



Unlocking the Power of Diaspora: New Partnerships for Development

Report of the Side Event held in New York, 24 July 2017 in conjunction with the Fourth Informal Thematic Session of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)

On 24 July 2017, a side event on “**Unlocking the Power of Diaspora: New Partnerships for Development**” in conjunction with the Fourth Informal Thematic Session of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) was co-hosted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco and Serbia.

The side event was held within the framework of the Global Joint Programme on Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It brought together representatives of governments, civil society and diaspora leaders to exchange experiences and share best practice on effective partnerships to maximize the human and professional capital of diaspora for development at local, national and international levels.

Emerging from the side event were three areas of action: **Engage**, **Enable** and **Empower** for governments and other stakeholders to consider focusing their efforts on.

1. **Engage.** Knowing and understanding transnational communities is crucial to engaging with them effectively and developing the appropriate outreach strategies towards diaspora. Suggested actions include:
 - Developing effective mechanisms for consultation and engagement to allow diaspora groups to voice their needs and interests. Social media and connectivity can play an important role here. For example, the online [iDiaspora Platform](#) is being used to engage migrant and diaspora communities in discussions around the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
 - Improving data on diaspora to develop effective methodologies to map and survey transnational communities. This information can be used to assess the socioeconomic profile of diaspora and their willingness to contribute to the development of their countries of origin.



2. **Enable.** Establishing appropriate frameworks at the local and national level can enable transnational communities to become effective agents for development. Suggested actions include:

- Strengthening political and institutional frameworks to reduce the social and financial costs of migration. For example, promoting ethical labour recruitment in order to protect job-seekers; reducing the costs of remittances; and developing institutional policies in countries of origin that mainstream migration into national development policies.
- Developing effective integration policies to create environments in which the rights of migrants are protected and diaspora communities are not excluded and are empowered in terms of decision-making and political participation.

3. **Empower.** Transnational communities will spontaneously transfer resources and strengthen links between their countries of origin and destination, in spite of the barriers that may exist. Putting in place special measures and specific programmes to support them to do this can be beneficial. Suggested actions include:

- Establishing diaspora placement programmes to enable qualified and skilled diaspora members to support policy development in specific sectors in their countries of origin. These types of programmes could also support capacity building amongst local staff to ensure their long-term sustainability.
- Supporting the formation of diaspora professional networks to encourage knowledge and skills exchange. Student networks can play an important role in harnessing the knowledge, experience and contacts that students gain abroad. Platforms such as trade fairs and business summits can also provide useful opportunities to bring stakeholders together.
- Creating knowledge exchange hubs to provide comprehensive resources and data for policymakers and diaspora communities. These could also be used to showcase best practice and examples of diaspora partnerships.