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Enhancing Migrant and Diaspora Empowerment for Socio-Economic Development

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After fifteen years of formulating, debating and refining policies and frameworks; of developing, testing and improving programmes and projects; we are now entering the era for implementation, full scale action and unrelenting practicality.



Government officials need an objective understanding of the role of migrants and diasporas in development, followed by a semi-emotional acceptance of the virtues of diaspora-development, before they can give whole-hearted support to diaspora entities.



The factors that influence migrants and diasporas to be committed to countries of origin or heritage include the following:

- Family and social connections in 'origin / heritage' countries
- Sense of belonging to a 'nation'
- Actual or potential citizenship of a 'state'
- Aspiration for 'active' return
- Possibility of 'passive' return



The factors that influence migrants and diasporas to be committed to countries of residence or citizenship include the following:

- Motivation for success in order to help kith and kin
- Anxiety about wanting to improve perceptions of 'nation'
- Keenness to demonstrate loyalty to new home country
- Desire for upward mobility in new community
- Duty to make life easier for future generations



African
Foundation for
Development

- contributions made by diaspora communities

include the following:

- Financial Payments
- Economic Ventures
- Skills and Aptitudes
- New Approaches and Outlooks
- Socio-Cultural Influence
- Politico-Economic Advocacy

Empowering migrants and diasporas depends not only on 'what to do' but also on 'what not to do'. We invite governments to reflect on the following 7 point list of commissions and omissions.

Do work with groups on thematic and sectoral issues;
Do not assume that diasporas have general expertise

Do facilitate substantive and substantial migrant participation;
Do not pursue ongoing consultations with nominal project work

Do accommodate plurality amongst migrants and diasporas;
Do not insist on a single voice for a diverse constituency

Do incorporate capacity-building in all forms of engagement;
Do not exclude migrants by virtue of entrenched incapacity

Do create bespoke migrant and diaspora support packages;
Do not shoehorn groups into inappropriate standardised models

Do seek out and foster dynamism and innovation in the sector;
Do not nurse and institutionalise mediocrity

Do support the growth and expansion of diaspora programmes;
Do not condemn migrant groups to micro-projects



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