

Fourth Informal Thematic Session on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

“Contribution of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits”

23-24 July 2017

Intervention by Jamaica in Panel 3

Thank you Moderator. Let me thank all the panelists for their very good presentations today.

Jamaica has a proportionately large diaspora scattered all across the world but primarily concentrated in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Our government has long recognized the essential role that the Diaspora plays in supporting national development, not only through high levels of remittances but also through philanthropic and entrepreneurial activities; as an example, the Diaspora has contributed some US\$5.1 million to the healthcare sector since the start of this year. For this reason we have created a structured mechanism for diaspora engagement to help streamline the engagement in order to enhance the mutually beneficial relationship. We also designated June 16 as Jamaica Diaspora Day since 2005.

I will highlight two parts of our Diaspora engagement:

As we speak, Jamaica is hosting the 6th Biennial Conference of the Jamaican Diaspora under the theme "Partnering for Growth". Out of the Conference we anticipate developing strategic actions to optimize human and financial capital, to grow and sustain the Diaspora's contribution to the country's growth, and at the same time identify actions to provide solutions for the socio-economic problems facing the Diaspora in destination countries. Simultaneously, we have developed official structures within the major Diaspora centers, whereby the Diaspora can select regional representatives to be the main interlocutors with the Government through what we call a Diaspora Advisory Board.

We also use both mechanisms to target and engage second and third generation Jamaicans within the Diaspora. This two-pronged model has proven successful for Jamaica and can be modified and replicated elsewhere.

Questions:

Since remittances are private funds and not considered ODA or FDI, how can we more accurately measure their impact on SDG implementation? Should we seek to devise means of tracking the purposes and/or use of remittance funds? We should bear in mind here as well that remittances are not the sole economic contribution of Diasporas to their countries of origin and that not all remittances are directed towards development.

On mobile money services, are there capacity building measures to help countries with the necessary regulatory mechanisms and also to support uptake among those members of society who often prefer face to face and hard cash transactions.