The role and place of the diaspora in the post-2015 agenda

The High-level Dialogue of the United Nations on Migration and Development was held in New York on 3-4 October 2013. During these meetings, global partners in migration have focused on important issues such as the integration of migration in the post-2015 agenda for development, the role of the diaspora as development actors, and South-South migration.

The proposals in this dialogue have been widely supported by civil society, which is committed to working with states on eight priorities over the next five years. In preparation for the High Level Dialogue, global civil society has organized more than 20 regional preparatory meetings and more informal interactive hearings held July 15, 2013 in New York.

For members of the government, more than 500 delegates, including 55 ministers and senior government officials met in Geneva on 18 and 19 June 2013 and were invited to share their experiences to identify better ways to involve communities, and to make them responsible as development actors.

In the mobilization of civil society, two major issues have attracted the particular attention of NGOs. On the one hand, voices have been raised to consider and propose a new action plan in order to follow up the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. On the other hand, a strong argument has been developed by civil society to include the theme of migration and development in the post-2015 agenda.

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To echo these discussions and resolutions, we trace the history of the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) to highlight key issues and to understand the discussions on the continuation of their implementation. We then present a brief overview of the Geneva Ministerial Diaspora Conference. We will conclude with two civil society fora. In
Barcelona, Spain, on 20 and 21 September 2013, the « Foro Migrante » was dedicated to dialogue between local authorities, civil society groups and migrants. They considered how to strengthen the role of migrant organizations in Europe as advocates and practitioners of development through strengthening the network.

A week before this date, on 12th September 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland, saw the presentation of the « Strategy of Global Migration and Development Programme » against the backdrop of a discussion on the topic of knowledge management for Migration and Development.

Arthur Yenga

The historical antecedents of the Millennium Development Goals

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest.

2000 - Millennium Summit

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2002 UN Millennium Campaign

The United Nations Millennium Campaign, started in 2002, supports and inspires people from around the world to take action in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Watch the videos by the Millennium Campaign on poverty, education, women’s empowerment, maternal health and the environment and discover how the lives of ten ordinary people around the world are impacted in profound ways by the level of progress their countries have made towards achieving the Goals.

2002 - 2006 UN Millennium Project

The Millennium Project was commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2002 to develop a concrete action plan for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people. In 2005, the independent advisory body headed by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, presented a summary of its final recommendations to the Secretary-General, “Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”

2005 World Summit

The 2005 World Summit, held from 14 to 16 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York, brought together more than 170
Heads of State and Government. It was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take bold decisions in the areas of development, security, human rights and reform of the United Nations. The agenda was based on an achievable set of proposals outlined in March 2005 by the UN Secretary-General.

2008 High-Level Event on the MDGs

Governments, foundations, businesses and civil society groups rallied around the call to action to slash poverty, hunger and disease by 2015, by announcing new commitments to meet the Millennium Development Goals, at a high-level event at UN Headquarters on 25 September 2008. The gathering «exceeded our most optimistic expectations », UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, noting that it generated an estimated $16 billion, including some $1.6 billion to bolster food security, more than $4.5 billion for education and $3 billion to combat malaria.

2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals

The 2010 MDG Summit concluded with the adoption of a global action plan - ‘Keeping the Promise: United in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals’ - and the announcement of a number of initiatives against poverty, hunger and disease. In a major push to accelerate progress on women’s and children’s health, a number of heads of state and governments from developed and developing countries, along with the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations, pledged over $40 billion in resources over the next five years.

Source: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/


Switzerland - Over 500 delegates participated in IOM’s milestone Geneva Ministerial Diaspora Conference (DMC) on 18-19 June 2013, including 55 Ministers and high-level government officials. The event invited governments and experts to share their experiences in order to identify better ways to engage, enable and empower diaspora communities, and promote them as development actors.

Diasporas were defined as “transnational communities” connected to more than one country, society or community. They include migrants and their descendants who share a common sense of identity and belonging to a community. They maintain networks that facilitate a more open flow of trade, investment, skills and knowledge, and act as “ambassadors” of their societies of origin, as well as facilitators of cultural exchange.

Conference participants recognized that diasporas can build bridges between states and societies and called for the development of local and global strategies designed to harness this potential.

Delegates admitted that there is a lack of information about diasporas and stressed the need for more communication and outreach in the design of policies to facilitate diaspora engagement. This will often require countries of origin to strengthen their embassies and
consulates in countries hosting their largest diasporas.

Christiane Taubira, Minister of Justice of the French Government

Participants highlighted the importance of an enabling environment in both countries of origin and destination to maximize the potential of diaspora engagement. This will require, among other measures, more effective integration policies, social protection measures and access to dual citizenship.

Delegates also stressed the importance of strategic partnerships between states, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to create a framework for diaspora engagement that empowers them to share and transfer their resources to countries of origin.

The conference also recognized the role that diasporas can play during and after humanitarian crises. It recognized the need for appropriate frameworks to enhance diaspora engagement in supporting post-crisis recovery.

Cécile Kyenge, Italian Minister for Integration

The outcomes of the meeting will be shared with the UN General Assembly’s High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development scheduled to take place in New York on 3rd-4th October 2013.

For more information please visit http://diaspora.iom.int/ or contact:

IOM’s IDM Secretariat
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How to strengthen the role of migrant organisations in Europe as development advocates (and practitioners) through network building?

At the event « Foro Migrante » held in Barcelona September on 20 and 21 by the Senegalese organizations cupola in Barcelona and the NGO Allianz per Solidad, Sarah Schlaeger from ICMPD gave a presentation entitled: « promotion and advocacy work with the Euro-African diaspora network for participation in the international development agenda and the role of ICMPD »

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES AT STAKE?

The inclusion of migration into the development debate has been accepted by development practitioners at last and the diaspora’s unique position to enable development as actors between and within different countries has become common knowledge. However, a lot still has to be done to allow the diaspora to become true enablers of development, as the receiving countries’ preferred migration schemes do not necessarily support integration and long term residence. This however provides the ground for enhanced development engagement. Furthermore migrants’ rights are often disregarded, especially if they are in have an irregular legal status. At the same time those governments
who have understood the importance of diaspora engagement for development may at best consult, but rarely enter into a true partnership with, diaspora actors, which may result in frustration on the side of the diaspora. And for governments these well-meant activities become a real challenge: they wish for one voice but have to come to terms with a diverse diaspora.

They may aim to find the perfect partners for different activities but often find themselves with those most available rather than actors most suitable for cooperation and dialogue. These mutual frustrations can be countered by investing in more trust-building exercises and through efforts on all sides to get to know each other better.

THE AFRICA-EUROPE PLATFORM

The European Commission, together with the Swiss, the German, and the Dutch governments, has taken a first step towards enabling better participation of the African diaspora by funding the Africa-Europe Platform, which aims to build a European wide development platform of African Diaspora organisations. The project is implemented by four diaspora organisations/ networks: ADPC, AFFORD, FORIM, and CGMD; and ICMPD, an intergovernmental organisation. In the framework of the project we have been working for the last 2 1/2 years to bring together, inform, build capacity, and link African migrants and diaspora organisations across Europe. The platform allows for the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt for improved development work. Actors are brought together which work on an everyday basis towards what the MDGs have outlined as objectives for 2015. Diaspora remittances, for example, are continuously and strongly improving health care and are helping to put children into school. And the platform also links diaspora actors and provides opportunities for formulating a resilient voice and stronger representation in larger policy discussions. Empowering the diaspora entails governments and other stakeholders being forced to listen.

The diaspora is heterogeneous and should be so. There is room to find common ground, and a platform is an effective tool for cooperation and exchange. AEP is still in the process of platform building. Nonetheless, the project has identified dynamic individuals in the different European target countries, brought them together for European-wide meetings and capacity-building, and linked the project to national events to continue discussions on the inclusion of the African diaspora in development.

ENHANCING DIASPORA INCLUSION IN THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

With the UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) and the discussion around the post 2015 development framework at stake, ICMPD took the lead together with SDC, GIZ and ICMC in organising a roundtable on diaspora and development on preparing for the 2013 HLD. Here around 70 members of the diaspora engaged in development from across Europe were brought together to discuss the inclusion of migration and migrants in the post 2015 development framework. To ensure that the recommendations formulated during this event would make a global impact, a representative was chosen who subsequently travelled to NYC to present the recommendations at the during the United Nations interactive hearings of Civil Society on International Migration and
This event was an opportunity to share thoughts, concerns, and ideas with member states, civil society groups and international organisations worldwide. And we, members of the diaspora, ICMPD as an international organization, and European governments worked together to support the diaspora in making sure that a voice from diaspora organizations in Europe was present and heard.

PLATFORM BUILDING AS KEY

During the roundtable the need for stronger diaspora networks was highlighted repeatedly and thus one of the recommendations from the meeting outlined the importance of diaspora platform building “which are supported by, and act in partnership with, key stakeholders at the international, national and local levels.”

Diaspora transfers, be it money or knowledge, not only but particularly to countries of origin are increasingly tapped by governments and donors. It is thus time that the African diaspora takes every chance to step up and voice their concerns and thoughts in order to include the global diaspora alongside national governments in forging a new global partnership, as was requested during the IOM Diaspora Ministerial meeting in June this year, is no longer an option but a duty. For this, it is important that emphasis is placed on remaining hopeful and strong, and not losing too much time in contemplating the challenges ahead.

For combined efforts in development network building are key and it is this that we will continue to support as mediators at ICMPD because we believe that migration is development.

To conclude, we’d like to thank the organisers – Amadou Bocar Sam, our representative from Spain who has been crucial for the European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development project and Jara Henar from Allianza por la Solidaridad.

Sarah Schlaeger
ICMPD

Presentation of the Global Strategy Programme on Migration and Development and discussion on the topic of knowledge management on Migration and Development

Migration has been a factor for economic and human development since the dawn of mankind. It is an all encompassing phenomenon which reaches into a multitude of economic sectors and in many spheres of society, a symbol of a globalized world and a factor which intertwines people.

Migration has always been a factor in development for millions of people who migrate or take advantage of the migration of a third party. The Global Migration and Development Programme (GMPD) was established in 2009 by the SDC to increase in such a context the positive aspects of migration for development and to minimize the associated risks.

Over the past four years, the program has become a key player at the national and international level in this field. Continuing the 'Message Sud' ['message south'] on Development Cooperation adopted in 2012 and which includes migration as one of the most important challenges at the global level, a 2013-2017 strategy was developed by the Global Programme on Migration and Development (GPMD).

Besides the presentation of the 2013-2017 strategy, it will focus on the topic of knowledge management and collaboration with universities and other organizations involved in the field of migration and development. The KNOMAD project (Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development) benefit from significant support from SDC.

KNOMAD aims to provide a global platform for : a) the production of an innovative knowledge on migration and development and b) for the collection of data in a field still fairly virgin (www.knomad.org). Such a project can not produce conclusive results by ensuring a
strong interaction between academic centers and other actors in the field.

**LAUNCH OF GLOBAL "MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT" KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PLATFORM**

With the launch of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) in Geneva, researchers from around the world are being called upon to share their knowledge, generate new knowledge, and make it accessible to the public. Switzerland provides financial support to this new World Bank instrument and is a member of its steering committee.

For a number of years, Switzerland has advocated realising the potential of migration for sustainable development and combating negative effects such as human trafficking. Solid facts and relevant statistics are indispensable instruments to carry out this work. KNOMAD, which is supported by the SDC, is to become the international reference point for knowledge management in this area. KNOMAD will be launched in Geneva on 11 September 2013 in the presence of the director-general of the SDC, ambassador Martin Dahinden, and high-ranking representatives of the World Bank and other partner organisations.

**PLATFORM FOR RESEARCHERS**

The overarching goal of KNOMAD is to give state and non-state actors access to facts, statistics and findings in the field of migration and development. Researchers from all over the world are invited to pool their knowledge in a single platform. It is the first time this has been possible on such a scale. In addition, new knowledge is to be generated through the participation of internationally recognised experts. KNOMAD will also use state-of-the-art technology to turn the information it collects into an easily accessible public good. The inclusion of partners in developing and emerging countries will ensure that issues that have hitherto received scant attention from the academic research community – such as South-South migration – will also be examined. Civil society will also benefit from KNOMAD by presenting its work to a broad public and by using the platform's products. KNOMAD can also, upon request, conduct specific studies and supply data sets to be used for policy development purposes.

Lastly, the platform will also play a key role in international dialogue on migration and development, for example in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

**SWITZERLAND IN THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

As early as the late 1990s, the World Bank emphasised the importance of knowledge in international cooperation, and played a pioneering role in knowledge management in the field of migration and development.

Switzerland has underwritten this multi-year project to the tune of 5 m Swiss Francs and is currently its largest donor. This contribution enables Switzerland, which is a member of the steering committee, to exert direct influence on KNOMAD’s future development. Like the international community as a whole, Switzerland also stands to gain from KNOMAD and will be able to put its knowledge and information to good use, both in projects in the field and through its participation in
international processes. Beata Godenzi, head of the SDC’s Global Programme Migration and Development, also chairs the Technical Working Group on Policy and Institutional Coherence, one of KNOMAD’s 12 thematic working groups.

KNOMAD website: www.knomad.org

Le projet EADPD est financé par l’Union européenne et co-financé par l’Agence suisse pour le Développement et la Coopération, le Ministère néerlandais des Affaires étrangères et la GIZ.