



Global Diaspora Summit Background Note

Session 4 – Diaspora as Diversity: The Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Framework

Overview

Many global developmental agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, have placed at the core of their visions an irremovable commitment so that issues of diversity and inclusion remain at the core of human development. Diaspora communities are central contributors to such visions given the social capital that their diasporic journey has created. Promoting diversity through diaspora communities creates momentum for positioning diaspora individuals as changemakers in advancing sustainable and inclusive societies.

Diaspora as Diversity: A New Framework for Innovating Diaspora Engagement

The unique position that diaspora communities occupy in terms of having multiple senses of belonging is at the centre of how they can contribute to progress on diversity, inclusivity, and belonging. The social capital that such belonging provides means that diasporas have become a conduit for building collaborative social and political outcomes that can contribute to development. The IOM defines social capital as the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

Diaspora social capital positions diasporas as bridge builders across communities. They are repositories of cultural, economic, social, and political cohesion that can promote cross-cultural leadership by aligning diverse belief systems and practices. This reveals how diaspora diplomacy, for example, can become an instrument of global geopolitical cooperation.

Whilst the community-level social capital impact of diaspora communities is noteworthy, perhaps the most significant aspect at work in terms of how diasporas can contribute to diversity, inclusion, and belonging remains how it can empower diaspora individuals to create long-lasting change towards development. Diaspora individuals bring nuanced understanding of issues and have an ability to address complex problems from a variety of perspectives. For example, this ability has resulted in diaspora engagement contributing to social movements for the under-represented and marginalized in society.

Therefore, promoting and advancing diaspora leaders – at an individual and institutional level – has become more prominent. Another important consideration in this area is how to strengthen inter-generational diaspora leadership to ensure longevity of belonging across generations of the diaspora.

Whilst the immediate diaspora impact can be around the development of inclusive societies, the issue of belonging has also recently been elevated by other institutional actors as part of their stakeholder engagement strategies through the DIB framework – diversity, inclusivity, and belonging. A subtle new cohort of diaspora leadership is emerging across different sectors in this regard. This reflects the growing realization in these sectors that diaspora leaders bring familiarity of local and global cultures, markets, and procedures. In the networked age of economic, political, and social frameworks, diaspora leaders are positioning as one of the most attractive sources of leadership to address challenges in these sectors.

Institutions are increasingly embracing diaspora individuals as key enhancers of their competitiveness and competencies in ensuring diverse and inclusive workforces, leadership, and service delivery. They understand that the market expectations in these issues are now higher than ever, and diaspora engagement offers multiple mechanisms through which they can meet these demands whether through development of corporate social philanthropy, diversification of governance leadership, and advancing inclusive executive leadership.

Scope of Session

This session will explore some of the early innovators who have embraced this opportunity. It will provide reflection on the type of interventions and tools that align diaspora communities and leaders as communities of diversity.

It will explore the intersection of diaspora engagement with current work to promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging to propose actionable outcomes to shape an inspirational call to action that educates and applies the capacities that diaspora engagement provides in the context of diversity, inclusion, and belonging. To achieve such outcomes, the following guiding questions will be discussed:

- What are the main forms of social capital that diaspora communities and individuals can provide to build sustainable societies?
- What are the ways in which diaspora engagement can contribute to the diversity, inclusivity, and belonging goals of the SDGs, the GCM or other global policy agenda?
- How can government and institutions/private sector create the conditions for diaspora to thrive in terms of diversity, inclusivity, and belonging?
- What is the best way to support next-generation diaspora leaders and promote inter-generational diaspora leadership?
- How can these generational shifts be served by different tools – digital and otherwise – to mobilize diaspora engagement in the context of diversity, inclusivity, and belonging?
- What is a preliminary agenda of action to amplify the intersections of diaspora, diversity, inclusivity, and belonging and who are the key actors required to achieve such an agenda?

Methodology of Session

The session will open with an input from the governmental host to share their diaspora engagement story, followed by an inspirational address from a global leader on the topic.

The session will conclude with a showcasing of a diaspora organization exemplar and an interactive discussion with participants to help develop recommendations for the enhancement of diaspora engagement a vehicle of purpose within international development through the lens of belonging, diversity, and inclusion. In line with aims of the summit to provide peer-to-peer exchange and knowledge sharing, the digital platform also provides networking capacity throughout the session for participants to engage with each other. The final outcomes generated through the panellist and participant interventions will be reflected in the summit report and provide insight for the final 'Outcome Document' of the GDS.

We look forward to welcoming you to this session to learn about your ideas and views on diaspora as diversity to create new markets for diaspora engagement!

