

Migration is an essential and accepted aspect of Bahamian life. The Bahamas has a rich history of the continual ebb and flows of people moving into, away from and around the archipelago. Even today, the propensity for migration and general responsiveness to moving to wherever there are opportunities continues to be high though marked by certain changes through the years.

While discourse on migration tends to focus on the negative aspects of irregular migration, The Bahamas, because of its own historical experience with the movement of migrants, is acutely mindful of the potential yields of regular migration. It is likewise aware of the aggressive, criminal enterprises that benefit from irregular migration and the challenges of managing increasing influxes of migrants.

The Bahamas, therefore, considers imperative the development of a comprehensive approach to migration, that has a focus on the root causes of migration, includes the establishment of appropriate mechanisms that can help to ensure that migration occurs through safe and regulated channels, and the development of specific programmes that produce environments where the benefits of migration can be derived and cause positive feedback.

The overarching objective of the migration policy of the Government of The Bahamas is to ensure the security, well-being and economic progress of The Bahamas, while respecting the human rights and dignity of migrants and refugees.

The Bahamas has a unique migration situation, based on its geographical location, its economic and social prosperity, relative to the region, and the porous nature of its archipelagic topography. Consequently, there is a high prevalence of irregular migration and the isolated nature of many islands results in unknown arrivals, resulting in challenges to the formulation of effective, evidence-based migration policies.

Outside of traditional border and social security concerns that impact policies relating to immigration and migration, the financial benefits of strategic immigration are a major migration priority. In The Bahamas, presently, matters pertinent to migration fall under the Ministry of Financial Services, Trade and Industry and Immigration.

In addition to the foregoing, the Government of The Bahamas is actively seeking to strengthen engagement with the Bahamian diaspora to boost national growth and sustainable development through the creation of the relevant structures and the provision of opportunities for inclusion in policy development processes, for example.

Finally, The Bahamas is concerned that the continued loss of a disproportionate number of highly qualified and skilled persons through migration has created deficits in the reservoir of human resources with potential negative implications for national development.

Within this context, The Bahamas would wish to propose that the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration include the following objectives.

- *A coordinated approach and cooperation framework to improve data for migration policies*
- *A systematic and coordinated approach to the generation and analyses of databases on the circulation of people not recorded in any systematic way through traditional migration statistics*
- *Mapping diasporas*
- *Facilitation of diaspora engagement in origin communities through, for example, the establishment of frameworks to encourage entrepreneurship, financial investment in major projects, participation in the development of national policies and strategies, and assistance to social welfare projects*
- *Promotion of initiatives that facilitate diaspora engagement in host countries. For example, Caribbean populations in North America provide critical channels for Caribbean culture and product.*
- *Coordination of efforts to remove obstacles of remittance transfers*
- *Consideration of alternative money transfer channels*
- *The establishment of diaspora associations and partnerships to create critical linkages, consolidate networks, and improve collaboration among different actors*
- *Determining the impact of the disproportionate loss of educated and skilled persons through migration on affected countries? For example, does it create a net loss for the countries affected? Is there a compensatory set of movements?*

- *Facilitation of programmes that promote the return of qualified persons to countries of origin*
- *Promotion of collaborative initiatives that seek to address labour market issues that result in pressure to seek migration opportunities*
- *Enhancement of knowledge of international and commercial recruitment and its cor/relation to migration*
- *Support for national capacities to govern international labour recruitment*
- *Encouragement of research on climate change that establishes it as a driver of migration*