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# **Background Document for ADPC Workshop at GFMD Event in Mexico**

# **Report of the Preparatory Meeting**

## **Executive Summary**

On October 13-14, 2010, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), in cooperation with the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a two-day preparatory meeting in Addis Ababa. The preparatory meeting was organized for African policymakers responsible for engaging diaspora for development prior to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) that will be held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, from 8-11 November 2010. The Mexican Chair-in Office is keen to see enhanced participation in the GFMD 2010 process from a number of regions, notably, Africa. In this regard, he welcomed the initiative taken by ADPC with the support of the MacArthur Foundation to enable more African policy makers to participate in the GFMD event in Mexico.

A diverse group of diaspora-oriented African government officials, holding high-ranking positions with great responsibilities in their respective governments participated in the preparatory meeting. They represented various countries and regions on the continent. The countries they represented are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda. All representatives expressed a great willingness to speak to the GFMD with one voice, and to formulate a concrete and realisable action plan.

The purpose of the preparatory meeting was to provide a platform to deliberate on matters of common interest in the field of migration and development within the context of Africa. The participants discussed a number of issues reflecting their concerns and aspirations on matters related to diaspora and development. As a result, they have identified a number of challenges that require urgent policy attention.

### **Key Points**

- **Participants noted the lack of access to reliable information and data on the number, location and skills-profile of their diaspora overseas**
- **The limited capacity to develop diaspora outreach strategies and to design diaspora-oriented national policy strategy was highlighted. This greatly hampers efforts to reach out to the diaspora and engage them deeply with the development of their countries of origin**
- **Participants drew attention to the capacity deficiency for policy coherence and cooperation and for implementation of diaspora-oriented programmes**
- **The complexity of dealing with irregular migration – within and outside of the continent – was observed. Strategic regional partnerships are required as well as exploring new models such as ‘ Circular Migration’ in order to deal with this effectively**
- **Network building is currently poor among participants. A mechanism must be sought to facilitate – on a more systematic basis – the exchange of good practices**

**(policies and programmes) among policymakers in Africa dealing with diaspora and development related issues**

### **Action Plan**

Participants identified a number of policy priorities for an Action Plan both collective and at the individual country level that can be translated into realisable programmes within a feasible period of time.

#### **Collective Action Plan**

- **Establish a mechanism that facilitates the exchange of good practices in the form of an African Consultative Forum on Migration and Development (ACFMD)**
- **Develop diaspora outreach strategies such as the creation of a national ‘Diaspora Guide’**
- **Create policy coherence by: establishing or appointing a focal institution responsible for coordination of diaspora policy; establishing a diaspora advisory council comprised of representatives from all institutions that deal with diaspora affairs; creating a matrix of roles and responsibilities among ministries and agencies**
- **Establish capacity building programmes along the lines of the ADPC’s ‘Capacity-Building Programme’ for the newly-formed Diaspora Ministries in Africa**
- **Undertake concerted efforts for data collection and evidence-based study**
- **Advocate for an International Year for Migration and Development in order to maintain the momentum and generate renewed attention, new knowledge and high-level support**

### Country Level Action Plan

Representatives of a number of countries participated in the meeting, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda have made specific commitments. They presented Action Plans which their respective countries have made into key priorities in 2011

- **The government of Kenya is committed to creating a complete diaspora-oriented communication strategy and a national diaspora policy paper by next year**
- **The government of Benin is committed to initiate a diaspora outreach programme which will promote trust and build confidence between diaspora and the institutions in the country. The programme will put in place mechanisms and policy measures that help diaspora returnees with administration, registration, logistical support and business counseling for those who wants to set up business in the country. Furthermore, the country is currently preparing a ‘welcome back home’ event for the diaspora**
- **The government of Senegal has committed to advocate for the creation of an International Year for Migration and Development. This will be done in order to maintain the momentum, generate renewed attention, new knowledge and high-level support**
- **The government of Ethiopia is committed to develop a diaspora-oriented national policy strategy which will be officially launched in early 2011**
- **The government of Burkina Faso is committed to develop a ‘Diaspora Guide’ which provides information about how diaspora can contribute to the development of the country and what Burkina Faso can do for them. Furthermore, the government of Burkina Faso is reaching out to the diaspora to help mediate and connect international companies with the companies in the country**
- **The government of Uganda is committed to creating one focal institution that coordinates the government policy on diaspora and development related matters. The institution will also be tasked to facilitate the annual conference ‘Home is the best’ which the government organizes for the diaspora with the aim of exposing them to the existing opportunities in the country**
- **The government of Rwanda is committed to increase effective use of modern communication and information technology in order to reach out to the diaspora. This will make it easier for the diaspora to transfer urgently needed knowledge, expertise and resources. Thereby remaining deeply engaged with the development of the country**

## 1. Background

On October 13-14, 2010, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), in cooperation with the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a two-day preparatory meeting in Addis Ababa. The preparatory meeting was organized for African policymakers responsible for engaging diaspora for development prior to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) that will be held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, from 8-11 November 2010.

Until now, diaspora-oriented policymakers in Africa have been under-represented in GFMD meetings and preparatory processes. Consequently, the voices, concerns and aspirations of African governments have been lacking in the deliberations on migration and development related issues at the global level. To redress this imbalance, ADPC took the initiative to ensure that diaspora-oriented policymakers in Africa will be well-represented at the fourth GFMD in Mexico. The participation of these policymakers in the GFMD consultations and policy dialogue will further enhance their knowledge, networks and policymaking capacity in the field of migration and development and raise the profile of their respective countries in Africa at the global level. Furthermore, the GFMD event will provide African representatives with the opportunity to express their concerns and policy priorities with regards to engaging their diaspora for the development of their respective countries.

The preparatory meeting provided a platform for 15 diaspora-oriented African government officials to deliberate on issues of common interest in the field of migration and development within the context of Africa and to formulate an Action Plan that will be presented at the forthcoming GFMD. As one of the participants expressed during the meeting: *'Now is the time to take African ownership of the GFMD agenda and to express common concerns and ideas'*.

The meeting was generously hosted by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mebrat Beyene, Director General of Ethiopian Expatriates Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided an introductory presentation, which emphasised the leading role that the Ethiopian government is playing in the field of migration and development within the context of Africa. She also announced that the Ethiopian government has developed a diaspora-oriented national policy strategy which will be officially launched in early 2011. This policy strategy emphasises the importance that the government of Ethiopia has afforded to their diaspora abroad; communities it considers to be valuable partners for the development of the country. Furthermore, Mrs Beyene stated that the Ethiopian government is pleased to host the first meeting of the proposed African Consultative Forum on Migration and Development (ACFMD) planned in April 2011.

Over the course of the meeting the participants identified a number of issues reflecting their concerns and aspirations on matters related to diaspora and development. For each of these issues challenges, best practices and ways forward were identified, which were then translated into an Action Plan. The issues can be defined along the following five lines: (a) **knowledge, evidence and data**; (b) **outreach**; (c) **policy formulation, coherence and implementation**; (d) **irregular migration**; (e) **networking and exchange**.

## 2. Knowledge, evidence and data

### *Challenges*

Participants were unanimous in their judgment that, in general, there is a lack of access to reliable information and data on the number, location and skills profile of their diaspora. In order to be able to harness the resources these diaspora have to offer, it is critical to have access to disaggregated data by training, profession, status and gender. In this regard, it was remarked that it is not necessarily only the highly skilled migrants that can make a valuable contribution to development. Ghana stated, for example, that lesser skilled migrants can be useful resources in mechanized agriculture.

A complicating factor in collecting data is that there are large groups of diaspora that are difficult to trace due to their irregular status and changes of nationality and name. Ethiopia gave the example of their migrants that move to the Middle East and adopt a new Muslim name, or go to Europe where they 'lose their passport' and apply for asylum under another name. Chad also indicated difficulties in retracing those that left the country as war refugees and who are now frequently living irregularly in other parts of Africa.

In addition to the aforementioned lack of data, there seems to be a general lack of access to tailor-made information and evidence-based research on what kind of policy interventions are feasible and effective. For example, there is an emphasis nowadays on providing realistic information on migration and employment opportunities in the West, as well as on the dangers and downsides of irregular migration. However, the extent to which this provision of information constrains people's movements remains unclear. Another question raised was, what are the real benefits of tax incentives for diaspora investors and returnees?

### *Best Practices*

- For a number of years, Senegal – through the Senegalese consular network – has maintained a database of skilled Senegalese abroad. The database now includes the profiles of 5,000 Senegalese who have voluntarily registered. The database allows for regular updates of profiles and curriculums and is used to invite Senegalese experts to come to Senegal for short missions.
- Kenya is currently undertaking a formal survey of the profile of their diaspora abroad with a view to promoting cooperation in the development of the country in certain areas.
- Mali has made use of the many Malian diaspora associations abroad in order to conduct an informal survey of their diaspora.

### *Policy Considerations*

- i. Concerted efforts for data collection and evidence-based study, by **mapping existing data** and programmes, and ensuring these programmes, such as the current World Bank survey, match the needs of African governments regarding diaspora and development related matters.
- ii. Integrate diaspora and migrant data into **national censuses**.

- iii. Be **pragmatic** and ‘pick the low-hanging fruits first’. Look first looking at countries that host a relatively large number of diaspora. Register diaspora via affiliated associations, as there are some cases of diaspora being unwilling to register on an individual basis.

### 3. Outreach

#### **Challenges**

The greatest challenge, unanimously identified by participants, is that, even if you have (partly) identified where and who your diaspora are, how do you reach out to them effectively? How do you encourage diaspora to invest, transfer technology and knowledge, to engage in philanthropy and tourism and to make positive political contributions?

One major impediment in reaching out to diaspora is the limited capacity of many African governments in terms of knowledge and resources. This impedes the development of coherent diaspora outreach strategies and the implementation of such strategies, in particular through consular networks. Also lacking, in this regard, is effective regional and continental cooperation to facilitate learning and to pool resources, for example by sharing embassies and consular services. Especially in terms of high-skilled migration, sometimes referred to as ‘brain drain’, it was deemed important to work more closely with countries of destination in order to forge partnerships and twinning arrangements that would allow for (temporary) return and compensation models.

Another complicating factor is the often limited level of organization among the diaspora themselves. They tend to be scattered and sometimes even divided along political lines, which can hamper effective outreach strategies. While diaspora can be important brokers for promoting the image of their country of origin abroad, a way of encouraging ‘external’ investments and development projects, they do not always fulfill this role effectively. For this reason, it was deemed important that diaspora have easy access to coherent and comprehensive information on state-of-the-art developments within the country of origin, something currently lacking.

#### **Best practices**

- In recent years, several countries have organized home-coming and diaspora investment days in the home-country. For example, Mali organized a Diaspora Forum for Investment in 2009 and a Diaspora Forum for Intellectual Engagement in 2010 as a way of maximizing the contribution by diaspora to development.
- Senegal has developed a ‘solidarity programme’ to engage their diaspora in development through the following strategies: encouraging investment in Senegal; mobilizing scientific and technical Senegalese for short term return missions in Senegal; supporting local development projects in sectors such as clean water, health, education, infrastructure and agriculture; asking diaspora to contribute to bringing ICT and innovation to remote areas.
- Rwanda has created a diaspora policy resting on three pillars: (1) to mobilize the diaspora; (2) to encourage return; (3) to improve the image of Rwanda abroad via ‘Diaspora Ambassadors’.
- Dual citizenship was identified as one of the practical measures that allows for diaspora to return more easily, travel back and forth, invest and be politically involved. Several African countries, including Mozambique, already allow dual citizenship. Through its new constitution, Kenya has also recently made the shift to permitting dual citizenship.
- Rwanda organized a ‘one-dollar-campaign’, during commemorations to mark the genocide that occurred 15 years ago. Each member in the diaspora was asked to contribute at least one dollar to rebuild the country. Within six months, the campaign had collected one million dollars.

### ***Policy Considerations***

- i. To organize cultural and other **events in host countries** through consular networks and well established associations, in order to create a sense of belonging and oneness. Events could be organized around music, sports, dance, celebrating national days or around investment opportunities and professional lines.
- ii. To host **home-land events** and home-coming days to keep diaspora attached to their homeland, to encourage investments and return and to show the reality and new opportunities the country has to offer. To be pragmatic and cost-efficient, such events could be organized during periods when many diaspora return to their homeland anyway, such as around the Christmas holidays.
- iii. To promote the establishment of **diaspora banks** in order to encourage investments in the home country
- iv. To **train professionals in the Foreign Service** and to sensitize them to diaspora affairs. This could involve creating a manual and training workshops and appointing a diaspora focal point in each embassy/consulate.
- v. To create a '**Diaspora Guide**' at the country level. This would include all information on the country of origin that could be relevant for diaspora, such as rules and procedures, investment opportunities, return provision and so on.
- vi. To establish a diaspora **return and reintegration desk**, including information on local employment opportunities, language training and legal requirements.
- vii. To make use of modern **communication and information technology** and to create networks and connectedness among diaspora.
- viii. Ensure an **enabling environment** for investment and return, by reducing administrative burdens and levels of corruption, providing tax incentives, allowing dual citizenship, and other measures.
- ix. Identify and engage with diaspora leaders and appoint them as **honourable consuls**. Kenya is a good example.
- x. Ensure involvement of **high-ranking officials and politicians** by, for example, adopting a policy that anytime an official visits a country abroad a meeting with diaspora will be organized to ensure good will and recognition.
- xi. Look to diaspora located within the region (i.e. in other African countries), as these groups are often larger in numbers and easier to reach.



## 4. Policy formulation, implementation and coherence

### **Challenges**

Creating effective and coherent outreach strategies requires knowledge, resources, human capacity, political will and long-term commitment. The lack of any of these elements poses major constraints on making well-informed policy choices and developing feasible strategic interventions and actions that can maximize the contribution of the diaspora to development. These challenges exist on multiple levels:

1. Lack of single comprehensive national policy on migration and development.
2. Failure to integrate migration and diaspora into national development planning and poverty reduction strategies.
3. Lack of coherence and national coordination of policies and competition among branches of government.
4. Lack of political support.
5. Inadequate and ineffective implementation.

Mozambique was held up as an example of a country with all supporting structures in place, such as an institution to support Mozambicans living abroad, visa exemptions for neighboring countries, dual nationality and so on. The challenge now, however, is how to make these policies effective for development on the ground. Several participants indicated that diaspora are often not seen as important agents for development across the board in government. For example, officials in foreign missions often do not seem to regard diaspora issues as paramount.

### **Best Practices**

- Nigeria has appointed one institution as the focal agency on diaspora issues and migration and development. This agency has overall responsibility for coordinating with all other relevant institutions. In addition, Nigeria has integrated diaspora issues into its general migration policies and has created a draft bill to establish a Diaspora Commission. Nigeria also intends to establish diaspora focal points in their embassies and representations abroad, starting with Saudi Arabia in 2011.
- Uganda has recently established a national working group on migration and diaspora, comprising all relevant ministries and institutions. It aims to create a diaspora policy strategy paper in the coming year.
- Senegal followed a well-defined roadmap to arrive at a national diaspora strategy. They started with organizing national consultation days, which involved representatives from the Senegalese Government and Senegalese diaspora from African and European countries. The consultation resulted in an action plan that led to the establishment of a special Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, acknowledging the important role diaspora can play as development partners. Subsequently, they conducted research on the number, location and profile of their diaspora and established a database that now holds 5,000 diaspora profiles. The Ministry also established an office in Paris, in order to reach out to the Senegalese diaspora in France.

### **Policy Considerations**

- i. Establish **diaspora focal points in embassies** and consulates in countries where there are large diaspora communities.
- ii. Create policy coherence by: establishing or appointing a **focal institution** responsible for coordination of diaspora policy; establishing a **diaspora advisory council** comprised of representatives from all institutions that deal with diaspora affairs; creating a **matrix of roles and responsibilities** among ministries and agencies.
- iii. Ensure **political and long-term commitment** and make use of pro-diaspora politicians to institutionalize policy that are not easy to change.
- iv. Upgrade skills and knowledge and provide **capacity training** to key government officials.

## **5. Irregular migration**

### ***Challenges***

Perhaps one of the most complex and controversial issues with regards to regional and global deliberations on migration is the issue of irregular migration and the contribution of irregular migrants to development. The upcoming GFMD will, for the first time, dedicate a roundtable session to examining joint strategies to address irregular migration in the context of enhancing the development outcomes of migration. Also in the context of Africa, the complexity of dealing with irregular migration in and outside the continent was acknowledged during the meeting. Various challenges were discussed:

1. *Root causes*: How to tackle the root causes of irregular migration, including high levels of unemployment, lack of prospects, low salaries, political instability, human rights issues and the demand for irregular migration in receiving countries?
2. *Perception*: How to address false public perceptions regarding the benefits of irregular migration and the unlimited opportunities for economic development and employment in Europe and elsewhere?
3. *Protection*: How to prevent the human costs and death toll incurred by irregular migration and how to protect diaspora with an irregular status?
4. *Criminality*: How to address the organized crime behind the phenomenon, to provide adequate assistance to victims of human trafficking and to ensure effective punishment of perpetrators?
5. *Intra-regional cooperation*: Given that most migration flows, whether regular or irregular, take place within the region, it is of paramount importance that responsibility for irregular migrants is also taken by (the various regions on) the continent. There is a need for critical self-reflection: how are those without regular status treated on the continent itself?
6. *Information*: The discussion of specific cases also revealed limited awareness about the numbers and situation of irregular migrants within own borders, as well as of migrants in irregular situations in other African countries, in Europe and in the rest of the world, which in itself was identified as a challenge.

### **Best practices**

- ECOWAS was hailed as a good model. This regional cooperation allows for internal freedom of movement, minimizing irregular movement across neighboring countries.
- The Ghana Immigration Service has a programme to sensitize people to the realities of migration and the dangers involved with irregular migration.
- The EU-African Plan of Action on Trafficking of Human Beings aims to effectively combat trafficking in human beings through a victim-centred approach and to address the root causes of trafficking in countries of origin, as well as in countries of destination.
- Mauritius provided an example of a best practice through the Circular Migration Model and more particularly the bilateral Agreement it has with France where migrant workers would be given the opportunities to work in France over a specific period, save money and come back home to invest in Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Senegal has adopted a 'zero-illegal-migration policy' along the following three lines:
  1. Fight poverty in high departure zones;
  2. Surveillance of sea borders through maritime cooperation with Frontex (EU's border agency);
  3. Agreements with host countries to promote legal migration in the interest of both country of origin and country of destination.

### **Policy Considerations**

- i. Adopt a system of **consular identity cards**, similar to the Mexican Matrícula Consular card, so as to be able to better cater for migrants with irregular status and to allow them to contribute to development regardless of their status.
- ii. Tackle the **root causes** of irregular migration by, among other things, investing in employment and decent work in the informal economy. Development aid and projects should also be focused on creating jobs and could concentrate on high departure areas.
- iii. **Sensitize** important actors, such as policymakers, border guards and police on the issue of irregular migration and the vulnerable position of irregular migrants.
- iv. Provide **realistic and easily accessible information** on migration and employment opportunities in the West, and the dangers and downsides of irregular migration.

- v. Appeal to civil society organizations in countries of destination to address the demonization and **negative attitudes** towards regular and irregular migrants alike. Where possible, advocate for regularization, as this also increases the likelihood of return and circulation.
- vi. In partnerships and agreements with countries of destination the **demand side for irregular migration** should also be addressed, through labour market regulations, curbing the black labour market and creating more options for regular migration.
- vii. In the context of irregular migration there was a particularly strong call for **regional cooperation**. Existing regional organizations such as the AU and ECOWAS should take the issue on board; rules and regulations, such as those on political asylum, should be harmonized across the continent; and a gradual shift to **regional free movement of people** (and goods and services) would be desirable. The AU is currently running a programme on harmonizing visa and migration law on the African continent.
- viii. Countries should be encouraged to adopt **Circular Migration** through bilateral Agreements to overcome irregular migration.

## 6. Networking and exchange

Of all the challenges identified, participants unanimously expressed the need to exchange information and to share local experiences and best practices with each other on a more regular basis. A clear need was identified for stronger network building among African countries and an institutionalized mechanism to facilitate continuous exchange, also beyond face-to-face meetings. Similarly, countries also expressed the wish for exposure to lessons that can be learned from countries outside of the continent, such as through participation in the GFMD.

## 7. Towards an Action Plan

As one of the participants remarked: *'We want an action plan that is implementable in a feasible period of time. This time, we mean business! Our message is that **Africa is on the Move** and is willing to take its own responsibility to reap the benefits of migration and engage their diaspora'*. Out of all the ideas and policy routes identified during the meeting, five key policy priorities for an Action Plan were identified, which can be translated into realisable programmes within a feasible period of time.

### I. International Year for Migration and Development

- We endorse the proposal, which will be submitted by Senegal during the GFMD, calling for an International Year for Migration and Development. This will maintain the momentum and generate renewed attention, new knowledge and high-level support.

### II. Data collection

- We will undertake all reasonable efforts to integrate diaspora, migrant and development data into national censuses and call upon the assistance of other governments to provide technical assistance and guidance in implementing this.
- We call upon the African Union, the World Bank and other regional and global organizations to share and assist in mapping existing data on diaspora. We also request to be involved in ongoing research and mapping exercises, to ensure that the data produced matches our needs as African policymakers.

### III. Outreach Strategies

- On the country level, we will each create a 'Diaspora Guide', within the next two years. This will include all information on the country of origin relevant to diaspora, such as rules and procedures, investment opportunities, return provision, etc. This information will also be accessible online.
- In developing new coherent and comprehensive diaspora policies, we will look into the unprecedented opportunities offered by modern communication and information technology in order to create networks and foster connectedness among diaspora.

### IV. Capacity Building

- We call upon the international community to provide assistance in setting up and sustaining capacity building programmes, such as ADPC's 'Capacity-Building Programme for the newly-formed Diaspora Ministries in Africa', in order to enhance our knowledge and policymaking capacity, to gain insight in how to formulate migration and development and diaspora policies and to learn about the experiences of other countries within and outside of the continent.

### V. African Consultative Forum on Migration and Development

- We fully endorse the initiative of the ADPC to establish an African Consultative Forum on Migration and Development (ACFMD) in 2011. Establishing such a mechanism will facilitate access to up-to-date information and the exchange of good practices both in policymaking and effective implementation of programmes among policymakers in Africa dealing with diaspora and development related issues. It will strengthen the policymaking capacity of the newly-formed Diaspora Ministries and related institutions in many countries on the continent.

**Annex**  
**List of African Policymakers participated in the preparatory meeting**  
**in Addis Ababa**  
**October 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 2010**

**Benin**

**Mrs. Nicole Elisha**

Technical Adviser for Diaspora Issues  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 318, Cotonou  
Phone number 229 21 30 88 95  
[nicole.elisha@yahoo.fr](mailto:nicole.elisha@yahoo.fr)

**Burkina Faso**

**Mr Nacambo Ousman**

Minister Plenipotentiary/Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ouagadougou,  
Postal code: 03 BP 70 38  
Phone number 00226 50 31 73 66  
[burkinadiaspora@yahoo.fr](mailto:burkinadiaspora@yahoo.fr)

**Cameroon**

**Joseph Raymond Ndziga**

Chief of the International Cooperation  
National Employment Fund,  
310 Rue de Ngouso, PoBox: 10079, Yaounde  
Phone number 00237 22225181  
[josendziga@yahoo.fr](mailto:josendziga@yahoo.fr)

**Chad**

**Mr. Fadlassid Ali Naffa**

Fonctionnaire, Migration Focal Point  
Ministry of External Affairs, African Integration and  
International Cooperation  
City Ndjamen, PO. BP 1402, Chad  
Phone number (+235)99905517  
[fadlassid@hotmail.fr](mailto:fadlassid@hotmail.fr)

**Ghana**

**Ms. Anim Belinda Adwoa Sika**

Assistant Comptroller of Immigration  
Ghana Immigration Service, PMB Ministries  
Number 3 Mozambique Street  
Accra  
Phone number 00233 302674125

[banim@ghanaimmigration.org](mailto:banim@ghanaimmigration.org)

**Kenya**

**Mr. Maurice Okomo Okoth Amisi**

First Secretary Diaspora & International Jobs Desk/  
Director Diaspora Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harambee Avenue,  
00100, Nairobi, Kenya, Box 30551  
phone number: +254 20 31 8888 ex 414  
[moaokoth@mfa.go.ke](mailto:moaokoth@mfa.go.ke)

**Liberia**

**Ms. Robtel Neajai Pailey**

Special Assistant to the Minister of State for  
Presidential Affairs  
Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs  
Executive Mansion  
P.O. Box 9001 / Capitol Hill  
Republic of Liberia  
Monrovia, Liberia  
Office: +231 2 720 1601  
[rpailey@emansion.gov.lr](mailto:rpailey@emansion.gov.lr)

**Mali**

**Seydou Keïta**

Conseiller Technique  
Ministère Maliens de l'Extérieur et de l'Intégration  
Africaine  
Sébénikoro, secteur VII  
Rue 432, porte 373  
03 BP 62 Bamako 03, Bamako, Mali  
Tel: + 223 20 21 81 48/49  
[seydml@yahoo.fr](mailto:seydml@yahoo.fr)

**Nigeria**

**Mr. Etim-Ikang**

National Commission for Refugees (NCFR)  
AG.DIRECTOR(PRS)/HEAD OF MIGRATION  
Old National Assembly qtrs, maitama  
13 Uruquay

Abuja  
Pmb 119 Garki Abuja, Nigeria  
Phone number (work) +234 987 03 876 / +234 95  
235 256  
[baitaikang@yahoo.com](mailto:baitaikang@yahoo.com)

## Ethiopia

### Mrs. Mebrat Beyene

Director General – Ethiopian Expatriates Affairs  
Directorate General  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal  
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Bole  
P.O.Box 393 Ethiopia , Addis Abeba  
Phone number +251-11-5537520  
[mbeyene@hotmail.com](mailto:mbeyene@hotmail.com)

## Ethiopia

### Mr. Woldegiorgis Yohannes Fanta

Director at the Directorate General for the  
Ethiopian Expatriates Affairs Directorate General  
City Addis Abeba  
P.o.Box 393, Ethiopia  
Phone number +251-11-5152213  
[tsedi20032000@yahoo.com](mailto:tsedi20032000@yahoo.com)

## Mauritius

### Mr. Anil Kumar Kokil

Assistant Director, Circular Migration Program  
Coordinator  
Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment  
Ground Floor, Government House Port Louis  
457 Hugnin Road  
Rose Hill  
Mauritius  
Phone number (+230) 201 27 66, 201 14 24  
[akokil@mail.gov.mu](mailto:akokil@mail.gov.mu)

## Mozambique

### Mr. Mário Jorge

Head of Department  
Ministry of Interior Av. Olof Palme Nº46/48  
Maputo  
Postal code 290  
Mozambique  
Phone number (+258) 21 32 72 44  
[tchingry2009@gmail.com](mailto:tchingry2009@gmail.com)

## Rwanda

### Mr. Robert Masozera

Director General  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
Diaspora General Directorate  
P.O Box 179  
Kigali  
RWANDA  
Phone number +252599138  
[rmasozera@minaffet.gov.rw](mailto:rmasozera@minaffet.gov.rw)

## Senegal

### Mr. Papa Birama Thiam

National Director  
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères  
Direction des Affaires juridiques et consulaires  
Place de l'Indépendance  
B.P. 4044 Dakar  
SENEGAL /  
DAT, 106 Rue Carnot, Dakar  
Tel: + 221 33 822 7970  
[pbthiam@gmail.com](mailto:pbthiam@gmail.com)

## Uganda

### Ms. Berti Kawooya

Head Diaspora Services Division  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Apollo Kagwa Road, 7048, Kampala  
Tel: 00256 414 341514  
[batikosovo@hotmail.com](mailto:batikosovo@hotmail.com)



