



## **Report from the ADPC Training Workshop**

### **Capacity Building for Policymakers serving in the Newly-formed Diaspora Ministries in Africa**

**Accra, 22-27 November 2010**



## **Introduction**

On 22-27 November 2010, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) organized the first training workshop for African policymakers serving in the newly-formed diaspora-oriented ministries in Africa. The training workshop was held at the Alisa Hotel in Accra. This training workshop, which was the first of its kind, was developed in response to capacity deficits affecting the performance of the emerging diaspora ministries and other institutions tasked with overseeing diaspora and development related matters in many countries in Africa. The purpose of the training course was to strengthen the capacity of diaspora-oriented policymakers in Africa by providing them with the essential knowledge, skills and tools to develop feasible policies aimed at maximising the contribution of the diaspora to the development of their respective home countries.

This is the first of two trainings that will be organized during the period of the project. The second training course will take place in spring 2011. For this first workshop, 12 participants were selected, representing six countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Rwanda. The selection criteria were based on regional representation, post-conflict and stable countries, as well as forerunners and newcomers in the field of migration and development. In particular, the workshop was able to provide an opportunity for latecomers to the field to learn from the experiences and good practices of the forerunners. More concretely, it helped representatives from countries such as Liberia and Kenya to learn from the successful diaspora-oriented programmes implemented by Ethiopia and Rwanda.



Furthermore, the training workshop provided a unique platform, enabling participants to establish viable contacts, networks, freely exchange valuable information and share best practices and positive experiences on engaging the diaspora for the development of their respective countries. Indeed, there are a number of best practices in the context of both policies and programmes that the African countries could share, something that the participants greatly appreciated.

## **Description of the training course**

The training course was developed in response to capacity deficits affecting the performance of emerging diaspora ministries in many African countries. In recent years, there has been a significant change in many African governments' perception of their overseas diaspora. Diasporas are increasingly seen as positive actors who can contribute substantially to the development of their homelands. Not only in terms of financial transfers (remittances) but also in terms of knowledge transfer and building capacity of individuals, organisations and institutions. The growing awareness of this potential has led an increasing number of African countries to initiate diaspora-friendly policies and set up specific institutions or ministries for that purpose. For instance, there are now more than 30 African countries that have established diaspora-oriented institutions and ministries in order to address diaspora issues more professionally. However, these newly formed diaspora-oriented institutions often lack the capacity to develop well-informed and effective migration and development policies.

This lack of capacity is three-fold: (1) lack of relevant knowledge and information tailored to their specific policymaking needs; (2) limited exposure to best practices and lessons learned from the experiences of other countries both in Africa and beyond; and (3) lack of technical capabilities to develop a national Migration and Development Strategy Paper (MDSP) that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions. This training is developed for government officials serving in the newly-formed diaspora ministries and other institutions tasked with overseeing diaspora and development related matters.

## **Content of the training course**

The content of the training course is designed in a manner that is tailored to the specific policymaking needs of the African government officials dealing with diaspora and diaspora issues in their respective countries. The courses are organized to ensure that trainers gain access to up-to-date information in the field, which will enable them to make better informed policy choices and more appropriate decisions in their practical interventions. It is organized to enhance the knowledge and policy-capacity insights of the African officials dealing with diaspora and development related issues in a tangible manner.

The key issues that the training course covers include an introduction into the existing literature and policy discussions in the field. It also includes an overview of the nature and patterns of the diaspora organisations and associations, as well as the modus operandi of their vast transnational networks (criss-crossing countries and continents) linking the process of globalisation to the local conditions of their respective countries of origin. Moreover, the training provides an account of the development related activities in which diaspora groups and

organisations are involved and the areas where their intervention can be more effective in terms of homeland development. Furthermore, the training course deals with issues related to innovative mobilisation strategies that homeland governments should adopt in order to entice and connect the diaspora to homeland development. Another important aspect covered by the training course is the lessons learned from good practices in engaging diaspora in the homeland development both in Africa and beyond. Finally, the training course equips the trainees with the technical capabilities to develop a diaspora-oriented national policy strategy, which would facilitate the integration of diaspora-driven development into the overall national development agenda.

### **Key components of the training course**

The key components of the training course are:

- ▶ Overview of the migration and development discourse
- ▶ Best practices: cases in Africa and beyond
- ▶ Capacity building for policy development



### **Overview of the migration and development discourse**

This background component of the training course introduces, in a concise manner, the different phases that the migration study has passed through historically. It addresses migration study as an historical, cultural and development phenomenon. It also discusses migration in terms of human movements and processes versus the key livelihood strategy for poor people, as well as being an opportunity to promote development in the original homelands. Furthermore, the training course introduces an overview of the shifting debates in the field from the 1960s to 2010. In addition, this section of the training course also addresses migration management, different dimensions of migration and development and perspectives of the diaspora and migration as a policy arena and a public discourse. Finally, the trainees are familiarised with both intercontinental and global debates on migration and development, such as the strategic role of the African diaspora in Europe within the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan, adopted in Lisbon in 2007, as well as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

In this regard, this background component of the training course helped the trainees to obtain a basic knowledge of the field particularly tailored to their needs. It also enabled them to become acquainted with the distinct topics and themes of the study of migration, as well as the relevant

literature on the subject. Furthermore, the trainees have been exposed to the different dimensions in the field, as well as to the ongoing policy debates on the issues within the development cooperation circles at several levels.

### **Best practices: cases in Africa and beyond**

This section of the training course offers examples of best practices in diaspora-driven development interventions in the homelands. Since the nexus between migration and development has gained a global prominence, different countries and continents have undertaken initiatives to benefit from the development potential of their diaspora communities living abroad. However, certain continents and countries have been quicker to assume a leading role than others in this regard. For instance, in comparison with their Asian and Latin American counterparts, many countries have not taken full advantage of the vast untapped potential of their overseas diaspora. Likewise, similar trends can be discerned within Africa, as not all countries are at the same stage in their dealings with the diaspora and development-related issues. Countries such as Mali, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, for example, are leading the way, while many others are only now joining the field.



The training workshop provides the countries that are new to this area with an opportunity to learn from the experiences and good practices of those at the forefront of the field. It also offers ample opportunities for the trainees to exchange and showcase examples and catalysts of existing policies, programmes and successes in their respective countries that might be replicated by others. Moreover, the training workshop provides a platform for the diaspora-oriented African government policymakers representing diverse countries and regions on the continent to exchange policymaking information, to learn from each other's experience and to share best practices and positive lessons in their dealing with diaspora and development related matters

At the first training workshop in Accra, participants were introduced to a number of concrete programmes deemed to be examples of best practice. The selected programmes were initiated and implemented by diverse countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Examples included the Diaspora Corporate Bond (DCB) established by the government of Ethiopia; the Tax Relief for Non-Resident Indians Scheme introduced by the government of India; Diaspora Volunteering Programme (DVP) implemented by Voluntary Services (VSO) and African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), UK; and the Matching Fund set up by the Mexican Home Town Associations in the US and supported by the government of Mexico.

The participants in the training critically examined the merits and demerits of these selected programmes. They also discussed the opportunities and limitations of replicating some of the programmes in their respective countries, the need to consider the specificity of the local context, national priorities and the importance of the political will of governments, etc. Furthermore, the training facilitated participants learning from each other by sharing experiences of concrete programmes, such as the Rwandan Diaspora Mutual Fund initiated by the government of Rwanda and the Nigerian National Volunteer Service, which was set up by the government of Nigerian to support the development initiatives of the diaspora.

The best practice exercise was presented in a manner that actively sought the critical articulations of the participants. The deliberations were also facilitated in a way that encouraged the trainees to question the viability of the selected case studies and to come up with alternative ideas and suggestions for improvements. In short, the whole exercise was set up to unlock or stir the critical mind of the trainees. The facilitator exhorted participants to come up with counter arguments regarding the viability of the selected programmes rather than simply accepting them as best practice cases to be replicated without sharp scrutiny of their expected development impact.

Ultimately, this aspect of the training course facilitated the participants to gain access to unique best practices both in policies and programmes, something that would not have been possible without this workshop. Gaining access to valuable best practices has not only enriched the experience of the participants but it has also widened their horizon of possible options for tapping the resources of the diaspora for the development of their respective homelands.

### **Capacity building for policy development**

Capacity building for policy development is a critical component of the training course. It is designed to provide the trainees with appropriate knowledge and information about policy development. Increased policy insights in the field enable African policymakers to make more informed policy choices and appropriate decisions in their practical interventions. It also enables them to devise appropriate instruments for effectively harnessing the considerable resources of

the diaspora for the development of their respective home countries. Furthermore, improved policy insights provide them with the capacity to engage in effective policy dialogue with their counterparts in Europe and beyond. Likewise, it enables them to articulate professionally in their dealings with both the diaspora organisations and the diaspora-oriented institutions in the host countries.

This capacity building for policy development is also designed to equip the trainees with the technical capability to draft a diaspora-oriented policy document. This is a policy paper that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions. Acquiring sound technical capability for diaspora-oriented national policy development can easily facilitate governments to integrate the diaspora-driven development into the overall national development agenda, notably through programmes such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



In this regard, the training course offered the trainees information on the theoretical, practical and policy related aspects tailored to their specific policy development needs within the framework of migration and development. More concretely, the training course provided a theory of policy development, examples for policy development and tools for effective policy development. Similarly, the training course offered diverse learning techniques. It facilitated the discussion of examples of government policy papers developed by others countries. In addition, some of the participants presented initial ideas for national policy documents that they are currently developing. A good example is Ethiopia, where the government is currently drafting a diaspora-oriented national policy strategy, which will be officially launched in early 2011. A key aspect of this section of the course was the facilitator providing individual coaching to trainees.

Furthermore, throughout the training workshop, participants were encouraged to practice writing exercises coached with the light-hearted slogan that 'If it is difficult to write the first sentence of the policy paper, start with the second one'. On the last day of the training

workshop, each of the participants presented a draft policy paper, an important milestone after a week-long exercise.

Writing a proper policy paper is a complex enterprise. Acquiring a capacity for policy development demands a simultaneous provision of background information and knowledge, tools and related technical capability, sharing best practices and undertaking repetitive and rigorous writing exercises on the spot. This is precisely what the participants in the workshop were offered in the training course.

## **Methodology**

The training workshop is designed in an interactive and face-to-face format. It is also designed to stimulate participatory learning, which encourages participants to openly exchange information, knowledge and share good practices both in policy and programme related operations. In this context, the Chatham house rules are adopted in order to facilitate a free flow of ideas that is conducive to a dynamic exchange of ideas and experiences.

## **The training workshop has achieved the following results:**

Participants in the training course:

- ▶ Obtained new knowledge and up-to-date information tailored to their specific policymaking needs.
- ▶ Gained knowledge about best practices from each other and from the experiences of other countries in Africa and elsewhere.
- ▶ Acquired innovative strategies geared to mobilising the diaspora for the homeland development.
- ▶ Developed technical capabilities to design a national Migration and Development Strategy Paper (MDSP), which can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.
- ▶ Gained policy and practical insights on how diaspora-driven development can be integrated into the overall national development agenda, notably, through programmes such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



## **Broadening the topic of the capacity building programme**

During the training workshop, participants proposed to broaden the topic of the capacity building programme. In addition to the capacity building training, participants identified other critical areas requiring urgent interventions in order to further increase their policy insights and practical operations in the field. These proposed additional interventions would ensure a cumulative effect in terms of boosting their capability to design effective policy instruments. In turn, this would facilitate the integration of diaspora-driven development into the overall national development agenda in their respective countries. The areas identified are: African consultative forum on migration and development (ACFMD); online course; direct technical assistance; strengthening the capacity of regional consultative processes; and evidence-based best practices case studies.

1. African Consultative Forum on Migration and Development (ACFMD). This forum would facilitate the exchange of good practices (policies and programmes) on a regular basis among policymakers in Africa dealing with diaspora and development related issues. The forum would also facilitate peer consultation among policymakers. It was proposed that the ACFMD should be held twice a year, rotating from one country to another.
2. Online courses. The government participants in the training workshop proposed to launch an online training course, which would enable them to continue learning and to gain access to up-to-date information in the field. This would go some way to redressing the current lack of access to the most recent knowledge generated on the subject. Moreover, continued access to up-to-date information in the field will allow for better-informed policy choices and appropriate decisions in practical interventions. Furthermore, providing online courses is an inexpensive and effective way to increase participation of diaspora-oriented policymakers in many countries in Africa.
3. Direct technical assistance. The government participants have indicated a need for direct technical assistance in the form of consultancy, coaching and mentoring. They will also require capacity building training for diverse groups of policymakers within each country, in order that more diaspora-oriented officials are trained. This direct technical assistance should focus both on supporting the development of effective diaspora-oriented policy and the implementation of diaspora-oriented programmes on the ground. Ultimately, the government participants are of the view that direct and concentrated technical assistance would enable them to acquire the capability to develop a national Migration and Development Strategy Paper (MDSP), which can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.

4. Strengthening the capacity of regional consultative processes. The government participants requested that the capacity of regional bodies, such as IGAD in East Africa and ECOWAS in West Africa, be strengthened in terms of the management of migration within the continent. This is important as developing effective regional policy approaches to migration movements can foster alliances and strategic partnerships among countries in the field of migration and development.
5. Evidence-based best practices and case studies. The participants indicated the importance of documenting best practices in those policies and programmes already initiated by African countries. Such case studies showcase successful experiences that should be widely disseminated.



The training workshop was facilitated by renowned international experts in the field of migration and development. Collectively, the unique quality of each expert resulted in the training course being a successful endeavour. The training workshop would not have been possible without the support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cordaid and the Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) of the Government of Germany. ADPC is committed to strengthening the policymaking capacities of African policymakers serving in the newly-formed diaspora-oriented institutions.

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