employer-employee relations across borders. They make it possible for national and international companies to hire employees with the right language and cultural skills and save the cost of training new personnel.

Governments demonstrated a wide array of initiatives to incentivize and support diaspora networking, particularly in the context of returning to and/or investing in their countries of origin. These range from business events and fairs in the origin or host countries, to scholarships for diaspora children, marketplaces to compete for development project funding, training tools for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), matching grants for community development investments, diaspora skills and job banks, web portals and other IT support tools. These are discussed further in the following chapters.

Innovative technologies and social media have played a key role in bridging distances and changing diaspora relations with their home countries. While low-budget travel enables people today to move faster, more frequently and in many directions, the Internet and social media – with their real-time connectivity – have spawned a large and growing number of online or electronic diaspora networks that have changed the nature of migration and mobility. Enterprising diasporas can contribute their knowledge, experience and skills to the development of the country or community of origin without actually returning home. Temporary contract workers can stay abroad longer yet remain in close contact with their families.

To bridge the distance between its diaspora and their families or communities back home, the Philippine Government has a joint initiative with Microsoft, the *Tulay* or Bridge Education Program, which will train the overseas Filipino workers and their families on the basic functionalities of the computer as well as the Internet and e-mail. Primarily aimed at addressing loneliness, family separation



and in many cases broken families where there is a member working overseas, it also helps diasporas to stay in touch with each other and their communities of origin. It can also enhance the value of their work and make them more competitive in the global market.

As part of the strategic plan for its diaspora, the Cape Verde Government enables its expatriates to obtain legal documents and have them notarized online. India's recently launched Workers Resource Center in Dubai will have state-of-the-art IT to register and track complaints/grievances of the workers. Mobile banking technology offered by the private sector can also help diaspora members connect with their countries of origin and catalyse diaspora investments. Mobile banking services have found a rich market within diaspora communities from Kenya, Mexico, the United Republic of Tanzania and other countries of origin.<sup>3</sup>

## **Diasporas and national identity**

Legal status in both the host country and country of origin, such as through citizenship, enables full participation in the social and political affairs of the country granting it. When transnational communities are able to hold more than one citizenship or nationality, this can optimize their mobility and bridge-building at societal, economic and other levels. The Republic of Moldova and a number of others observed that a successful diaspora community is one that is fully integrated in the host country while remaining part of the community of its origin country. But, as Guatemala also pointed out, this is a two-way process between diasporas and the societies they are related to, with gains and entitlements but also responsibility and care accruing on both sides.

For many countries of origin, diasporas help “brand” their national identity for a range of different purposes, including tourism. Bangladesh and the Philippines, with large expatriate communities abroad, view their diasporas as “ambassadors” of goodwill for their countries of origin. Ethiopia's new Diaspora Policy launched in 2013 seeks, among others, to strengthen Ethiopian cultural values and its image abroad. The United Republic of Tanzania describes its diaspora as “smart citizens” outside the country and includes them in its national development agenda. Yemen sees its diaspora as potential messengers of peace and ambassadors for their country of origin.

Russia sees its expatriate community abroad as important promoters of the country and its culture. The Government is concerned with preserving the ethno-cultural identity of the Russian diaspora and promotes the Russian language,

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the M-Pesa-Safaricom model in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. Available from <http://www.mpesa.in/>.

culture and history among its nationals abroad, while strengthening their links to their homeland.

Cape Verde's Constitution identifies its diaspora as an integral part of the nation. Niger describes its diaspora as the country's ninth region, and seeks to promote the image of the country via artistic, sports and cultural activities with the diaspora. Sierra Leone sees its diaspora as the "fifth region" of the country, and plans to engage them as nation builders. The Lithuanian Government sees its diaspora as part of one uniting nation, able to enhance the international image and identity of the country towards better trade and business relations with the global community. But in pursuing stronger ties with its skilled and professional émigré community, Lithuania has also identified some institutional challenges that many other countries may share with them, including a lack of financial resources to service its diaspora.

### ***Dual citizenship***

Many of the governments participating in the conference have adopted or are considering dual citizenship as a means of mobilizing diasporas and their resources for both countries. Under India's Overseas Citizenship of India Scheme, persons of Indian origin who migrated and acquired the citizenship of another country (other than Pakistan and Bangladesh), are eligible for overseas citizenship, which entitles them to a multiple entry, multipurpose, life-long visa to visit India, enter universities and undertake some investment and business there. The United Republic of Tanzania sees dual citizenship as an enabler of returns to the home country, and reports that its disallowance under migration law can cause an identity crisis among successor generations.

Growing numbers of countries today also permit out-of-country voting and electoral participation by their diasporas from abroad (see the next chapter).

### ***Diasporas and nation-building***

The Eritrean Government pays homage to the contributions of its diaspora to the independence struggle and nation-building of the country. Among the estimated 7 million Armenian nationals abroad, there is a strong interest in preserving the Armenian identity. In Sierra Leone, following the end of the civil war in 2002, the Office of Diaspora Affairs in the Ministry of Political and Public Affairs was created specifically to engage the diaspora for development in the context of nation-building.

Sri Lanka, as part of its efforts towards reconciliation after 30 years of conflict, is following the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation

Commission (LLRC) and developing, with stakeholders such as civil society, a comprehensive approach to harnessing the potential of its diverse expatriate community.

A cautionary note was struck about assuming that all diasporas act autonomously and in the best interests of their countries of origin or host countries. While in general diaspora ties to the country of origin can be beneficial for development, this may not always be the case. For countries that remain conflict-affected or have recently emerged from protracted conflict, the dynamics between their diaspora and the home communities and governments are clearly more complex and require a more nuanced approach to engagement, based on an awareness of political realities on the ground.<sup>4</sup>

### **Integration and reintegration can strengthen diaspora bridges**

Social inclusion, or “integration” in the host country, can be a tool of empowerment of diasporas to enable them to better contribute to development in their home countries. While in some host countries integration is increasingly seen as an indispensable part of immigration policy, it also counter-intuitively strengthens diaspora capacities to reconnect with their countries of origin by giving them the legal security to move and live freely between countries.

Both host and origin societies can benefit from this. Switzerland confirmed that the successful integration of diasporas into the host society increases the receiving state’s ability to engage in international cooperation. The United Republic of Tanzania observed that where its expatriates were not fully included in the host society, it was difficult for them to return or otherwise invest in the development of the country. Guatemala emphasized the joint responsibility of countries of migrant origin, transit and destination in protecting and supporting migrants and diaspora, particularly in vulnerable situations such as trafficked persons, and pointed to the good cooperation with El Salvador and other Central American states in this matter.

Italy sees diasporas as a valuable social and cultural resource, and the creation of the office of Minister for Integration was intended to send a signal about the value of providing mainstream services, such as education, housing, health and employment support, to migrants in Italy. Italy called for programmes to promote cultural enrichment and combat racism in Europe, also in regard to the Roma people. Luxembourg saw the integration and inclusion of diasporas in the life of the host country as a prerequisite for constructive cooperation between

<sup>4</sup> Sri Lanka reported that many of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora have used the newfound peace in Sri Lanka to eschew extremist ideas and re-engage with their roots in the country and even to invest in Sri Lanka.

countries of migrant origin and destination, and that diasporas can assist new migrants in this process.

Instead of “integration,” Turkey preferred to advocate for diasporas’ “active participation in the academic, social, cultural, economic and financial life of the country they live in,” and highlighted the importance of language skills in the receiving and home country. Zimbabwe recognized the greater contributions to development that diasporas can bring if they have access to fundamental rights such as education and health in the host country, and it has signed agreements accordingly with countries such as South Africa and Mozambique.

For traditional countries of immigration such as Australia and Canada, migrant settlement and integration have long marked the logical end phase of an orderly immigration programme, and linguistic and cultural diversity are valued societal attributes.

### ***Australia’s multicultural model***

Australia, with 25 per cent of its population born overseas and 50 per cent either born overseas or with one parent born overseas, pursues citizenship-based multiculturalism. Full integration as a citizen with all civil and political rights accorded is the expected outcome of Australia’s permanent immigration programme. Even under its growing temporary migration programme, Australia tries to ensure that all migrants are supported, empowered and embraced as valued members of the community.

This strengths-based approach to governing diversity involves a complex set of social policies and programmes at local, state and national levels, and in partnerships with civil society. These include community support through language training, translation and interpreting services, access to and equity of government services, community project grants and many others. Favourable policies for resident return and remittances facilitate easy movement between Australia and countries of origin and heritage. To date, according to an index of social cohesion maintained by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), social cohesion has remained relatively constant.

There were two takeaway messages regarding diasporas and development from the Australian example:

1. Immigration policies that include comprehensive integration strategies as the natural outcome of migration can obviate the need for diaspora-specific policies; and

2. Sound and well-coordinated integration policies can strengthen the capacities and incentive of diasporas to contribute to the development of their host society and economy, which, in turn, can give them a solid basis to return to their countries of origin and invest in the development of their countries of origin.

The 2009 GFMD in Athens already noted that diasporas' successful return and reintegration in their countries of origin is often contingent upon successful integration in the host country. IOM also believes that there is no contradiction between sound diaspora policy and integration policies when these policies are properly designed and implemented. IOM's forthcoming *World Migration Report 2013* focuses on migrant well-being as an indicator of human development in host countries in the global North and South.<sup>5</sup> The Organization has helped many governments establish Migrant Resource (or Information) Centres (MRCs) in host and origin countries to both support diaspora integration efforts and prepare them for voluntary return and reintegration to the country of origin.<sup>6</sup>

The conference confirmed that transparent and efficient immigration programmes that include the settlement and socioeconomic integration of immigrants can both assure social stability in host communities and empower diasporas as effective development partners for their countries of origin.

### **Countries of origin can contribute to the well-being and success of their diasporas abroad**

Understanding the connection between integration in the host country and engagement with the origin country, Algeria, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines, Morocco, Uganda and other countries of origin are increasingly investing in social support programmes for their diasporas in host countries. Consular offices are the first port of call for expatriates requiring information, legal assistance, advocacy with the host government and community support. In many cases, these outposts now serve as resource centres to prepare and equip migrants for return to or investment in the country of origin.

The Mexican Government seeks to improve the quality of life of its diaspora communities through access to education, job opportunities, sports and health, and through improved community organization, before even considering the

<sup>5</sup> For more information please see <http://www.iom.int/cms/wmr2013>

<sup>6</sup> IOM reports that as of July 2013 the following countries have (or have had) MRCs in operation: Albania, Australia, *Bulgaria*, Colombia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, *Hungary*, Lebanon, Mali, *Micronesia*, the Philippines, Portugal, *Romania*, *Russian Federation*, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, *Tajikistan*, *Tunisia*, *Viet Nam* and *Zimbabwe*. (Note that IOM has assisted in the establishment and/or the administration of those MRCs in italics.)

more measurable returns they may bring to Mexico. Its programmes in the United States of America, for example, include health services offered by the Ministry of Health and arrangements with US skills training institutions for certification of Mexicans in certain job sectors. The Government and diaspora leaders have jointly created advisory councils to assist in this and give feedback on the diaspora policy. For Guatemala, a country of migrant origin, transit and destination, the protection of the rights and well-being of migrants and diasporas both within its borders and abroad is a top priority.

Algeria, in recent years, established a committee involving diaspora community members to discuss the conditions of its diaspora communities in the host societies. Chilean consulates offer legal assistance with family-related issues, and aim to conduct a census of children of Chileans living abroad in 2014. China actively encourages integration among its diaspora communities, in particular through respect for host society laws, customs and conditions, and contributions to the development of their host countries. Colombia supports its diaspora with pensions and health services abroad. El Salvador's embassy in the United States of America gives legal immigration assistance to its nationals residing and working abroad, most of whom are in the United States of America.

The Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs is finalizing a policy that protects the rights of its nationals abroad and creates a conducive environment for the diaspora to participate in the life of the host country. Nigeria has established diaspora desks in its embassies and consulates to work with diaspora committees and advocate for their rights, entitlements and well-being.

The Philippine Government supports the integration of its expatriates abroad with a large range of services through its Migrant Welfare Fund, which is funded from overseas workers' fees. Similar welfare funds are also managed by Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. India has established a fund and some workers' resource centres abroad to help its migrants in vulnerable circumstances. In Dubai, for example, the Indian Embassy has set up a one-stop Workers Resource Centre to provide information and counselling to its community in the United Arab Emirates.

At the regional level, neighbouring countries are partnering to offer mutual protection and support for migrant and diaspora communities; for example, Guatemala will host a regional seminar on migration and children in August 2013, expected to result, inter alia, in a memorandum of understanding for regional action against trafficking in persons.

## Public perceptions of diasporas

Public perceptions about diasporas – both abroad and whenever they return home – are a critical part of any comprehensive diaspora strategy. There was little direct discussion of public perceptions at the conference, but governments repeatedly confirmed that transparent, inclusive immigration and integration programmes that assured legal status and access to services, coupled with non-discriminatory laws and practices and a balanced public debate about the benefits of migration, can greatly help protect the rights and well-being of diasporas.

A positive image of diasporas within the community of origin or heritage is also critical to encouraging expatriates to return to or invest in that community. Turkey observed that the way States perceive diasporas and the policies they pursue impact on how the diasporas will contribute to the development of their home countries, and called for policies and actions to combat discrimination, racism and hate crimes that target diasporas in the receiving countries, with all necessary means. Ethiopia, Italy and Romania called for policies to combat xenophobia, racism and marginalization of migrants. Yemen also advocated for the removal of immigration restrictions, and for public acknowledgment and discussion of the value of diasporas. Egypt called for greater interregional, Euro-Arab dialogue to jointly foster legal migration beneficial for development and redress the negative image of migrants in the European media.

While individual diaspora success stories can be their own best advocate, how expatriates are labelled by their governments of origin can influence their desire to return, reintegrate and invest in their former home communities. The Philippines, for example, accords its expatriates the status of national heroes and celebrates December as the month of overseas Filipino workers in honour of their returning workers.

International organizations can be impartial expert partners in protecting migrants against negative social perceptions and behaviour. IOM's MIDA programmes for Somalia are accompanied by a major public information programme, which explains to nationals who stayed at home the rationale for such a special outreach programme and the benefits that will accrue to them through the skills and talents that their returning colleagues bring with them. Guinea is also working with IOM to ensure that migrants receive greater security and protection of their rights in host countries.

## Outcomes and conclusions

Participants called for a new vision and new policies to deal with diasporas as bridge builders in a world of pluralistic, multicultural and transnational societies. Traditional emigration countries are now receiving their own immigrants; traditional immigration countries are experiencing growing diaspora populations abroad; non-immigration countries and regions are hosting some of the largest expatriate communities in the world; and many of the diasporas today are in the global South. All are trying to understand diaspora dynamics and incorporate them into national development planning.

Changing approaches to migrants and diasporas in society is also a global responsibility. A positive global vision of migration and its diasporas can encourage appropriate national and bilateral policies to protect communities against discrimination, xenophobia or abuse, as these directly affect the ability or even desire of expatriates to maintain ties with origin countries and invest in their development.

Regional entities such as the African Union or the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), interregional dialogue frameworks such as between Europe and the Mediterranean countries (e.g. the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership [EUROMED]), and global dialogues such as the GFMD<sup>7</sup> can prompt national actions to deal with the negative treatment of migrants. Regional consultative processes (RCPs) on migration can also foster productive linkages between migration and development and enhance the protection of human rights of migrants.<sup>8</sup>

### Participants urged that IOM and the Second UN HLD on Migration and Development:

1. *Give recognition to the important role diasporas can play in closing distances between societies, cultures and economies (while exercising caution about painting all diasporas with the same brush, and exclusively as a positive force).*
2. *Encourage migrant integration programmes in host countries that effectively protect and empower diasporas, for instance, through equal access to mainstream social services, anti-discrimination laws and practices, and transparent public debate about the benefits of migration.*

<sup>7</sup> See in particular the Reports of Proceedings for the GFMD 2011 and 2012 summit meetings, which focused on the role of diaspora in fostering transnational business, trade, entrepreneurship and private sector growth. Available from [www.gfmd.org/en/](http://www.gfmd.org/en/).

<sup>8</sup> See the Chair's summary of the 4th Global RCP meeting in Peru, 2013. Available from [www.iom.int/cms/2013-global-rcp-meeting](http://www.iom.int/cms/2013-global-rcp-meeting).



3. *Encourage effective reintegration policies that facilitate the voluntary return – physical or virtual – of diasporas to their countries of origin or heritage.*
4. *Develop a compendium of good practices as an outcome of the conference (for IOM).*
5. *Ensure that diasporas are included in the post-2015 development agenda as potential enablers for development.*





## Chapter 2.

### **States can *engage, enable and empower* diasporas for development purposes through communication, outreach and partnership policies and actions**

States have a primary responsibility to protect, support and enable migrants and diasporas – both as countries of origin and host countries. But since there are limits on what one State can do within another State's sovereign territory, this burden of care has to be a joint governance effort. Studies show a wide range of policies and programmes to engage diasporas for development, most of them unilateral in nature and very few based on complementary or joint approaches between governments and communities.

Many state initiatives to support diasporas fall within the category of immigration, settlement or integration policy, and include, for example, transparent migrant entry policies, flexible visa arrangements, expedited integration and reintegration, and dual citizenship. Many fall into other policy and regulatory categories, such as banking, tax, customs, foreign investment and ownership. Some of the most inspirational strategies by governments, in collaboration with diaspora communities, private sector, NGOs and international organizations, fall into the broader, less regulated category of communication and outreach, covering a vast array of “enabling” initiatives from diaspora trade and investment fairs to consular services and advocacy abroad, and support to families back home.

Given the diversity of diasporas, there is no single global approach but a multitude of possibilities to engage them. Governments repeatedly affirmed IOM's three-pillared strategic approach to “engage, enable and empower” diasporas, both as a motto for the conference and a framework for identifying policy and programme options to strengthen diaspora participation in development processes.

Sri Lanka also proposed the addition of a fourth *E* to IOM's 3*E* strategy, namely to “educate” diasporas, particularly about realities in their country of origin, so that

they are not victims of exaggerated or distorted perceptions if and when they choose to return to or invest in the country.

## **Knowing the diasporas and reaching out to them**

Conference participants agreed that understanding who and where the diasporas are, their role in society, their needs, and their potential to contribute to development in host and origin societies should be the first step in devising a policy to engage them. Systematic information and data were needed to inform smart communication and outreach strategies; and these were missing in many countries. Romania called for policies to be based on facts not myths about migration and the diaspora. El Salvador, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Mexico and others emphasized that policies should put human development before economic development.

Indeed, information and data were needed by all players on the diaspora trajectory: diasporas seeking work, investment, business and cultural or simply recreational return opportunities; companies seeking to match the right skills to available jobs; and governments hoping to attract diaspora resources to enhance national development efforts. But systematic data collection, dissemination and utilization require political commitment and resources, which, for many countries, posed serious challenges. Involving the diaspora, the private sector and international expert agencies such as IOM, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others could help share the burden.

A range of mechanisms already exists to collect and disseminate diaspora-related data, such as diaspora surveys and censuses; mapping of diasporas and their skills; and inventories of diaspora skills, experiences and interests. A growing number of web-based portals and capacity-enhancing tools offered information, guidance and instruction on issues such as how to start up transnational SMEs.

Guinea has created a social and professional data bank and established a diaspora network across 110 countries and 50 states in the United States of America, and is conducting a census of Guineans abroad. Kenya is creating a database of Kenyans abroad, a diaspora skills inventory, and other innovative web-based means to communicate with its workers in other countries. Zimbabwe has created a Human Capital website to attract its diaspora to job opportunities back home. IOM has worked with Angola, Ethiopia, Guyana, Mali, Moldova, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, as well as with Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America as host countries, on mapping respective diasporas. Namibia has mapped its diaspora communities with a view to assessing how they could help fill labour needs back home. For Sierra Leone, such mapping will help fill jobs in the public health sector critical for its post-war reconstruction.

With more than 10 million expatriates abroad, the Philippine Government this year is setting up a one-stop online portal for diaspora engagement (*BaLinkBayan*), as announced at the GFMD summit in Mauritius in 2012. It will offer information on investments, businesses, products, philanthropic activities, and volunteer work especially in the medical field, as recommended by respective agencies in the country's towns, cities and provinces. Tunisia also plans to launch a consolidated online portal for Tunisians abroad, which combines various services for its diaspora.

Many countries hold diaspora conventions and fairs in host and origin countries to exchange ideas and foster partnerships among diasporas, government, private sector, civil society and international agencies. Malta has commenced preparations for its 4th World Convention of the Maltese Living Abroad in 2015. The Russian Federation has held four international congresses of its diaspora to inform and attract them back to the Russian Federation.

In 2013, the Philippine Government and its diaspora council convened the 2nd Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora, engaging Filipino community leaders from all over the world, representatives from the Philippine government agencies, Philippine-based civil society organizations and academia.

Sri Lanka engages its young professionals abroad through initiatives like *What's Next!*, an independent forum for post-graduates and professionals of Sri Lankan origin residing in France and interested in promoting sustainable peace in Sri Lanka through intellectual exchange and multicultural dialogue.

IOM works with governments, diaspora groups, NGOs, the private sector and other international organizations at all points in the migration cycle. Through information campaigns and MRCs in host and origin countries, IOM reinforces the outreach efforts of governments, civil society and private sector. India, with a huge expatriate population in the GCC and Middle East region, has set up multiple workers' resource centres to provide its nationals with information and help should they need it.

## **Creating the right institutional structures to engage diasporas**

Connecting with diasporas, and leveraging their various resources for development, involves a multitude of government departments and other partners, and the interest and commitment of government at the highest levels to move such a cross-cutting agenda forward. A governmental ministry or entity dedicated to diaspora issues can facilitate the necessary interministerial coordination and ensure that these communities abroad are included in any national development plan.

There are today more than 30 countries with ministries or cabinet-level offices focused on diasporas, most of which were present at the conference. The Philippines' Commission on Filipinos Overseas, one of the longest-standing diaspora entities, was established some 33 years ago by presidential decree to provide policy advice directly to the president on how to maintain and strengthen links with the diaspora. Morocco's Hassan II Foundation for Non-Resident Moroccans was established in 1990 under King Hassan II to provide support for non-residents while in Morocco and promote cooperation with them on economic, social and cultural affairs. In 1996, Algeria set up a number of government structures to deal with its overseas communities.

Many of the dedicated ministries and national diaspora policies are recent phenomena or still in the making: Algeria's General Directorate for the National Community Abroad was created in 2012, and is part of Algeria's national action plan for its diaspora; Cape Verde's Minister of Communities was set up in 2010; the Directorate for Maltese Living Abroad was established in 2012; Ethiopia's national policy on its diaspora was endorsed by the House of People's Representatives in 2012 and launched in 2013; Kenya is finalizing a national diaspora policy to engage with its expatriates; and Sierra Leone is aiming for a diaspora migration policy underpinned by a full legal instrument to define the diasporas' role in the broader post-war reconstruction development efforts. In its new activism on diasporas, the Congo, jointly with IOM, has drawn up a national strategic framework to engage its diaspora. The Philippine Government has mainstreamed migration in the Philippine Development Plan 2011–2016, which it ascribes directly to the highest-level mentoring by the president.

### ***Embassies and consulates at the front line***

With the increasing importance of diasporas, the role of embassies and consular offices is changing for many countries. They are often the first port of call for expatriates in need and the first line of action for establishing trust between governments and their diaspora communities. Many consulates today offer free legal assistance, welfare support, passport assistance and other services to their nationals. But increasingly, they also organize cultural, business and trade events, and consultations with and among expatriate groups; provide information, guidance and training on integration and reintegration issues; and advocate with host governments for favourable immigration and diaspora policies. Governments like Guatemala, Hungary and Uruguay are making concerted efforts to simplify and expedite administrative procedures and enhance their outreach to diasporas abroad.

Philippine embassies and consulates have assisted their diaspora members for many decades now, including consultations through dedicated welfare centres

in strategic locations. In 2012, the Filipino communities in Europe worked with their embassy in Italy and Europe-based multilateral organizations to organize the first-ever global conference on the Filipino diaspora in Europe titled “Diaspora to Dialogue”. As a result of this, some of the diaspora members formed the European Network of Filipinos in the Diaspora, covering at least 10 European countries. This initiative will be replicated in 2014 during the Conference of Filipinos in the Diaspora in the Middle East and Africa, supported by the Philippine Embassy in the UAE.

Algeria and Morocco have, for many decades, worked actively to support and protect the interests and rights of their diasporas through their consular offices. Cape Verde’s Council of Communities was set up, among others, to improve the efficiency of consular tasks abroad in support of its diaspora. Chile offers its more than 1 million Chileans living abroad a package of public services on the ground, including free passport facilities, legal aid and a handbook on how to manage life abroad and how to access available health, education, banking and other social facilities in the host country. Guinea involves its diaspora in the national development process by strengthening its capacities, inter alia, for microfinancing ventures and transfer of capital through Government representatives abroad.

Guatemala has some 2 million expatriates in the United States of America, and in 2012 set up 132 mobile consulates, attached to its 12 consulates across the United States of America, to service the growing numbers and emerging needs of its nationals in more remote locations. The consulates of Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico also issue consular ID cards (see the Mexican “matricula consular”) that enable their large communities to bank and remit their earnings, regardless of their immigration status. Other countries, such as Ethiopia, Pakistan and Turkey, also issue special ID cards or other documentation to persons of their national origin for a variety of purposes, including investing in the country of origin.

Consular offices are also best placed to broker and support diaspora consultations, for instance through diaspora councils, and to help administer out-of-country voting among their diaspora communities. Notably, the Cape Verdean Minister of Communities had previously served as the head of the Cape Verde overseas electoral registration commission while on diplomatic posting abroad.

## **Consultative mechanisms for diasporas**

Examples brought forward by participants suggested that diaspora engagement works best if diasporas are included in the planning of diaspora policies and programmes. Some host countries like Italy, France and Switzerland support

dialogue between diasporas and their communities in their countries of origin. Many countries of origin have established diaspora councils that include diaspora members elected by their own communities, and serve as consultative vehicles for sharing ideas and inspiring joint projects and funding.

One of the oldest, most enduring diaspora councils is Mexico's Consultative Council of the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, established in 2003, which offers a meeting place for Mexican-American community leaders in the United States of America and the opportunity to advise the Government on its diaspora policies. In 2011, Malta's Parliament passed an act establishing the Council for Maltese People Living Abroad comprising representatives of Maltese communities and experts in the field of migration. Its recommendations are implemented by the Directorate for Maltese Living Abroad. Uruguay has also established consultative councils to act as representative organizations of Uruguayans abroad.

Expatriates from the Comoros have formed a commission of mixed diaspora communities to give policy advice to the Government. In the case of the Philippines, a Government summit meeting of diaspora and community leaders worldwide, held in 2011, inspired them to create their own Global Filipino Diaspora Council, the first global network of overseas Filipinos across 25 countries. The first Yemeni Communities Forum held in January 2013, and attended by Yemeni community leaders from around the world, led to the creation of the Yemeni Communities Supreme Council elected by diaspora leaders, which follows the interests and needs of Yemeni diasporas.

### **Enfranchising the diasporas: Citizenship, voting abroad, parliamentary representation**

Increasing numbers of governments today extend to their expatriates abroad the same civil and political rights as the nationals at home. They permit dual or multiple citizenship, or limited variations thereof, which can facilitate free movement, access to education, business, trade and investment opportunities between countries. Underlying the discussion on the interplay between States and diasporas was the lingering question: Is there a contradiction between loyalty to the new country and developmental support to the country of origin or heritage?

Many States have also adopted, or are considering adopting, laws that allow their citizens abroad to participate in national elections, among them, Algeria, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, France, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines.



The United Republic of Tanzania, with a small but highly educated and skilled diaspora community abroad, and an active strategy to involve them in its overall development agenda, reported that the lack of dual citizenship was a constraining factor both for successful integration in the host country and return to the origin country. The issue is under Parliamentary discussion; and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation anticipates that by early 2014 the Tanzanian diaspora will enjoy dual citizenship and be integrated into the Tanzanian national development agenda.

Turkey, with some 6 million nationals living abroad, issues a special ID known as the “Blue Card” to avoid possible loss of its diaspora members where dual citizenship is not allowed by the other country, or where persons have relinquished their Turkish citizenship and not opted for dual citizenship. This waives the requirement for work (except as a government official) and residence permits when they stay in Turkey and accords them equal rights as Turkish citizens in ownership of property. (The ID does not allow any political rights or social security and pension entitlements.) Uruguay sees the right to vote as an inalienable right of all citizens and is considering electoral reform to enfranchise its diaspora.

Some countries, such as Colombia, permit their nationals overseas to elect their own representatives to the national legislature. Algerian law gives its diaspora the same political and civil rights as citizens at home, including voting and participating in national and local elections. Eight delegates from the diaspora, to date, have sat in the major chamber of the Algerian Parliament. Cape Verde’s diaspora communities are represented in Parliament on a geographical basis. Peru is considering constitutional change to allow its diaspora to have special representation in Congress.

French expatriates have optimal political representation and support from France, including the right to vote in local and presidential elections and full-fledged Parliamentary representation. In 2014, members of the French diaspora will be able to vote for their own Parliamentary councillors for some 132 consular councils that will meet in Paris twice a year to offer their international expertise to the Government and Parliament.

Beyond national boundaries, at the summit of UNASUR<sup>9</sup> held in Peru in November 2012, South American leaders proposed to create a single South American citizenship in support of a more integrated South American region.

<sup>9</sup> UNASUR integrates the two existing customs unions in the broad South American region: the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community of Nations, including Chile, Guyana and Suriname.

## Creating an enabling environment for return and reintegration

Diaspora engagement with countries of origin or heritage is predicated on trust, opportunities, incentives and capacities. While the last of these is in part covered by the information, outreach and capacity-building strategies outlined above, the first three are indispensable for an “enabling environment” in the country of origin to attract diasporas back. Some of the biggest obstacles lie in restrictive or non-existent policies that can hinder or prevent mobility, transfer of assets, investments in business or any other entrepreneurial ventures by diaspora members.

Conference participants recognized that most of the enabling conditions can be created by the country of origin, such as a favourable business and investment environment, access to finances, lower remittance transfer costs, tax incentives, scholarships, social welfare, dual citizenship, the right to vote and/or parliamentary representation. Niger is also earmarking certain plots of land for its returning citizens, and has agreements with travel agencies to expedite travel arrangements for their returnees. Other enabling conditions rely on joint arrangements between origin and host countries, such as the portability of social welfare entitlements and recognition of skills acquired abroad.

Mauritius, the Philippines and others demonstrated how reintegration strategies are most effective when migration is an integral part of the national development strategy of the country of origin. The Philippines’ D2D programme offers Filipino expatriates options and incentives, ranging from diaspora philanthropy through cultural and educational exchanges, transfer of technology, medical missions, tourism to diaspora investment through physical or virtual returns and reintegration. Mauritius’ circular labour migration agreements are linked to the Government’s sectoral reform efforts that open up more opportunities for job or business start-ups for its returning diaspora.

Guinea has a plan of action specifically to create a conducive business environment to encourage its diaspora members to return and invest in certain sectors. Namibia has set up a multi-agency Government task force to assess the country’s skills needs, and is considering how skilled returnees could further fill some of the identified skills gaps. Peru has laid the legal foundations to address all the challenges to return and reintegration of its diaspora by promulgating the Law of Economic and Social Reintegration for the Returned Migrant in March 2013. Uganda’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs is finalizing a policy to protect the rights of its nationals when they return, to enable them to participate in national affairs.

Yemen reports that among the steps it has taken to strengthen diaspora interest in the country of origin is the launch of a satellite channel with improved media messages for its nationals abroad. Zimbabwe has launched a human capital website to advertise employment opportunities and encourage return of qualified persons. Many other such examples are given in the following chapters.

As the following chapters also demonstrate, the private sector is a major partner in these endeavours; and regional and global consultative entities such as the African Union or the GFMD can showcase them and garner broader support for them.

## **Outcomes and conclusions**

The discussion confirmed that policies on diaspora engagement are likely to be most effective when championed in government at the highest political level, for example, through a dedicated ministry or office, committee or commission attached to the head of State. This gives prominence and legitimacy to diasporas, and facilitates a “whole of government” approach to an issue that touches many areas of policy. And, as the Philippines illustrated, it ensures that diaspora are factored into the larger migration and development discourse, and accounted for in national development agendas.

The discussion also demonstrated that full legal status and participation in the country where expatriates reside and enfranchisement by the country of origin may be the most effective forms of outreach to diasporas and encouragement to engage in the development of both countries. These rights and entitlements are also the basis for protecting the well-being of migrants and diasporas across borders, in turn empowering and motivating them to contribute to the development of their origin and host societies.

Working with the private and civil society sectors to establish enabling conditions for diaspora return and/or investments can provide the incentives for diaspora engagement; and innovative communication strategies can inform, guide, educate, connect and galvanize diasporas into action.

There was a strong call for more research on policies and laws that may inhibit diaspora mobility and negatively affect the competitiveness of countries in the global labour market (such as local content policies).

**Participants urged that IOM and the Second UN HLD on Migration and Development:**

- 1. Encourage governments to champion and engage their diasporas at the highest political levels.*
- 2. Encourage countries of origin to strengthen their embassies and consulates, including through training, to provide outreach and services to diaspora communities.*
- 3. Build the capacities of governments, diasporas and their partners to create databases, skills banks and other online tools to inform and mobilize diasporas for development.*
- 4. Foster coherence of migration and diaspora policies with labour market planning, to create the conditions that attract diasporas back to their countries of origin.*
- 5. Ensure that IOM makes the Diaspora Ministerial Conference a regular event/tradition.*



## Chapter 3.

### ***Diaspora resources, both financial and non-financial, can leverage family, community and national development efforts in host and origin countries***

The financial and non-financial contributions of diasporas to family, community and national development at home and abroad are increasingly well understood and documented. The conference focused more on the value of diaspora skills, expertise and investments in sustainable development than on remittances. Participants discussed how to leverage these contributions in ways that firstly meet human development needs and only secondarily enhance the material outcomes for societies and economies. This includes how to ensure that diaspora remittances, investments, philanthropic capital, skills, knowledge and ideas may be channeled towards sustainable development initiatives while diaspora members and their families grow personally. There are no simple or single formulae, and each country needs to find its own right mix of policies, incentives and tools.

#### **Easing remittances and other financial transfers**

Remittances are the best-studied and most measurable contribution that diasporas can bring to development, although most governments agree that they are private resources, to be protected from undue state or other interference. Participants reported huge benefits from remittances: in India, the largest recipient of recorded remittances, with some USD 70 billion received in 2012, remittances help people acquire decent housing, health care and social care; for countries like Lesotho, Liberia, Moldova and Somalia, remittances can account for more than 20 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Remittances can boost investments, business and trade; reduce poverty and improve well-being, at least at the household level; and fill a need during and after crises. In Cape Verde, where remittances account for some 10 per cent of the national GDP, they help with job creation in sectors like construction and

tourism. However, remittances can also have negative effects, such as rising property prices and local inflation.

Participating governments agreed that more work was needed to reduce the costs of remittances, which in some countries and regions still remained high. For example, Uganda's central bank was working on reducing the costs of remittances, which had been as high as 10 per cent. While not discussed extensively, mobile banking offered a way for migrants and diasporas to transfer funds quickly, securely and at no or low cost to communities receiving them. Mobile remittance platforms have been established in countries like Georgia, Kenya, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania (e.g. the M-PESA service set up by mobile network operators in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania). The success of these schemes depended on the appropriate regulatory environment and cooperation of banks, microfinance institutions, international organizations and others.

Egypt, India and other countries allow tax-free foreign currency bank accounts for their diasporas, so that their transferred savings can grow cost-free in the country of origin. In Ethiopia, expatriates abroad can use their foreign currency accounts as collateral in local currency to facilitate the purchase of government bonds. Niger is laying the foundations for a diaspora bank, and has set up special interest groups to reach out to its expatriates. Yemen has established an expatriates' bank with contributions from diaspora businesspersons.

Websites with transparent data on costs and options also help migrants and diasporas make informed and less costly remittance decisions. In Central America and the Dominican Republic, there is an online tool that compares providers, costs and exchange rates for remittance transfers; and it also provides free information on the costs of sending money from the United States of America to Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Italy also has a website that provides comparative information on the costs of sending remittances.<sup>10</sup> The next challenge was how to direct remittances towards projects for sustainable development that involved diasporas in constructive public-private partnerships, and without undue state interference.

Governments recognized the efforts of international organizations such as the World Bank, IOM and UNDP in recording and comparing costs, and bringing international pressure to bear on money-transfer organizations to lower remittance costs and build capacities for better remittance management.<sup>11</sup> Joint

<sup>10</sup> See [www.mandasoldiacasa.it](http://www.mandasoldiacasa.it).

<sup>11</sup> For example, see the African Institute for Remittances (AIR) joint project involving the World Bank, the European Commission, the African Development Bank, IOM and the African Union. Available from <http://pages.au.int/remittance/about>.

initiatives involving such organizations with regional banks and other funding agencies can support ministries of finance, banks and other financial and non-financial institutions across regions such as Africa to offer the right low-cost deals in many countries. Multi-stakeholder consultative forums and policy-advising councils, such as the Philippines' Remittance for Development Council, can also advise on policies to further reduce remittance fees, and encourage remittance-related studies and research.

## **Skills mobility and social remittances**

In contrast to many global discussions around the financial contributions of diaspora remittances, the conference focused most attention on skilled diasporas and social remittances. Many conference participants confirmed that smart migration and diaspora policies were linked to labour mobility planning towards better development outcomes. Circulation of skills, particularly when expedited and governed by circular migration agreements, has helped local and global economies to be more flexible, competitive and connected.

Sweden reported that in a globalized labour market, access to the right skills was essential for its companies to remain competitive. Insufficient supply in the national labour market meant that companies either needed to contract or employ people from abroad or reduce, close, relocate or refrain from expanding their operations. The decision about where to locate a company thus depended both on locally available competence and the ease and speed with which migration procedures could facilitate supplementary hiring of personnel from the global labour pool, including diasporas.

El Salvador and Honduras emphasized the importance of strengthening skills for increased competitiveness and sustainable development over simply relying on workers' remittances, which can have mixed outcomes for development. Namibia is considering the return of its own skilled diaspora in lieu of other foreign skilled personnel, and to complement the skills training of its local youth and ensure adequate national skills in critical sectors. Zimbabwe reports that its Human Capital website, set up to attract back its qualified diaspora, has recorded over 150 Ph.D. holders, and over 40 per cent have already been employed by local universities.

The Sri Lankan Government is actively promoting professional mobility and brain circulation, including the return of its diaspora to work and invest in the country, through public and private sector job creation schemes and a web portal with comprehensive information to link users with key industry bodies in Sri Lanka. A worldwide network is being built to create awareness of the site and its services among educated professionals, mainly Sri Lankans abroad.

IOM's MIDA programme for temporary or virtual returns of qualified persons offers a multilateral approach and framework for the voluntary return – temporary, permanent or virtual – of diaspora talent.<sup>12</sup> Evaluations show that MIDA has been most successful in returning professionals in the health, education and rural sectors. In Ghana, more than 8,000 medical staff have benefited from MIDA. In the Great Lakes region, more than 150 institutions have benefited from capacity-building initiatives in over 400 temporary expert missions by diaspora members under MIDA. To address the shortage of professionals and teachers, Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health has worked with IOM to have migrant doctors and teachers return to hospitals, the university, the university medical school and training institutes in the country. The Zimbabwean Government reports that the short-term return of teachers has improved the quality of education in the country.

MIDA has also been useful in establishing some common practices and resource materials such as skills banks for origin and host countries, and mainstreaming migration issues in national development planning.

### ***Removing policy obstacles to talent mobility and return of skilled diaspora members***

An interactive panel on the margins of the conference, involving the Mauritian Government, the private sector and the World Economic Forum (WEF), examined how some national policies to protect local labour markets and economies can harm efforts at mobilizing global talent to meet skills shortages and strengthen national competitiveness. It looked at local content policies enacted by several resource-rich developing countries to guide or regulate the behaviour of international firms licensed to exploit natural resources and to favour local workers to maximize the local benefits from these activities.

As demonstrated by some examples in Canada and Mongolia, international firms unable to hire local talent may be constrained in hiring internationally by restrictive local content policies. This can lead to skills-jobs mismatches, market distortions and declining labour productivity, with possible spillover to other sectors employing locals, such as mining, transportation and manufacturing.

One solution was to be more strategic in short- and long-term labour market planning to diversify policy more. This could also enable short-term, project-

<sup>12</sup> IOM's MIDA programme, launched more than a decade ago (2001), and endorsed by the Organization for the African Union, has involved countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Zimbabwe. Available from [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&products\\_id=536](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=536).



based jobs, such as in the mining sector, to be filled by appropriate talent from the diasporas, and longer-term jobs in the enduring sectors, such as transport, manufacturing and services, to be filled by local talent. Sectors are, in any case, interlinked, and filling long-term jobs with talent from abroad can, at the same time, leverage the short-term job sectors.

WEF thus encouraged States to discuss diasporas in the broader context of “talent mobility,” or the ability of skilled individuals or jobs to cross borders. Research by WEF shows how by 2020 all countries will be affected by talent shortages, both in the global North and South. WEF surveys showed that the less brain drain, the more competitive a country can be. One option in a mobile global labour market was for governments to align their policies with broader efforts to attract the return of skilled diaspora members.

More research was needed on local content policies linked to measures of competitiveness, so that countries could position themselves optimally in global markets.

Mauritius also urged the removal of obstacles to global labour mobility for the benefit of all countries. As a first step, politicians and researchers, academics and experts on migration and diasporas needed to understand each other and collaborate jointly on diaspora solutions. Devising comprehensive, durable joint solutions among ministers, diasporas and the private sector was key to achieving policy coherence and ensuring that migration (and diasporas as part of that) is mainstreamed in development planning. Cooperative regional approaches, such as across the African continent, could help meet the supply-side local content challenges of individual countries.

## **Investment and business**

Most governments were keen to strengthen the potential of expatriates to make investments, start up businesses and help generate employment in their countries of origin or heritage. The challenge was to put in place instruments that could attract more investments. Banks, credit agencies, microfinance institutions and international organizations such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Bank, UNDP and IOM offered crucial financial and technical support in this endeavour.

Bangladesh treats expatriates that remit USD 150,000 or more, or import goods worth USD 500,000, as “commercially important persons” for the country. The Investment Corporation of Bangladesh is promoting a Bangladesh fund to mobilize diaspora wealth for development; and the newly established Expatriates Welfare Bank offers incentives for diaspora-based private sector initiatives.

Cape Verde has tax incentives for SME start-ups, purchase of homes and import of goods; and it also believes that diaspora contributions could be enhanced through technical assistance on investment and business.

Ethiopia's new national diaspora policy aims to engage its diaspora more in investment, trade and tourism; and the Government issues an ID card granting foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin the right to participate as domestic investors. Attractive opportunities are offered, for example, in the housing sector, and investments are permitted either through 100 per cent equity ownership or joint ventures. The last 10 years have seen some 3,000 investment projects worth approximately USD 1.2 billion.

Non-resident Indians and persons of Indian origin may also invest and conduct business with India, within certain limits. Malawi is seeking to increase the number of expatriates transferring their skills, making financial contributions, and investing in businesses in Malawi in partnership with the Government and the private sector. Peru has embedded in the newly enacted Law of Economic and Social Reintegration for the Returned Migrant incentives such as tax exemptions, scholarships and other social benefits to attract its diaspora to return and invest in the home country. Tunisia sees the importance of investment and provides a legal framework for its banks abroad, also to reduce the costs of remittances.

The Philippines' multi-stakeholder project, Building a Future Back Home, aims at harnessing remittances for job-creation investments in cooperatives with rural banks, microfinance institutions and social enterprises. Sierra Leone's Ministry of Political and Public Affairs has set up project DENI-SL (Direct Expatriate Nationals Investment in Sierra Leone) to mobilize SME establishment by members of the diaspora in strategically targeted areas and projects around the country.

To raise awareness from the country of origin end, Sri Lanka has commenced a process to hold Diaspora Investor Forums specifically to support post-conflict development efforts. Sri Lanka hopes to guide those working abroad towards securities instruments such as equities and bonds, and provide information about investment opportunities and economic growth prospects in Sri Lanka via a web portal, so that members of its diaspora can both invest and help attract other investors. Georgia plans to create a database of potential investors and companies abroad. Zimbabwe, seeking diaspora investments at a time of economic recession and unemployment, has held investment road shows in Botswana and South Africa, and is planning similar outreach campaigns in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In Uganda, the central bank has conducted a feasibility study on longer-term investments, such as in infrastructure; and the Government has launched a

compendium of investment opportunities for the diaspora and offered incentives to encourage them to return and invest in strategic sectors. Guinea's Plan of Action on Migration, 2011–2015, includes diaspora-oriented projects to create SME opportunities through micro-investment projects in villages, with the assistance of 5,000 young volunteers, to create jobs and step up local productivity around the country. It will work with a diaspora databank and network in major host countries like the United States of America to facilitate transfer of funds and encourage voluntary returns and the creation of SMEs and tourism.

At the Global African Diaspora Summit meeting in South Africa in 2012, governments expressed their commitment to establish the frameworks and structures to attract back African talent for the continent's development and growth. Angola reinforced the need to implement the recommendations of the summit, in particular to create the Diaspora Investment Fund and organize the African Diaspora Summit every three years, especially since many of the African diaspora communities are already in Africa.<sup>13</sup> Local banks in many countries of origin, such as Morocco, are today increasingly offering their own mortgage products for diaspora members and their families willing to return to and/or invest in their countries of origin. The Senegalese Government has also introduced an investment fund for its citizens abroad.

Sierra Leone and Eritrea brought to attention the fact that policies and regulations in some host countries can hamper the diaspora-focused efforts at nation-building of origin countries. In some cases, these can arise from concerns about politically motivated remittances. Sierra Leone specifically raised the example of security and exchange regulations in some host countries that make it difficult for countries of origin to create diaspora funds for diaspora-driven investment. These issues required further open discussion and clarification among States.

## **Grant funding and matching grants**

A recurrent theme at the conference was funding and how governments, the private sector, civil society, international organizations and diasporas can work together on joint development projects and funding for such projects. Matching grants were a well-tried technique that had many facets and varied success. Among these is the celebrated Mexican *Tres por Uno* programme, where federal, state and municipal governments match every dollar invested by diaspora hometown associations in a concrete development project. Also, Kenya, which is making a historic constitutional transition to a two-tier (national-county) system of government, sees a role for innovative grant funding partnerships to attract diaspora investment in local development projects.

<sup>13</sup> Innovative financing mechanisms such as diaspora bonds or infrastructure project bonds have been considered in discussions with the banking sector, also under the lead of the African Development Bank (see the workshop on infrastructure and diaspora bonds in Africa during the AfDB's annual meetings in Morocco in May 2013).

The Moroccan Government has recently established MDM INVEST, a matching-fund scheme with banks for diaspora investment projects in Morocco, whereby a personal diaspora investment of up to 25 per cent of the project cost attracts matched funding of 10 per cent by the Government and up to 65 per cent credit by a bank. Other incentives include the extension of the fund guarantee to investing diaspora members on the same conditions as Moroccan residents.

Countries with major diaspora populations such as France, Germany and the United States of America have created tools, platforms and global marketplace competitions to strengthen the capacities of diasporas to invest in SMEs and other entrepreneurial ventures in their countries of origin. (For example, see the African Diaspora Marketplace, where United States of America-based entrepreneurs are awarded matching grants to fund innovative business plans and promote economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa.)

Global marketplaces for diaspora groups to compete for funds (mostly matching) for development-oriented SMEs in high development-impact sectors were seen as an effective way to bring together diaspora entrepreneurs, development agencies, funding entities, NGOs and the private sector. These have been fostered by the World Bank (through the Development Marketplace for the African Diaspora in Europe) and by governments such as the United States of America (through the African Diaspora Marketplace) as partnerships among development agencies, the private sector (e.g. Western Union), diaspora communities and other expert agencies.

It was suggested that the EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (EC-UN JMDI) could support the efforts of governments like Kenya to engage their diasporas in partnerships on community development projects. Kenya suggested that permanent grant funding schemes for diaspora and migrant organizations be placed on the agenda of the 2013 HLD, so that States deliberate on it at the highest level.

## **Migration, diasporas and the youth**

Children and the youth featured repeatedly in the conference, both in the context of expatriates abroad and families in the country of origin. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that many of its 1.7 million nationals (including second- and third-generation) working and studying abroad are young and educated, with enormous potential resources for supporting the growth of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Chile plans to extend its on-the-ground services for expatriates to the children of Chileans living abroad.

Romania called on conference participants to ensure that diaspora policies take account of the vulnerability of children left behind by migrants. Sri Lanka has made efforts to engage young professionals in its diaspora through initiatives such as *What's Next!*, an independent forum of post-graduates and young professionals of Sri Lankan origin residing in France.

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas is reaching out to its second and third generations of overseas Filipinos through its Youth Leaders in the Diaspora (YouLeaD) program, for example, through study tours of the various regions of the country to re-introduce them to the culture, history and heritage of their homeland. The commission has also embarked on youth-to-youth online peer counselling as an extension of the pre-departure orientation programme for young Filipino emigrants. It has also partnered with the Land Bank of the Philippines, which has commenced a children's savings programme for those abroad and those who stayed behind.

Namibia is seeking to pursue a human resource planning and development agenda that combines skills training of its local youth with the return of skilled Namibian emigrants, to ensure a balanced national labour force.

## Using existing platforms and tools

The conference brought to light the fact that a large number of platforms and tools already exist to provide information, guidance, tools and recommendations for further action, including, in some cases, the frameworks and funding to take the action forward. In addition to IOM's IDM series (which included this conference), the following examples were showcased:

- **Global African Diaspora Summit** (South Africa, May 2012), the first-ever African diaspora summit to bring prominent Africans abroad into contact with African leaders to discuss ways of harnessing their expertise for development on the continent.
- **EC-UN JMDI**, set up in 2008 to provide grant funding to diaspora and migrant organizations working on development projects in 16 countries of origin and heritage, in partnership with civil society and local authorities.
- **GFMD**, the largest multilateral forum of its kind, which since 2007 has dealt with diaspora issues, including the summit meeting in Mauritius in 2012, where a government Roundtable and a Common Space panel were dedicated to diaspora and development issues.
- The IOM/MPI handbook, *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries* (2012).

- **Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD)**, a multidisciplinary project started in 2012 by the World Bank to establish a global platform to generate knowledge on migration and development, and a menu of peer-reviewed policy choices.

## Outcomes and conclusions

As observed by Moldova, many of the initiatives exhibited in the conference as good practices have not yet been assessed for their impact and policy effectiveness. While larger, multi-country, donor-reliant projects such as MIDA (or the USAID-supported Global Diaspora Forum) have been evaluated and revised accordingly over time, many of the national or local web-based information and training platforms, skills banks, diaspora databases and incentives to invest diaspora resources had not yet been thus reviewed. This needed to be done, with the support of expert international organizations.

Also, to avoid duplication of effort, participants repeatedly suggested that existing information, platforms, tools and facilities should be used more optimally before new ones were devised.

Embedding migration in national development plans can both clarify the connections between diasporas and development, and assure certain implementation. For example, the Philippines' new one-stop online portal for diaspora engagement aims at directing diaspora interests and investments towards locations in the Philippines where the greatest development needs existed. In Zimbabwe, the diaspora investment promotion campaign abroad is being led by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion.

Regional entities such as the African Union or UNASUR, or RCPs can be significant players in giving legitimacy to diaspora concerns, framing cooperation and prompting national actions to include diasporas in development plans. The commitment by South American leaders at the summit of UNASUR in Peru in 2012 to create a single South American citizenship in support of a more integrated region may, in the longer term, seriously change the whole discourse on diaspora, at least at the regional level.

Interregional dialogues and events can further globalize this dynamic. An example is the first African Global Diaspora Summit meeting in South Africa in 2012, where members of the African Union, the Governments of the Caribbean and Latin America, and representatives of the African Diaspora signed a formal declaration to collaborate at political, social and economic levels.

**Participants urged that IOM and the Second UN HLD on Migration and Development:**

- 1. Mainstream diasporas into national local labour market planning and situate local labour hiring policies in a more regional/global context of supply-side local content challenges.*
- 2. Analyse the impact of national and international regulations on labour force protection (e.g. "local content" policies) and global flows of investment capital on efforts to mobilize diaspora talent and their financial resources for cross-border investments.*
- 3. Continue and expand the joint transnational programme JMDI as a model for more permanent schemes of grant funding of local diaspora-based development projects.*
- 4. Better utilize existing and emerging knowledge sources and tools on diaspora, such as the IOM/MPI's Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries, the GFMD website, and the World Bank's forthcoming knowledge bank KNOMAD.*







## Chapter 4.

### ***Strategic partnerships between states, international organizations, civil society and the private sector provide a framework to engage diasporas***

Partnerships are key to unlocking the potential of diasporas for development. In the words of the Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, bilateral and multilateral collaboration and coordinated global initiatives can guarantee more sustained diaspora engagement. The Bangladesh Ambassador described partnerships as the vehicles for all forms of engagement and empowerment of diasporas.

This was a leitmotif throughout the conference. It echoed the discussion of the African Diaspora Summit in South Africa, 2012, which aimed for unified, joint approaches to engaging African diasporas, particularly within the continent. It also reinforced the message of all major studies, dialogues and policy guides on diaspora issues that alliances built on mutual trust and cooperation can bring benefits to all players – diasporas, States, civil society, international organizations and the private sector. Lastly, it reflected a shift in thinking about diasporas as sources of foreign currency and finances to diasporas as partners for development, as discussed in the 2012 GFMD in Mauritius.

In a world where human mobility is today largely driven by the migrants themselves and the private sector, States can no longer act alone. Diasporas have already established effective social, cultural and economic networks, such as through hometown associations; and states can draw mutual benefits from these by involving them in development policymaking and creating attractive climates for them to return, invest, and conduct business and trade in the origin country. In turn, diaspora members can commit their savings, remittances and/or skills to such endeavours, even while continuing to reside abroad.

Countries hosting diasporas can be part of this equation, for example, by strengthening the capacities of diaspora groups to organize themselves and participate in development projects in the origin country. International

organizations, civil society, businesses, banks, employers and third-country donors all contribute in a variety of ways to engaging, enabling and empowering diasporas. The growing number of online facilities, web portals, platforms and tools that inform and connect diasporas, practitioners and policymakers bear witness to the explosion in diaspora networking and collaboration in recent years.

## State-diaspora partnerships

Most interactions between States and diasporas do not involve formal agreements, but rather represent forms of cooperation and collaboration based on trust, commitment and expectations of mutual benefit. These can range from galvanizing diaspora communities around an issue of national concern to incentive-based schemes to match-fund small, local community projects, or at the macro level to offer diaspora bonds that may be channeled into infrastructural development. Involving expatriates in development planning can be a diaspora-cohering strategy; for example, Ethiopia consulted some 15,000 of its expatriates in 25 cities around the world on its new national Diaspora Policy launched this year.

Among the most visible state-diaspora partnership frameworks are the diaspora councils or committees, where self-elected diaspora community representatives work with government officials of the origin country in a structured dialogue. These forums can reach agreement on further partnerships, incentives, co-funding arrangements, and how to engage the host country and the private sector as partners. For example, the Philippines' 2nd Global Summit of Filipinos in the Diaspora in 2012 was co-organized by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the diaspora council.

Actual partnerships on the ground include matching grant schemes such as Mexico's *Tres por Uno* or Morocco's MDM INVEST schemes mentioned earlier. There are a number of variations of this model today in Mexico and other countries. The Philippines' savings programme for children and the youth at home and abroad offers an opportunity for parents, siblings or guardians to match their dependants' savings towards their future human development. The global diaspora marketplace schemes designed by, for example, the World Bank, the European Union (EU) or individual country development agencies (e.g. the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]), have also enabled diaspora groups to compete for matched funding of community development projects.

While there were not many state development agencies present at the conference, development and technical cooperation agencies in some major countries hosting diasporas, such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United

Kingdom and the United States of America, are increasingly strengthening the capacity of diasporas and their counterpart communities in countries of origin to partner with the private sector on SMEs and other local development projects. Their methods can range from web-based capacity-building tools for diasporas to support for loans and credit schemes in the origin country.

The NGO Committee pointed to partnerships between consulates and their expatriates as key to successful diaspora engagement for development. Particularly in the context of crises, the NGO Committee observed that in the Philippines' 3Ps approach to assisting migrants in distress (preparedness, partnership, political will), partnership was the most critical factor. Sri Lanka relies on the partnership of Government, the private sector and academia in a multidisciplinary task force to draw up a programme of action to harness the potential of its mixed diaspora as part of its post-crisis strategy.

### **Intrastate partnerships**

Some countries have demonstrated how a whole-of-government approach based on cooperation and agreement among ministries and with other entities within and outside government can better underpin efforts to partner with diasporas, both in the country of origin and the host country. For example, the Philippines' one-stop online portal for diaspora engagement involves a unique multi-agency effort by the Commission of Filipinos Overseas and the Departments of Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Tourism and Health. Also, the savings programme for Filipino children abroad and at home is founded on a partnership between the commission and the Land Bank of the Philippines.

### **State-to-state partnerships**

The conference explored some strategic intercountry partnerships that foster "brain circulation" of qualified nationals who re-invest their skills in countries of origin. These include labour mobility and social security agreements at bilateral, regional or global level, with provisions and commitments of mutual benefit to all parties, including skills training to match jobs and labour reinsertion of returned workers. Variations of such agreements have been negotiated by Mauritius and the Philippines with a number of labour-hiring countries.

The EU's Mobility Partnerships with origin countries such as Armenia, Cape Verde, Georgia and Moldova were intended as a tool to facilitate and organize the legal and humane mobility of third-country nationals and reinforce the development outcomes of migration. They also offer a framework for skills circulation of mutual benefit to both countries. Luxembourg, a participant in the partnership with Cape Verde, is seeking to deepen its relationship with that country through

its expatriate community and to include the Cape Verdean diaspora in its new policy on development aid.

Luxembourg sees the mobility partnership as fostering circularity of workers, who can pick up new skills and return home for a period to pass the benefits of this experience on to the communities of origin. The Luxembourg Government has established links between schools for apprentices to study and even work for a time before returning home with their new knowledge. Bosnia and Herzegovina has worked with Austria on brain drain and with the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation to study its diaspora community in Switzerland and its potential to contribute to development of the country of origin.

The Congo and others called for country-of-origin partnerships with the host countries to better protect their diasporas abroad. Guatemala, El Salvador and other neighbouring countries cooperated on protecting migrants in transit and, as appropriate, returning vulnerable groups such as trafficked persons or unaccompanied minors. Yemen and others suggested fewer restrictive immigration measures and greater support for the mobility of expatriates in the interests of mutual development and global security. Sri Lanka saw a role for States hosting diasporas in assisting countries in a post-conflict/-crisis situation to ensure that their expatriates are not a hostile influence on the peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts back home.

The EU and its member States are also committed to step up support for development contributions of diasporas in the global South-South context, such as by supporting research on the role of South-South diasporas as development actors in countries of origin.

## **Partnering with communities**

The conference confirmed one of the key messages from the 2012 GFMD debate on diasporas –namely that diaspora initiatives are likely to have the most impact at the local level. The involvement and ownership of local authorities and communities are likely to achieve greater sustainability of diaspora-backed projects and their development impact. Development agencies in diaspora-hosting countries such as France, Germany and the United States of America are increasingly supporting diaspora partnerships with local communities in countries of origin. Origin countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Mexico the Philippines and others are pursuing diaspora support for small and local community projects.

The EC-UN JMDI fosters such state-diaspora-community partnerships at the local level, inter alia, by strengthening small organizations and civil society to act

as viable project partners. The JMDI has set up the *Community of Practice* web portal to encourage partnerships among civil society organizations, diaspora groups, migrant associations, local authorities and UN agencies.<sup>14</sup>

Some inter-state partnerships have also been negotiated at the local government level through twinning arrangements between expatriates' cities or municipalities of origin and the host countries. Israel testified to the importance of twinning arrangements between its municipalities and expatriate communities for building trust with the diaspora. Niger reported that it had created the conditions for twinning of cities. The oft-cited cases of Dutch municipalities twinning with local governments in source countries like Turkey, Suriname and Morocco have shown that such partnerships can help strengthen local governance. They can also be effective vehicles for jointly organizing diaspora engagement in translocal development projects.

Diaspora organizations such as hometown associations have evolved over recent years, within many diaspora communities specifically to maintain close relations and partnerships with communities in the origin country, for example, on philanthropic initiatives. These range in size, activism and complexity, but have proven in many cases – the Philippines, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mexico – to be effective collective forces in their support to communities of origin and in their advocacy with host governments.

### **Partnering with international organizations, civil society and the private sector**

The international community, civil society and the private sector all have a role to play in protecting and supporting communities abroad and facilitating the transfer of diaspora finances, skills and other resources. International organizations have global programmes for skilled diaspora members to return on a short- or long-term basis or to transfer their skills and knowledge virtually through online support. Private companies often prefer to recruit diaspora members over “non-diaspora” experts because of their commitment to the country of origin and their transnational experiences.

IOM has worked in partnership with most governments present at the conference, and their diasporas, to study, map, assist, protect, build capacities of, and return and reintegrate their diasporas. It has assisted countries like the Congo in drawing up national strategic frameworks for engaging their diasporas, and has established MRCs to better inform and empower migrants and diasporas abroad and in their countries of origin. Generally, the global network of IOM offices has

<sup>14</sup> See the *Community of Practice* website at [www.migration4development.org/](http://www.migration4development.org/).

positioned the organization well to complement the work of consulates and field missions.<sup>15</sup>

IOM's MIDA and UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programmes have both successfully engaged skilled diasporas in partnership with local institutions in critical sectors such as health, education and public administration for short-term development missions to their countries of origin.<sup>16</sup> By capitalizing on the natural advantages of shared language and tradition among the diasporas, they add a useful "home-grown" dimension to technical cooperation and help mitigate the adverse effects of brain drain. Their enduring success, however, depends on the sustained involvement of the diasporas and on the continuing commitment and efforts of States.

Protecting and supporting expatriate children and youth is also an area where governments hosting large displaced and refugee communities have partnered with other governments, international organizations (e.g. the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]) and NGOs (e.g. Save the Children) to ensure that children have access to the rights accorded them by international law, such as schooling. In Jordan, for example, where some 450,000 Syrians have taken refuge, the Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF, the EU and Germany, is providing free schooling to Syrian children.

### ***Public-private partnerships***

Many of the incentives to mobilize diasporas to return and invest in their countries of origin – such as tax reductions or waivers, reduced remittance costs, loans and/or co-funding of business start-ups, foreign currency banking, diaspora bonds and support for SMEs, and others – require the cooperation of banks, finance and credit institutions, businesses and other private sector partners.

The Philippines' innovative multi-stakeholder project, Building a Future Back Home, to harness remittances for local development, is built on a partnership between the Government's Commission on Filipinos Overseas and UNDP, Western Union Foundation and the Philippines' National Economic Development Authority. The earlier-mentioned joint initiative between the Government and Microsoft (*Tulay* or Bridge Education Program) to train overseas Filipino workers and their families on basic computer functionalities and the use of the Internet is also a public-private partnership to financially empower nationals abroad. Other platforms to incentivize diaspora investment in business start-ups and

<sup>15</sup> For example, IOM Cairo is developing, with partners from the NGO and microfinance institution sectors, a web-based platform to support Arab expatriate engagement in economic development within communities of origin.

<sup>16</sup> The MIDA-Italy programme focused on Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia and Nigeria, and generated a database of over 300 migrant associations in Italy with interest in co-development.

partnerships in countries of origin, such as USAID's African Diaspora Marketplace, also rely on the collaboration of the private sector.

Mobile remittance platforms that facilitate low- or no-cost transfers and banking between countries are mostly the initiative of the private sector, but they also rely on and help to integrate all the key players in this area – government, microfinance institutions, commercial banks and international organizations.

The Moroccan MDM INVEST fund for the diasporas is based on co-funding and fund guarantee agreements between the Government, banks and the Central Guarantee Fund. These kinds of joint initiatives are emerging in other countries and involving a range of different ministries or departments.<sup>17</sup>

## **Forums and platforms to foster diaspora partnerships**

There has been a proliferation of forums and platforms to engage diasporas in the development affairs of their origin countries over the past few years. Government participants at the conference shared a wide range of national initiatives, and those of their diasporas, and gave recognition to some key global and regional events and mechanisms.

At the national level, the Philippines' multi-stakeholder Remittance for Development Council provides a regular national consultative forum for all remittance-related stakeholders including government agencies, the Central Bank of the Philippines, other banks, migrant organizations, NGOs, academia and international organizations. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation has worked closely with IOM on setting up Diaspora Stakeholders Coordination forums, which have proven to be an important platform for sharing views and strengthening diaspora institutions in the five countries of the East African Community.

Country initiatives referenced at the conference but not elaborated on in detail include the United States of America's annual Global Diaspora Forum organized by the USAID-backed International Diaspora Engagement Alliance. In 2012, the forum brought together leaders in business, technology, investment and trade and government as well as global diaspora community leaders specifically to forge new partnerships among them.<sup>18</sup>

At the regional level, the 2012 African Diaspora Summit organized by the African Union pursued the issue of unity among diasporas, governments and the

<sup>17</sup> In the United States of America, for example, the 'Diasporas for Development Initiative is a strategic alliance among USAID, a management consultancy and outsourcing firm, and a global volunteer service agency. It is open to all US citizens or permanent residents who are members of the diaspora community.

<sup>18</sup> For further details, see [www.state.gov/s/partnerships/gdf/](http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/gdf/).

private sector within Africa and for Africa. The summit resulted in a declaration and agreed agenda of action for policymakers across the continent, which governments are now looking to implement.<sup>19</sup>

The EUROMED framework, which has traditionally discussed migration management between the Maghreb region and southern European states, offers a ready platform to link issues, such as the return of migrants and diaspora, to strategies for optimal investment opportunities. A growing number of RCPs on migration, covering most major regions of the world, are also well placed to foster closer partnerships on diaspora issues of common concern across neighbouring borders.<sup>20</sup>

At the global level, the GFMD has pursued the issue of diasporas since its beginnings in 2007, and in the past three years, has opened a common space to encourage interaction among governments, diaspora representatives, the private sector, development agencies and NGOs in countries of origin and destination. GFMD member States have urged that diasporas continue to be a central focus of the GFMD, in particular to strengthen private sector involvement and partnerships with them.

### ***Global partnerships***

The MDI exemplifies one of the most effective global partnerships on diasporas with proven practical outcomes for its programmes. A multilateral partnership involving the EU, UNDP, IOM, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it has supported a four-year, multimillion euro programme to empower local governments, diaspora groups, local communities and civil society across 16 countries.

The World Bank and other international expert organizations, in particular, the members of the Global Migration Group, are embarking on KNOMAD to support more evidence-based policymaking on migration and development, including diasporas. KNOMAD will synthesize existing knowledge and generate new knowledge on these issues; and with the financial and non-financial contributions of governments, it will identify critical issues and how to shape international and national policy in the area of migration and diaspora.

<sup>19</sup> See also the World Bank's African Diaspora Program launched in 2007, and involving the African Union, partner countries, donors, and African diaspora professional networks and hometown associations, inter alia, to strengthen multilateral cooperation on diasporas in the continent.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, an eight-country regional development organization covering the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa, has identified diasporas as important players within its regional development framework. For more information, see [www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/regional-processes-1/about-rcps.html](http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we-do/regional-processes-1/about-rcps.html).



IOM's Diaspora Ministerial Conference was the first attempt to discuss and garner high-level political support for state-diaspora cooperation and partnership across the globe. The recommendation by ministers to continue this new forum is a tribute to its success as a consensus-builder.

## Outcomes and conclusions

The main takeaway message on partnerships is that diasporas cannot be engaged, enabled and empowered without the right partners in place, including, and above all, the diasporas themselves as equal partners of government with international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Sweden called for partnership models based on mutual trust between States to be established in countries of origin and host countries.

There was also a strong and repeated call in the conference for more systematic evaluation of state-diaspora initiatives, and improved data gathering, analysis and sharing at national, regional and global levels. Multinational and multisectoral programmes such as the EC-UN JMDI, MIDA and KNOMAD all relied on partnerships and yielded important evidence on the effectiveness of diaspora partnerships on the ground. This kind of feedback was needed to inform smarter diaspora partnerships at all levels.

Participants noted that the report of the UN High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda of 30 May 2013 had omitted to include diasporas as global partners for development, and that the HLD should be called upon to redress this.

### **Participants urged that IOM and the Second UN HLD on Migration and Development:**

1. *Foster the engagement of diasporas as partners of government in shaping all aspects of diaspora strategies.*
2. *Encourage governments and international organizations to undertake rigorous evaluations of diaspora engagement strategies and foster a culture of critical reflection on this issue*
3. *Study the full complexity of relations between diasporas, countries of origin and host countries, in order to develop modalities that can better influence conflict resolution, reconciliation and development in the countries of origin in a sustainable manner.*
4. *Ensure that diasporas are included in any post-2015 development goal on global partnerships.*





## Chapter 5.

### **Diasporas can play a critical role in *crisis situations***

Participants recognized the role that diasporas can play before, during and after a crisis,<sup>21</sup> and also how diasporas and their families can be caught up and stranded by crisis situations in the host or origin country. Crises (including disasters) also result in forced migration and displacements that, over the longer term, can create diaspora communities. Select examples of all these scenarios were discussed by countries that are either experiencing a crisis or post-crisis situation, or had expatriates abroad affected by crises.

Well-engaged diasporas may help governments and communities resolve a crisis, deal with its humanitarian consequences and contribute to post-crisis recovery and rehabilitation. The transfer of diaspora skills can strengthen and build health, education, justice and other institutions in a crisis-affected country; and migrants and diaspora members can in turn mobilize other support for rehabilitation of the country of origin.

Members of a diaspora are often the first responders and the first to take investment risks; and have the potential to reinvigorate and fuel more enduring social and economic development after the crisis. For example, remittances can support recovery of families and communities in the short term, and investments in infrastructure can secure longer-term growth and development.

<sup>21</sup> The term *crisis* was used in the conference as defined in IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework, MC/2355, 15 November 2012, developed at the request of IOM Member States: "“migration crisis,” a term that describes the complex and often large-scale migration flows and mobility patterns caused by a crisis which typically involve significant vulnerabilities for individuals and affected communities and generate acute and longer-term migration management challenges. A migration crisis may be sudden or slow in onset, can have natural or man-made causes, and can take place internally or across borders.” Available from [http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/About-IOM/governing-bodies/en/council/101/MC\\_2355.pdf](http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/About-IOM/governing-bodies/en/council/101/MC_2355.pdf).

It is in the area of post-crisis reconstruction and rehabilitation that the argument for linking diasporas and development may be most compelling. Increasingly, governments, international organizations and other partners that engage diasporas in post-crisis reconstruction tend to tie their voluntary return and reintegration projects to community and sectoral development initiatives, as demonstrated in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone and other countries recovering from crises. Diasporas bring two fundamental advantages in regard to humanitarian assistance and longer-term development support: they can influence public opinion in the host country; and help sustain interest, funding and engagement in post-crisis work.

Some countries in post-crisis situations are also host to displaced persons and refugees from elsewhere. Iraq, for example, has given protection to more than 120,000 refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic while facilitating the return of its own nationals. Many countries of origin have had to manage the evacuation and return of their expatriates affected by crises in the host country, and many expatriates have been stranded by crisis in their countries of origin. Mali has recently experienced both the departure of many of its nationals and the repatriation of those caught up in war-torn Libya. Some, like Sri Lanka, have experienced complex crises, such as political unrest, natural disasters and their nationals being stranded abroad due to another country's crisis.

Governments paid tribute to the support international organizations and civil society give them in assisting displaced and diaspora communities affected by crises, supporting post-crisis rehabilitation, and mobilizing expatriates for post-crisis contributions. Cape Verde and others acknowledged the efforts of third countries that have assisted their vulnerable communities and given funding support for more sustainable initiatives. Governments hailed the frontline work of IOM, ranging from humanitarian responses to refugees fleeing armed conflict and other crises to repatriating labour migrants in distress.

In recent decades, IOM, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, Care International and other international and civil society partners have supported the reconstruction and development efforts of countries recovering from all manner of crises, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan, in many cases through diaspora-based programmes like MIDA.

Disasters were also identified by IOM's director general at the opening of the conference as one of the seven drivers of migration (alongside demography, demand, disparity, distance, digital revolution and dreams), that will increase the importance of diasporas in the years ahead. Disasters and other crises raised special migrant protection concerns such as trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, which tended to thrive in such situations.

## Mobilizing diaspora communities for post-crisis recovery

Most countries in a post-crisis phase today are looking to their diasporas for some form of support in the recovery of their countries. Among the options for mobilizing their diasporas is voluntary return, a key plank in any comprehensive post-crisis recovery and development plan, in particular for those expatriates who left most recently to escape the crisis. The following cases discussed at the conference are not exhaustive, but illustrate some of the policy choices available to policymakers.

In *Afghanistan*, since the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghan diaspora members have been influential in the formation of a democratic government. As Afghanistan moves from recovery to economic growth, mobilizing the Afghan diaspora as social and economic capital remains critically important. Skilled and professional Afghans have been returning to the country for decades, with the support of governments hosting Afghan refugees and the various voluntary return and reintegration programmes of IOM. Many of the tens of thousands of displaced Afghans who returned from over 20 countries between 2002 and 2011 received individually tailored assistance such as employment referrals, training and assistance in setting up small businesses. Many of the Afghan returnees were female experts, who received special support packages and placements in key positions for development, in ministries, government institutions and the private sector.

These programmes were designed to support the goals of the Afghan National Development Strategy, and dovetail with community development projects and capacity development in migration governance. Thus, some vulnerable members of the local community receiving large numbers of returning migrants are also benefiting from the projects. Since Afghanistan remains a major source, transit and destination for victims of trafficking, IOM and other agencies also provide victims of trafficking, especially among recent expatriate communities, with protection, rehabilitation and reintegration assistance.

In *Angola*, since the end of the war in 2002, many nationals forced to flee to nearby countries such as Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo, Namibia and Botswana have been assisted by IOM, UNHCR and other partners to return home voluntarily and contribute to the post-war rehabilitation of the country. One of the biggest challenges has been a lack of sustained funding for such programmes. The Angolan Government has complemented this immediate assistance to displaced persons with mobilization of its longer-term diaspora to come home through outreach events overseas around its peacebuilding efforts.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For example, see the third Conference of the Angolan Diaspora in the United States of America in 2013 to mark the 11th anniversary of peace in Angola.

*Iraq* has experienced large-scale domestic and cross-border displacements of its people in recent years, following the collapse of the former Iraqi regime. It has also hosted and assisted thousands of refugees, for example, from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iran (Islamic Republic of). Alongside its work with UNHCR, IOM and other organizations to address internal displacements, the newly created Ministry of Displacement and Migration encourages and facilitates the return of Iraqis to help with reconstruction of the country. In cooperation with international organizations, in particular IOM, some 300,000 families have been returned home voluntarily, and have benefited from various reintegration services, including financial grants, and assistance with job and house hunting. In neighbouring countries, Iraq assists its diaspora with allowances, replacement of official documents withdrawn by the former regime, and cultural centres and schools to help expatriates preserve their identity and links with Iraq.

The Iraqi humanitarian situation also brought to light the impact that crises in host countries can have on expatriate communities, such as foreign contract workers, and how countries of origin need to work together with international and other agencies to locate, evacuate and return diaspora members from a crisis situation. Iraq observed from its own experience that with increasing global mobility, the international community needed more rigorously to improve the economic and political situation of countries sending people abroad, strengthen their development potential, and attenuate the suffering of migrants.

In *Mali*, the political crisis of 2012 led to the displacement of many thousands of Malians within the country and an estimated 170,000 refugees in surrounding countries such as Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Some also fled further to France, Spain and other countries that were already home to substantial and influential diasporas. In total, roughly 500,000 were uprooted by the conflict, with women and children accounting for almost 75 per cent of the internally displaced persons, many of them in dire circumstances.

Mali is aware that longer-term displacements can have unforeseen consequences for all affected countries and communities, and require careful coordination among all actors – diaspora, civil society, technical experts and donors. With the support of the international community, the Government has commenced restoration of the country and its democratic institutions, and has drawn up a road map for the transition, which was adopted in early 2013 by the National Assembly. With the restoration of peace, many nationals are returning to Mali. A priority now was to manage the productive return and reintegration of its diaspora in ways that balance the socioeconomic needs of the individuals and the development needs of the country.

The United Nations, EU, IOM, NGOs and many other agencies have been on the frontline of both immediate humanitarian relief efforts and longer-term development support since the crisis in the north of Mali; for example, IOM has helped repatriate Malians from Libya, following the former's recent revolution, and has worked with consulates and the diaspora to establish an inventory of expatriates in the main countries of destination. IOM has also conducted a survey of internally displaced families from the northern areas of Mali, to assess interest in returning to the north as soon as security and economic conditions permit.

In *Sierra Leone*, in the wake of the end of the 11-year civil war in 2002, the Government is working with its partners on a national diaspora policy to be underpinned by a comprehensive legal instrument linking diaspora and development in the specific context of post-war reconstruction. The Government is also working with IOM and other international organizations to strengthen the capacity of authorities, civil society and communities to implement peace and stability measures through the contribution of diaspora talent.

*Somalia* is recovering from two decades of civil strife and violence and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of its people. The country is restoring its democratic institutions, and has devised a road map for the transition, where the diaspora can play a critical role through remittances, humanitarian assistance and transfer of skills and knowledge in key sectors. Many Somali expatriates are returning and taking up positions in government, parliament and the civil service. Their support for local projects in the education and health sectors, for example, has been indispensable for Somalia's local reconciliation and state-building efforts, and a major contribution to the Somali economy. Somalia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports its nationals abroad, and assists those returning with housing, replacement of key documents withdrawn by the former regime, and staying in touch with developments in the country of origin.

UNDP and IOM are working jointly with the Somali Government and diasporas to bring expatriate skills, knowledge and expertise to areas such as policy and legislation, public financial management and human resource management.<sup>23</sup> Many more nationals abroad are expected to return and help rebuild the country in this way.

*Sri Lanka* has been beset by complex emergencies: a 30 year-old conflict ending in 2009 and natural disasters, which have slowed economic development and resulted in an increased outflow of Sri Lankans. Some have chosen irregular

<sup>23</sup> See the recently launched UNDP-IOM Quests-MIDA programme, from <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/iom-somalia-quests-mida-expert-presents-guidelines-%E2%80%98new-deal-process%E2%80%99-aid>.

means and fallen prey to trafficking and smuggling rings. Thousands of families have also been displaced in the North and the East. In the current post-crisis phase, the country is thus challenged by various migration dynamics that call for joint efforts towards comprehensive solutions, combining humanitarian assistance, transition and recovery programmes, and return, reintegration, and capacity-building of the Government and its civil society partners.

Managing migration has thus become a key post-crisis strategy for Sri Lanka, with its long history of labour migration outflows, especially to the Middle East. IOM, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, offers voluntary returnees a tailor-made return and reintegration package, and works with the Government to improve training techniques, enhance skills of these migrant workers and explore new labour markets for skilled and unskilled labour. These strategies complement the programmes to rehabilitate small and large-scale infrastructure, and provide reintegration services to vulnerable groups including ex-combatants as part of early recovery and livelihood development.

Sri Lanka also sees its strategy to harness diaspora skills as a way to deal with some of the more hostile expatriate groups, in line with the recommendations of the LLRC that its diaspora be engaged constructively in Sri Lanka's future.

## **Supporting diaspora children and the youth as an investment in the future**

Many countries are increasingly focused on the vulnerable situation of children and the youth caught in a post-crisis scenario, both in terms of the disruption to human development and the potential human capital loss to the country of origin (and host country). Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is emerging from conflict and has lost many of its educated youth, is looking to strengthen the potential of its expatriate youth to support the growth of the country. Similarly, Sri Lanka has created a young professionals forum as part of its multipronged diaspora engagement initiatives.

The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) posed the question to the conference: How can we take advantage of the experiences of Syrian refugees to ensure ongoing education programmes so that students don't have to interrupt their education? From the example raised, it was clear that this question also related to the needs of many communities hosting refugees, often not equipped to deal with their own educational needs.

Behind the IIRO's question are some instructive examples of how countries of refuge like Jordan and Lebanon have dealt with the education needs of the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children. For example, Jordan's



Department of Education is working with UNICEF, the EU and Germany to provide free education to many Syrian children. In Jordan also, UNESCO is implementing a 4.3 million euros project funded by the EU to sustain quality education and promote skills development opportunities for young Syrian refugees and young Jordanians impacted by the humanitarian crisis. In Lebanon, Syrian children are accessing local schooling, and UNICEF and its local implementing partner CARITAS are providing school supplies to both the refugee children and their Lebanese host families through joint emergency education programmes.)

The important message conveyed by IIRO's question is the need for the international community to help strengthen the capacity of countries that give refuge to or host diaspora children over the short or long term to protect their right to access education. The question touched on an important takeaway message of the conference – that investing in children in any crisis-generated expatriate community is investing in the future recovery and growth of the country of origin as well as the development of the host community. In that context, international organizations and NGOs like UNICEF, UNESCO, CARITAS and Save the Children can play a critical role in ensuring that displaced and refugee children continue their schooling while away from home.

### **Returning diasporas from countries in crisis**

Some of the more recent economic, political and natural disaster crises in the Middle East, Africa and Asia have left millions of people, mostly labour migrants, stranded in foreign countries. This has seriously tested the ability of governments and the international community to plan and respond appropriately. Not every country of origin has the capacity and comprehensive diaspora support system for rapid responses and evacuation of their nationals in distress. Many have frequently called on international organizations like IOM to assist in the return of their migrants stranded in crisis situations. Mali worked with IOM to repatriate more than 30,000 Malians caught up in the aftermath of the revolution in Libya. Armenia invested huge amounts in assisting some 10,000 Syrian Armenians who fled to their ancestors' birthplace since the start of conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic – many of them pupils and students – and now calls for international support in meeting reintegration challenges such as housing and employment.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, the civil unrest in 2011 displaced both Syrian nationals in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and the existing diaspora communities within the Syrian Arab Republic that hailed from the region and beyond. In 2012, IOM assisted with the evacuation of thousands of stranded expatriates from the Syrian Arab Republic to some 35 countries of origin, and the onward travel of stranded persons in nearby countries of refuge such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

In addition to the humanitarian evacuations of stranded migrants affected by the crisis in Libya in 2011, IOM's Regional Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for Stranded Migrants in Libya and Egypt has provided comprehensive support to vulnerable migrants in those countries. Assistance to irregular migrants from Ethiopia and Sudan focused on in-kind reintegration support and capacity-building for civil society and state actors in the countries of origin. In July 2012, when Libya held its first democratic elections in decades, IOM, UNDP and Libya's High National Election Commission assisted Libyans in Europe, the Middle East and North America with out-of-country voting.

### ***The Philippine crisis response model***

Over the past 40–50 years, the *Philippines* has built a comprehensive migration management infrastructure, which includes systems and procedures to deal with sudden displacement and distress that many thousands of its expatriates have experienced in various crisis scenarios. Social protection is deeply entrenched in the Philippines' legal and social frameworks covering its nationals abroad. In 2002, the Government set up the Presidential Middle East Preparedness Committee in reaction to the turmoil at that time; and in 2011 the committee was replaced with the Overseas Preparedness and Response Team under the Office of the President, to cover all manner of natural, social and political disasters.

Following the Arab Spring events, the Government created an ad hoc interagency task force to oversee the rapid repatriation of overseas Filipinos, especially from Egypt, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic. However, when confronted with a number of global crises at the same time, for example, the earthquake in Christchurch and the tsunami in Japan in 2011, the Government created the Overseas Preparedness and Response Team (with rapid response teams as operating arms) to ensure monitoring and quick response on a global scale.

The Philippines' crisis response system is based on three *Ps*:

- **Preparedness** – as a standard operating procedure, diplomatic and consular offices abroad must consistently update their crisis contingency plans which include diaspora mapping, evacuation routes, plans, materials, and logistical resources; a coordination officer ensures implementation of the contingency plan.
- **Partnership** – diaspora is a strategic partner in assisting the policies.
- **Political will** – the Overseas Preparedness and Response Team reports directly to the President; and the orders for the creation of the rapid response teams come directly from the President.

The Philippine Government includes its diasporas as indispensable resources and strategic partners in developing and implementing these policies, and in assisting others in distress. Involving diasporas is a key plank in the diplomatic posts' contingency plans. Even at the height of all recent crises, its diplomatic and consular offices in places like Tripoli, Damascus and Cairo remained open and accessible. Where there is no diplomatic representation, the Philippines sends its consular teams into crisis-stricken areas, such as Haiti, Yemen or more recently Algeria, to provide assistance to Filipinos in distress.<sup>24</sup>

## **Need for more data and information exchange**

Participants called for more information on the lessons learned from some of these experiences, and more analysis of how these could be applied to other similar situations, for example during relief operations. As countries like the Philippines have demonstrated, a well-coordinated consular support structure, diaspora strategy and contingency plan in host countries can provide the framework to collect, update and share information on the diasporas for use in crisis preparedness and responses by all parties.

Mapping diaspora populations before and after a crisis can yield valuable data for both humanitarian assistance and mobilization for reconstruction efforts. After the end of the Angolan civil war in 2002, IOM conducted a diaspora mapping exercise in the United Kingdom, one of the largest hosts of Angolan nationals abroad. Similarly, IOM's current mapping of the Sierra Leonean diaspora in the health sectors in Canada and the United States of America will help identify available skills abroad and the incentives for such persons to return and help implement Sierra Leone's National Health Sector Strategic Plan. A parallel needs assessment of the health sector in Sierra Leone will help match diaspora skills with the needs of the sector. The survey data collected by IOM on Mali's internally displaced will also allow the Government of Mali and humanitarian agencies to plan large-scale returns to the north, which could place huge pressures on infrastructure, stocks of food, water and medical supplies; and hygiene and sanitation.

The Oxford Diasporas Programme at the University of Oxford reported that it is also undertaking research on diaspora engagement policies across the international system, in part based on information collected from high-level political leaders in the diaspora field. The results could help generate a useful inventory of such policies, frameworks and incentives, and begin to measure the various impacts of the policies.

<sup>24</sup> For more examples of such practices, see the 2012 IDM workshop dedicated to protection of migrants in time of crisis. Available from [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=2\\_4&products\\_id=869](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=2_4&products_id=869).

NGOs also called for all stakeholders to be involved in the development and implementation of migration and diaspora policies, including businesses, which both profit from the work of diasporas before a crisis and suffer from the loss of the diasporas during and after a crisis. Agreements should be struck among countries of origin, host countries, diasporas and migrant groups, and the civil society to deal jointly with migrants and diaspora in crisis. And this issue should go forward to the HLD in October, as the NGO Committee has already recommended in its proposals for the HLD.

## **Outcomes and conclusions**

Participants affirmed the role that diasporas can play before, during and after a crisis situation. While each crisis has its own dynamics, appropriate frameworks and structures can enhance diaspora engagement in supporting post-crisis recovery processes, regardless of the type of crisis. Trust-building between consulates and diasporas is key to such engagement. Mapping of the diasporas, their locations and circumstances, and agreements between countries and agencies to share such information in times of crisis can be critical for strategic outreach.

Participants also recognized that diasporas can be severely impacted by crises and be caught up in the resultant humanitarian crises; indeed, new diasporas can result from longer-term displacements. Governments needed to work in tandem with each other, and with international organizations, civil society and the private sector to locate their diasporas, identify their needs, and develop and implement rapid responses, protection and support, and return and reintegration programmes. Again, as noted by the NGO Committee on Migration, consulates are key in establishing a basis of trust with their expatriates, and encouraging the most vulnerable abroad, often with irregular migration status, to come forward in times of need.

Comprehensive models, such as the Philippines' preparedness and response strategy – anchored in migrant-protective laws and governance systems, directed from the highest political office, and engaging consulates and their contingency plans, as well as the diasporas themselves – are worth examining further and possibly adapting to the needs of other countries and regions.

**Participants urged that IOM and the Second UN HLD on Migration and Development:**

- 1. Give recognition to the important role that diasporas play in crisis and post-crisis situations, and include them in disaster risk management planning.*
- 2. Encourage governments to build trust with their nationals abroad and include them in solutions to crises, and post-crisis development efforts.*
- 3. Encourage governments to adopt joint preparedness and response strategies to assist diasporas in distress, and work with international, civil society and private sector partners to implement them.*
- 4. Call on international organizations to intensify and coordinate protection and assistance of diasporas in distress, and support to States in engaging diasporas for sustainable development.*
- 5. Create global mechanisms for information gathering and sharing to support rapid responses to crises and longer-term reconstruction efforts that include diasporas.*





# Conclusion

The Diaspora Ministerial Conference was truly a milestone in the IOM International Dialogue on Migration series, bringing together the largest number of cabinet-level officials dedicated to diasporas in the history of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration.

Participants unanimously underscored the fact that there is now worldwide recognition of the role diasporas can and do play for development in both their countries of origin and destination. The conference opened the way for a new approach to the migration and development nexus, by launching a discussion on diasporas at highest levels of government across the globe. The commitment and political leadership of ministers and state secretaries are indispensable for smart policies and programmes.

Participants were able to exchange views on how to strengthen political and institutional commitment as a basis for designing and implementing policies and programmes of diaspora engagement relevant to their countries' respective circumstances and needs.

IOM's decision to dedicate this year's session of the IDM to diaspora issues proved to be extremely opportune. Firstly, it responded to the growing pressure from many stakeholders – governments, civil society and international organizations – to urgently take stock of diaspora policies and programmes, and come up with recommendations to meet identified challenges and gaps. Secondly, the conference took place at a moment in the history of the global debate on migration and development when two major events would (re)shape the future of international migration governance: the second UNGA HLD on International Migration and Development in October 2013, and the (re)formulation of a post-2015 development agenda.

All these events, including the DMC, will put to the test the willingness and ability of the international community to link its increasing recognition of migration to future global development goals.

While it would be difficult to summarize in a comprehensive and detailed way all the outcomes of the conference, the five major thematic axes identified in this report are a reflection of the richness of the discussions and the variety of perspectives and approaches offered in the different panels.

Each participant contributed to the collective effort to find answers to the enduring question of how migrants can settle and integrate into a new host country while maintaining productive links with the country of origin or heritage. They also sought to define the policies, frameworks and partnerships to support this effort and optimize the benefits of diaspora bridging societies and states.

Guided by these overarching goals, the conference produced a set of conclusions and recommendations that address issues of effective integration, social inclusion and protection, access to citizenship, and the fight against marginalization and xenophobia through information and awareness. The role of the international community, civil society and the private sector was also highlighted in the process of achieving a win-win type of migration through brain circulation as opposed to brain drain.

Calls were made for frameworks and models that encourage qualified nationals to re-invest in their countries of origin or heritage the skills, qualifications, experience and financial assets they had acquired abroad. But equally, there were calls on governments and the private sector to open up and relax policies and regulations to make this possible.

The conference was notable for focusing attention on labour mobility, skills circulation and social remittances rather than belabouring the financial contributions of diaspora. It was strongly reminded that diasporas are, first and foremost, people with specific needs to be addressed throughout the migration cycle.

The conference illustrated with some concrete examples the range of entry points available to States to mainstream migration, particularly diaspora engagement, into their development planning, policies and practices. Private sector and civil society representatives suggested that States view diasporas in the broader context of regional and global skills mobility, and align their diaspora engagement policies more with local labour market and skills development planning. Factoring diasporas into labour market strategies can leverage local policies for economic development.

The discussions approached the socioeconomic dimensions of the diaspora theme from different angles, highlighting also their increasingly significant



role in helping to prevent, prepare for, and recover from crisis situations. The contributions of diasporas in post-crisis situations go beyond immediate protection to transitional and longer-term reconstruction efforts, and also through advocacy with host governments, galvanizing other international support and working closely with international organizations.

The importance of investing in the continued education of diaspora children displaced by crisis brought to attention the needs of vulnerable migrants and diaspora groups, and the cooperation frameworks required to address these needs in the interests also of sustainable development for all.

The discussions brought to light the ingenuity of the diasporas themselves, both individually and collectively, in linking communities across borders and creating transnational networks to engage with their countries of origin or heritage. It was instructive to learn about existing and potential efforts by governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to support and empower these communities with incentives and enabling environments, to make a difference in the countries they come from and the countries they live in.

There remain many gaps and inadequacies in many parts of the world, but there are also a number of emerging models to learn from. In view of the serious lack of data on diasporas and the policies around them, there was a strong call for more rigorous evaluations by governments and their international partners and the need to foster a culture of critical reflection on the diaspora issues, as commenced by this conference.

IOM considers that transnational societies are vital for maximizing the positive impacts of international migration and minimizing its downsides, and that all stand to win from a humane and orderly management of global human mobility. IOM was happy to note that its three-pillared strategic approach to diasporas, namely to engage, enable and empower, was reaffirmed during these two days of discussions. It has taken note of the request to furnish to policymakers a compendium of good practices.

The conference has achieved its objectives, not only in view of the global interest it generated among stakeholders, but also the rich and valuable outcomes, recommendations and good practices it identified and put on the table for the international community to consider in future discussions on diasporas and transnational communities. Many of the ministers called for a new vision and new policies to deal with diasporas as bridge builders in a world of pluralistic, multicultural and transnational societies.

To take this new vision forward, participants specifically requested that the HLD in October ensure the inclusion of migrants and diasporas as potential enablers for development in the discussions on a post-2015 development agenda; in particular, that diasporas be added as potential global partners in any post-2015 development goal on global partnerships for development.

The highly positive feedback IOM received from many Member States and participants during and after the conference is encouraging. IOM has taken note of the recommendation repeated by many participants to continue the tradition of holding a ministerial conference on diasporas or on other key migration issues in the future.



# Annex

## **IDM 2013: Diaspora Ministerial Conference 18-19 June 2013**

### **Summary of discussions prepared by the Secretariat**

This has been a milestone meeting in the IOM series of International Dialogues on Migration. It was the first global meeting gathering ministers responsible for diasporas. More than 500 delegates participated in the meeting, and 55 high-level government officials took the floor to share their experiences and good practices in engaging diasporas for development in countries of origin and destination.

These are the five major outcomes and recommendations of the last two days:

- 1. The participants recognize that diasporas can build bridges between States and between societies, and call for the design of local and global strategies aiming to harness this potential.**
  - The transnational nature of diasporas implies that these people are crucial when it comes to connecting countries and communities. They maintain networks that facilitate a more open flow of trade, investment, skills and knowledge. They act as “ambassadors” of their societies of origin and facilitators of cultural exchanges.
  - Governments have already put in place policies and programmes designed to facilitate the contributions that diaspora members make to their communities of both residence and origin. Leveraging the various resources of diaspora communities will involve a multitude of different government departments. A governmental ministry or entity dedicated to diaspora issues can facilitate this interministerial coordination.

- There is no single global approach to diasporas, but a multitude of possibilities that **ENABLE** diasporas to reach their full development potential, that effectively **ENGAGE** them and **EMPOWER** them to make a difference in the countries they come from and they live in. IOM constructs its whole migration and development strategy around these three pillars of intervention.
- Finally, participants recalled that diasporas are, first and foremost, people and therefore discussions should go beyond the material dimension to include specific needs they may have.

**2. The participants stressed that communication and outreach are key to the design and implementation of policies and programmes relevant to diaspora engagement. Too often there are information gaps on diasporas.**

- Firstly, who ARE the diasporas? Diasporas may be better described as “transnational communities” that comprise people who are connected to more than one country, society or community. They can include migrants, or descendants of migrants, who share a common sense of identity and belonging to more than one community. Data capture has to be flexible enough to cover the scope and breadth of these various transnational communities.
- Secondly, knowing and understanding transnational communities is crucial to engaging effectively with them and developing the appropriate outreach strategies. Maps and surveys of diaspora communities are useful tools for assessing their socioeconomic profile and their willingness to contribute to the development of their countries of origin and to improve communication with them.
- Outreach often requires countries of origin to establish and strengthen their embassies and consulates, including training labour attaches, whose portfolios now increasingly include service provision to these communities.

**3. Participants highlighted the importance of an enabling environment in both countries of origin and destination to maximize the potential of diaspora engagement.**

- Effective integration policies for migrants and transnational communities ensure that members of these communities adapt quickly to their environment and acquire new knowledge, skills and capital. These policies promote social inclusion and address marginalization. Information and awareness campaigns can also combat xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment.

- Social protection measures by governments of countries where diaspora communities reside can reduce their vulnerabilities. These measures include access to health care, decent housing and working conditions, and education.
- Access to citizenship of countries of origin as well as countries where transnational communities reside can serve to strengthen pre-existing links between those countries and communities.

**4. The participants stressed the importance of strategic partnerships between States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to create the framework for diaspora engagement and thereby empower them to share and transfer their resources.**

- Governments have an important role to play in creating the appropriate conditions that will incentivize transnational communities to invest their skills and resources in countries that they both live in and come from. This may include the creation of an attractive investment climate, for example, through tax incentives, increased transparency in the regulatory frameworks that ease the conducting of business between both countries, and support mechanisms for the creation of small and medium enterprises. These are particularly important at the local community level. Reducing the costs of remittance transfer and the provision of financial literacy training can also ensure the more productive use of remittances.
- In an increasingly security-conscious world, regulatory controls on global financial flows may be impeding efforts by countries to establish diaspora investment mechanisms. More open discussion on this issue may be warranted.
- Diaspora members can use their particular skills and expertise to develop local human resources where these skills are not readily available. Participants talked about the brain circulation of qualified nationals who re-invest their skills in countries of origin. Governments can assist this process by setting up frameworks that recognize the skills and qualifications they acquire abroad.
- The international community, civil society and the private sector all have a role to play in facilitating the transfer of diaspora skills and resources. For example, international organizations already have programmes that enable skilled diaspora members to return on a short- or long-term basis. Transfer of knowledge can also occur virtually through online support.

Private companies may prefer to recruit diaspora members over non-diaspora experts because of their commitment to their countries of origin and their transnational experience.

- The participants called for an appropriate inclusion of migration and migrants as enablers of development in the post-2015 development agenda.

**5. Finally, the participants recognized the role that diasporas can play in crisis situations, both during and after. Appropriate frameworks and structures can enhance diaspora engagement in supporting post-crisis recovery processes.**

- Crises can generate new diasporas, and existing diasporas can contribute to resolving crises. Beyond immediate protection concerns, long-term displacement can eventually turn refugees into diasporas. Crises can both interrupt remittance flows as well as trigger such flows in order to address their consequences. Existing diasporas are often also a strong resource and first responder to crises in their home-countries (e.g. by providing material support).
- Diasporas can be important players in peacemaking and peacebuilding through:
  - a) Mobilization of diasporas around peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives (e.g. intercommunity dialogue)
  - b) Participation and access of diasporas to transitional justice processes (e.g. reconciliation, truth and reparations)
  - c) Participation and access of diasporas to the political process (e.g. out-of-country voting)
- Diasporas can play a significant role in post-crisis reconstruction and recovery. For this purpose, skills and technical knowledge can be mapped and mobilized, targeting particular sectors such as health, education and justice as well as institution-building. International organizations have a role to play in supporting return of skilled diasporas in this context. Through their networks, diasporas can in turn help mobilize other international support for rehabilitation efforts in their home countries. Diasporas are often prepared to take risks and be the first to invest in reconstruction, for example, telecommunications, infrastructure and housing.
- Diasporas have the potential to help reinvigorate and fuel economic development in the post-crisis environment. For instance, remittances can support recovery of families and communities in the short term; investment in infrastructure can have a long-term impact.

This summary is not exhaustive. A speaker mentioned that there had been a few experiences where diaspora engagement led to undesired outcomes.

In conclusion, this conference has reaffirmed the value of high-level political dialogue on an issue that needs champions in government to carry forward the very policies agreed at this meeting. Appreciation to IOM for the support and guidance to its membership was also a central point of the dialogue.

The conference has set a new framework for global diaspora dialogue, starting at this meeting with ministers, and hopefully moving to the diaspora themselves, of course in cooperation with governments, at the next meeting. It has also reaffirmed the relevance of IOM's 3Es approach to diaspora development, namely, to *enable*, to *engage* and to *empower* transnational communities as agents for development.

Finally, IOM hopes that the necessary support will be given in order to follow the recommendations of a number of ministers to continue this dialogue on diasporas.



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