
DIALOGUE ON MEDITERRANEAN TRANSIT MIGRATION (MTM)

STRENGTHENING AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN DIASPORA POLICY
THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH EXCHANGE
(AMEDIP)

AMEDIP Workshop

Dakar, Senegal, 17-18 July 2012

South-South Cooperation in Migration and Development

Summary of Discussions

On 17 – 18 July 2012, the MTM AMEDIP workshop on ‘South-South Cooperation in Migration and Development’ took place in Dakar, within the framework of the second phase of the MTM programme *Linking Emigrant Communities for more Development*. The workshop was hosted by the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, and organised with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in close cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The meeting gathered representatives of the AMEDIP Partner States: Algeria, Cap Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. Furthermore, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the European Union, the international organisations ICMPD and IOM and the ACP Observatory for Migration participated in the event.

The opening session included welcome remarks by representatives of the Senegalese, the Swiss and the Italian governments, IOM and ICMPD, followed by presentations aimed at providing an overview of the



Linking Emigrant Communities for More Development initiative, more specifically the AMEDIP project and at introducing the theme of South-South cooperation in migration and development

The meeting focused on the identification of countries priorities and concrete actions and mechanisms as regards to South-South cooperation in the field of migration and development and to further elaborate a roadmap to reach these priorities.

To achieve these objectives, the workshop encompassed five main topics:

- Institutional practices related to South-South cooperation
- Priorities and challenges faced by AMEDIP Partner States in the field of South-South cooperation
- The optimization of remittances through South-South cooperation
- Institutional cooperation frameworks to support diasporas¹ engagement towards their home countries
- The transfer knowledge acquired by the delegates during the workshop to the relevant institutions/administrations

Session I: Discussion on institutional practices related to South-South cooperation

Session I examined existing South-South Cooperation frameworks in the AMEDIP Partner States and attempted to identify effective South-South Cooperation mechanisms for migration and development. In the course of the workshop, participants shared their own experience in South-South cooperation. A list of these initiatives can be found in annex 1.

The establishment of a framework for South-South cooperation with regard to migration has been less evident than for more technical sectors such as engineering, agriculture or medicine. Indeed, migration management has a direct impact on sovereignty of states and takes place in a more political environment. As such, achieving an effective South-South cooperation is a slow process, due to the various obstacles that must be overcome.

South-South cooperation in migration and development can take place at three different levels: bilateral, regional and inter-regional. To date, few experiences exist. At bilateral level, some examples of cooperation agreements between neighbouring countries were mentioned, such as the ones between Senegal and Mali, Mali and Algeria and Niger and Mali. Not all these agreements touch upon migration issues but could however constitute a good basis for south-south cooperation framework on migration.

¹ AMEDIP focus partner states use different terminology when they refer to their nationals abroad or to second generation emigrants living abroad. To keep the readability of this document the term diaspora is used.

A migration component could be added in joint commission cooperation and bilateral agreements, to unlock the potential of South-South cooperation and to contribute to better migration management.

At the regional level, the most advanced framework for cooperation is provided by ECOWAS, which favours the free movement of persons within the region, through the *Protocol on free movement of persons, residence and establishment* ([EN](#), [FR](#)).

At the inter-regional level, some efforts are being made as well to reinforce cooperation. Events such as the [Global African Diaspora Summit](#) (EN), organised by the African Union, is part of the effort to enhance South-South Cooperation.

With regard to the priority areas for South-South cooperation, it became apparent that **most of the participating states have common thematic priority areas**. One widespread concern is the issue of migrants' social security and its protection in host country (including portability).

In this respect, the Declaration on Migrants' Rights (which concerns countries from Maghreb, West and Central African but not yet ratified by all countries), affirmed during the Third Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development ([EN](#),[FR](#)) in Dakar on 23 November 2011, offers a good basis for further cooperation at inter-regional level. The Declaration includes statements on social security and aims at promoting agreements between countries of origin and destination on migrants' social rights.

At technical level, no mechanisms or framework exist yet on South-South Cooperation. Following this observation, the AMEDIP initiative provides experts and relevant decision makers from the AMEDIP Partner States with tools and means to translate the political will into technical and concrete actions.

Session II: Discussion of priorities and challenges faced by AMEDIP Partner States in the field of South-South cooperation

In Session II, the objective was to determine the participants' expectations on South-South cooperation and to identify the challenges encountered by the AMEDIP Partner States to set up a functioning South-South Cooperation framework in the area of migration and development.

The session started with a presentation of the methodology of South-South expert exchange mechanism², a main component of the AMEDIP project. The South-South expert exchange is an innovative scheme that promotes south-south cooperation and offers the AMEDIP Partner States the possibility to **exchange experience on capacities and skills in migration and development**. The exchanges take the form of study visits and experts assignments. **Expert assignments** are defined as the visit of experts from one country with the expertise sought by the inviting institutions on a specific

² See Annex 2, Methodology on South-South Expert Exchange Mechanism

initiative. **Study visits**, on the other hand, are characterised by the visit of representatives from institutions (maximum 3 from a same country) to countries where the expertise is available.

During Session II, the following key-priorities that were raised include, *inter alia*:

- ❖ The organisation of regular diaspora events in the countries of origin;
- ❖ The need to take a census and a profiling of the diaspora to better target it.
- ❖ The establishment of a network of highly skilled diaspora members;
- ❖ Provision of online language courses and curricula for training institutions abroad to strengthen the identification of second and third generation of emigrants with their country of origin;
- ❖ Regular exchanges and dialogue between the diasporas and countries of origin;
- ❖ Possibility for diaspora members to participate in the political life of their home-countries (by exercising their voting rights for instance);
- ❖ Portability of social security rights;
- ❖ Protection of migrants abroad;
- ❖ Provision of pre-departure information to migrants.

It became also apparent that the **AMEDIP Partner States share common expectations** regarding South-South cooperation on migration. Some of these expectations are, *inter alia*:

- ❖ The harmonisation of labour market standards and training curricula to foster circular migration and adequate employment. (NB: Labour market conferences with eight African states already take place as part of the standardising project of the African Union).
- ❖ The improvement of the free movement of people.
- ❖ The portability of social security benefits was highlighted as crucial for a functioning South-South migration cooperation system.
- ❖ The reduction of cost of remittances transfer channels: costly transfer channels are an obstacle for a better South-South migration system and could be addressed through South-South cooperation.

South-South cooperation in migration and development should have a broader scope than migration and include issues such as health, agriculture, environment, etc.

The geographic scope should also be extended. Sharing experiences with other continents such as Asia or South America would be of added-value in the South-South cooperation process as significant experiences have been conducted in these regions.

South-South cooperation should be an inclusive process, including not only institutional actors but also the civil society. All actors, either from the public sector or from the private sector can have a role in the process. Thus, migrant associations, government actors in AMEDIP Partner States, civil society organisations, technical and financial actors, chambers of commerce, business councils and entrepreneurs, banks, post offices, recruitment agencies and social partners such as trade unions and

employers must take part in the effort to engage emigrant communities toward the development of their home countries and to capitalize on their engagement.

Session III: The optimization of remittances through South-South cooperation

Although the impact of remittances on development is widely acknowledged, yet a gap still exists to ensure the maximization as well as the sustainability of their impact on development. In the framework of Session III, the AMEDIP Partner States exchanged practices and their experience on remittances which could be replicated by other states aiming to **strengthen the benefits of remittance flows**.

One common challenge identified was to channel a larger **share of the transferred funds to investments** while respecting the private nature of these funds. Assessments have shown that approximately 5 per cent are invested while the large proportion is used to satisfy the needs of the households. Other common concerns are:

- The formalization of remittances channels can be achieved through improved financial literacy and reduced transfer costs.
- Trust building between the diaspora and the countries of origin. The development of a healthy business environment is crucial in this sense as one of the major concerns of diaspora investors is the security of their investments.

The cooperation amongst national banks is key to create safe and reliable formal channels and therefore stimulate South-South remittances. On a broader scale, the African Central Bank, which will be operational in the coming decade, or other existing regional banks such as the BCEAO, should include the regulation of remittances in their mandate, in order to stimulate and harmonize South-South remittances through formalized flows.

The following practices, which have the potential to be replicated in other contexts and countries were implemented in the AMEDIP Partner States:

- ❖ The use of post offices to contribute to the formalization of remittances flows in remote areas;
- ❖ The organisation of forum for diaspora investors to provide information f on investment opportunities;
- ❖ The creation of investment agencies to target the diaspora;
- ❖ The promotion of incentives for investments such as tax exemptions or the increase of saving rates;
- ❖ Setting up business relations with banks in countries of destination or establish branches of national bank in these countries to facilitate cost-efficient money transfer.

- ❖ Provision of information in host countries (through websites, conferences or government representatives who are travelling outside the home country);
- ❖ Financial literacy training courses;
- ❖ Strengthening the business environment and the banking sector;
- ❖ Surveys on diaspora investor's needs and obstacles;
- ❖ Building trust with potential diaspora investors;
- ❖ Establishment of a one-stop shop for investors;
- ❖ Establishment of a support fund for investors;

A collection of concrete good practices emphasized during the workshop can be found in Annex 1 of this Summary of Discussions.

Session IV: What institutional cooperation framework to support diasporas' engagement towards their home countries?

Emigrant communities have increasingly played a part in investing in their home countries' private sector. They also play a vital part in the host country economy. Governments increasingly perceive them as a partner for national development within the framework of public/private sector partnerships. In this regard, AMEDIP Partner States have implemented different initiatives (An Inventory of Institutional Capacities and Practices in the AMEDIP Partner States is available in [AR](#), [EN](#), [FR](#)) to support Diaspora engagement toward the development of their home countries. Session IV aimed to provide room for an open exchange during which countries can share their experience and initiatives in diaspora engagement.

This session underlined that **cooperation and consultation with the diaspora** at national level are key to assess their needs and interests and create positive partnerships. The establishment of an advisory board to the government or of a Council composed of diaspora representatives provides the opportunity to cooperate with the diaspora in an institutionalised context. In this regard, the main challenge and concern for public institutions, in the area of diaspora cooperation, is the lack of legitimacy of diaspora associations acting as interlocutors representing the community.

A suggestion was made to include **diaspora representatives within the available structures** provided by the Regional Economic Communities.

The organisation of the diaspora into migrants' associations appears to be important to strengthen the diaspora and for the empowerment of migrants. In this respect, the [European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development \(EADPD\)](#) aims to promote the contribution of the diaspora to act as a

development actor for Africa through the establishment of a European-wide African diaspora platform for development.

Equally important is to enhance **knowledge of the governmental institutions on their diaspora**, in order to better assess their potential and adapt the institutional offer to the actual needs of the different components of the diaspora.

This can be done through different means:

- ❖ Data collection to gain information on the profile of the diaspora;
- ❖ Surveys to assess the diasporas' needs and priorities and to know more about their profiles;
- ❖ Inventory of their skills and capacity to identify diaspora members who are interested in contributing to the development of the country through investment and skills transfers.

Most AMEDIP Partner States have established **institutions to enhance the diaspora outreach**, in order to strengthen ties with their communities abroad. This provides an important basis and a great potential for South-South exchange.

Also, good **communication tools and channels with the diaspora** and a relation built on trust are crucial to build long-term partnerships between governments and diaspora members. For instance, the organisation of diaspora events in home and host countries provides an opportunity for the government and the private sector to link up with the diaspora.

Some AMEDIP partner countries now allow dual or multiple citizenships and have granted their diaspora the right to exercise their political rights (including the right to vote). Delegates expressed their interest to learn more about opportunities to **engage the diaspora in the political life in their home country**.

In some AMEDIP countries, **decentralised cooperation with the diaspora**, in order to engage them in regional development processes was considered very important as different Regions/County/Federal States have different sectorial development priorities and needs. The designation of focal points for diaspora matters at the local level, for instance, is a successful practice.

The protection of emigrants' social rights is an important matter for the diaspora. In the recent years, countries of origin have put a lot of effort in building bridges with the host countries to coordinate social security systems. In the regard, the possibility to establish a migration/diaspora attaché in the embassies and consulates based in host-countries to intensify the relation with the diaspora in main destination countries and reinforce the protection of their rights, is being explored by some countries.

Session V: How to transfer knowledge acquired by the delegates during the workshop to the relevant institutions/administrations

Knowledge transfer mechanisms at the national level are crucial to ensure a successful decision-making process towards an effective South-South Cooperation. Therefore, participants shared their information sharing mechanisms at national level. The main channels include regular meetings including all ministries involved in migration, a committee on migration, a network of migration focal points who meet on a regular basis, an ad hoc committee on migration that gathers when the need occurs, annual inter-ministerial meetings. In the context of South-South cooperation, the appointment of focal points in each ministry and institution could be considered as a way to ensure inter-institutional coordination.

Inter-institutional coordination is of paramount importance to a successful implementation of initiatives, programmes and policies.

The AMEDIP workshop on inter-institutional cooperation will tackle this issue by identifying successful inter-institutional coordination mechanisms in place in the AMEDIP Partner States which could be replicated in other countries.

Closing session

Closing statements to the AMEDIP Workshop on South-South Cooperation in Migration and Development were set forth by the Senegal representatives, AMEDIP Partner Agencies: ICMPD and IOM, and Tunisia who will host the next AMEDIP workshop on the inter-institutional cooperation on 7-8 November 2012.

The possibility to hold the third and last AMEDIP workshop, on South-North cooperation in Switzerland in spring 2013 was mentioned and welcomed by the participants.