

Migration and  
Development

# *Strategies for Mobilizing the Diaspora for Homeland Development*

**The Case Studies of  
Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal**

African  
Diaspora  
POLICY CENTRE



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# Introduction

This report is synthesized from fieldwork and research carried out in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal between January and May 2010 aimed at analyzing the strategies and instruments through which the initiatives of the Diaspora have been mainstreamed into national development.

The Diaspora has emerged as a major developmental actor in an increasingly interdependent and globalizing world. It is now widely acknowledged that as trans-nationalized individuals, groups and communities, the Diaspora – with their accumulated financial resources, as well as acquired human and social capital – are capable of making significant contributions to the political and socio-economic development of their home countries. Indeed, many in the Diaspora have worked or are working in skill sectors that are of critical importance to their home countries. Some have acquired requisite entrepreneurial ability and knowledge, both of which are needed for the successful establishment and management of business enterprises. Others have contacts with business partners and potential investors in their host countries and are capable of facilitating investment in trade and production outfits in small- and medium-scale factories. Certainly, a number of them are in the influential,

solid positions necessary to engender a positive socio-economic and political outcome in their host countries in favour of their home countries.

Although there are various approaches to analyzing the real and potential linkages between the Diaspora and development, this policy brief adopts Mohan's typology (2002), which analyzes these linkages as: (1) development in the Diaspora or development in place; that is, how the Diaspora uses their localized connections to secure economic and social well-being and for the development of their host locality; (2) development through the Diaspora or development through space; that is, how the Diaspora utilizes their diffuse global connections to facilitate economic and social well-being beyond their host locality to span countries, regions and continents; and (3) development by the Diaspora or development across space; that is, how Diasporas' financial and other flows facilitates positive development and/or the creation of a new order in their homelands.

The reality of development through and by the Diaspora influenced the African Union in May 2003 to embark on an active policy of engagement of the African Diaspora for continental development. This derived from the realization that the African Diaspora constitutes an amazing pool of talent and expertise. They are not only capable of accelerating continental

development towards the acquisition, usage and application of knowledge; they are also in a position to facilitate access to financial flows from their host countries. Consequently, the African Union and the various African governments have embarked on various strategies for harnessing the real and potential value of the African Diaspora to promote peace and security, socio-economic development, regional development and integration through brain gain and knowledge sharing.

The various continental and national efforts towards engaging the Diaspora for continental and homeland development explored multiple approaches. These ranged from supporting the Diaspora towards real and virtual participation in short-, medium- and long-term placements in their home countries to promoting institutional partnerships and networks between the host and home countries. There has also been an attempt by various African governments towards creating an enabling environment through the institutionalization of appropriate policies and strategies towards encouraging their Diaspora to provide requisite skills, services, products and resources for national development.

Against this background, this study analyzes the feasible mobilization strategies and enabling policy instruments that the governments of Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal have adopted in order to tap the real and

potential value of their Diaspora for national development. The study highlights how these selected countries are attempting to leverage the accumulated wealth, knowledge, influential contacts and valuable networks of their Diaspora population with the aim of mainstreaming their initiatives into existing national development activities. In analyzing the strategies adopted by the three countries in harnessing the initiatives of their Diaspora to make a positive difference in the national developmental process, particular attention is focused on issues such as: locating the broad and specific entry points for Diaspora engagement; identifying the strategic actors involved in facilitating and realizing Diaspora engagement; and assessing the scope and impact of concrete actions and activities undertaken by the three countries in order to actualize and enhance Diaspora engagement in the national developmental process. The overall objective of the study is to establish the nexus between Diaspora and development and highlight some measures that would assist the various African states to develop evidence-based policy strategies geared towards mobilizing the full potential of their Diaspora population for accelerated national development.

## Country context

Although there are marked differences in the socio-economic conditions of the three selected countries (as shown

in Tables I – III), as middle income developing countries with largely the same developmental challenges, they belong to the same strata on the developmental ladder. Nevertheless, there is a need for a short brief on each country's context.

## **Ghana**

Ghanaians are said to be migratory by nature and the country's history is replete with evidence of longstanding patterns of migration. Indeed, in a quest for better livelihoods and futures for themselves and their families, many Ghanaians adopted migration as a strategy to escape from declining political and socio-economic conditions at home. (Manuh 2005). This was particularly so in the period from 1981 to 1985, when the country was under the rule of a brutal military regime. At this time, Ghana suffered serious economic difficulties and political repression with very little or no hope for recovery. This sparked a deluge of migration out of the country, as large numbers of Ghanaians moved away in search of better living conditions elsewhere in the West African sub region and beyond.

Partly as a result of the nature and phenomenon of migration – i.e. that it is difficult to document and/or differentiate between legal and illegal migration – there are many gaps in the figures often quoted as the number of Ghanaians resident outside the country. Indeed, these figures are subject to a considerable

margin of error as, until recently, Ghana has not had a conscious migration management policy. Moreover, the introduction of stringent and often cumbersome measures for securing travel documents to control migration led to the emergence of a commercial migration industry and a market for forged documents, both of which spurred the growth of illegal migration. Consequently, it is difficult to pinpoint, with any measure of certainty, the number of Ghanaians in the Diaspora. Information available from the country's Foreign Ministry, compiled through its missions abroad, estimates the total number of people of Ghanaian origin living in Europe, Canada and the United States to be about 500,000. However, statistics from the European Union and some other sources puts the number of Ghanaian in the Diaspora at between 1.5 million and 3 million. Notwithstanding the problem of data, in 2006, official estimates suggested that about 190,000 Ghanaians were living in the OECD countries. This number represents 0.86 per cent of the total Ghanaian population of about 22 million. Of this number, 25.3 per cent are citizens of their respective countries of residence, 44.9 per cent live as foreigners, while the remaining 29.8 per cent are of unknown status. The largest concentration of Ghanaian emigrants resides in the US (35.5 per cent). This is followed by the UK (29.6 per cent), Germany (12 per cent), Italy (9.2 per cent), Canada (9 per cent), the Netherlands (5.9 per cent) and France (2.3 per cent) (Manuh 2006).

**Table II**  
**General indicators: Ghana**

Population, total (millions)	<b>24.8</b>
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.06</b>
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	<b>238.5</b>
Age Structure (% of total population)	
0-14	<b>38.4</b>
15-64	<b>58.0</b>
65 and above	<b>3.6</b>
Median age (total population)	<b>21.1</b>
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	<b>56.8</b>
Literacy rate (% of total population)	<b>66.6</b>
International Migration Stock (% of population)	<b>7.61</b>
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	<b>26.7</b>
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	<b>5.4</b>
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>5.7</b>
GNI Atlas method (current US\$) (billions)	<b>28.4</b>
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	<b>1190</b>
Workers' remittances and Compensation (current US\$) (billion)	<b>114.5</b>
Foreign Direct Investment net inflow (current US\$) (billion)	<b>1.68</b>
Official Development Assistance (current US\$) (million)	<b>1.58</b>
Official Development Assistance per capita (current US\$)	<b>66.4</b>
<b>Prevalence of HIV, total (% of adult population)</b>	<b>1.8</b>

*Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010*

## Nigeria

The exact numbers of Nigerians in the Diaspora are a matter of speculation as there are no reliable or even approximate data on the number of Nigerians migrating out of the country. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that there are substantial numbers of Nigerians living outside of the country, the bulk of whom migrated from 1982 onwards as a result of the return of the military to power and the progressive deterioration in

living conditions and the collapse of the middle class. The military government's Structural Adjustment Programme saw the introduction of severe austerity measures, which pushed many Nigerian professionals to migrate out of the country and to market their skills internationally. Another wave of migration began in 1993 following the conclusion of the political transition programme and the coming to power of an even more repressive and authoritarian military regime.

Subsequently, increasing numbers of Nigerians migrated to Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy and Ireland, as well as to Ghana, Cameroon, Botswana and South Africa.

From available evidence, it is estimated that the bulk of Nigerians in the Diaspora are resident in Western Europe, the US and Canada. For example, it was estimated in 2002 that about 125,000 highly skilled Nigerian professionals were resident in various OECD countries. According to the

Nigerian National Policy on Health, more than 25,000 Nigerian professional health workers are residing in the United Kingdom, with over 10,000 medical doctors resident in the US. It is estimated that about 26 per cent of all registered medical doctors and 20 per cent of all registered pharmacists in Nigeria are working abroad, and that there are more than 2 million highly educated Nigerian professionals living in Europe and the United States (Draft Migration Policy 2007).

**Table II**  
**General indicators: Nigeria**

Population, total (millions)	<b>155.2</b>
Population growth (annual %)	<b>1.93</b>
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	<b>923.8</b>
Age Structure (% of total population)	
0-14	<b>41.0</b>
15-64	<b>55.9</b>
65 and above	<b>3.1</b>
Median age (total population)	<b>19.2</b>
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	<b>47.6</b>
Literacy rate (% of total population)	<b>68</b>
International Migration Stock (% of population)	<b>0.71</b>
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	<b>377.9</b>
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	<b>NA</b>
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>8.4</b>
GNI Atlas method (current US\$) (billions)	<b>184.7</b>
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	<b>2500</b>
Workers' remittances and Compensation (current US\$) (billion)	<b>9.58</b>
Foreign Direct Investment net inflow (current US\$) (billion)	<b>5.80</b>
Official Development Assistance (current US\$) (million)	<b>1.66</b>
Official Development Assistance per capita (current US\$)	<b>10.7</b>
<b>Prevalence of HIV, total (% of adult population)</b>	<b>3.3</b>

Source: *World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010*

## Senegal

Senegal's lost its status as an immigration country in the 1980s, mainly as a result of declining economic fortunes. Since then, the country has witnessed increased emigration, affecting all regions and resulting in a negative migratory balance. Until this time, a disproportionate share of Senegalese emigrants, the majority of whom were traders, came from the regions of Saint-Louis and Matam in the Senegal River valley, as well as

the cities of Dakar and Touba (Sander & Barro 2003). However, the socio-economic factors that triggered increased migratory flow have continued to aggravate over the years. Consequently, the centre of gravity of Senegal's international migration has shifted from the Senegal River valley to the country's groundnut basin and there has been greater participation of groups such as the Mourides, who do not have a history of migration.

**Table III**  
**General indicators: Senegal**

Population, total (millions)	<b>12.6</b>
Population growth (annual %)	<b>2.6</b>
Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)	<b>196.7</b>
Age Structure (% of total population)	
0-14	<b>43.0</b>
15-64	<b>54.0</b>
65 and above	<b>3.0</b>
Median age (total population)	<b>18</b>
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	<b>60</b>
Literacy rate (% of total population)	<b>49.6</b>
International Migration Stock (% of population)	<b>1.6</b>
GDP (current US\$) (billions)	<b>12.8</b>
Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	<b>5.8</b>
GDP growth (annual %)	<b>2.2</b>
GNI Atlas method (current US\$) (billions)	<b>13.1</b>
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	<b>1040</b>
Workers' remittances and Compensation (current US\$) (billion)	<b>1.4</b>
Foreign Direct Investment net inflow (current US\$) (billion)	<b>207.5</b>
Official Development Assistance (current US\$) (million)	<b>1.1</b>
Official Development Assistance per capita (current US\$)	<b>81.1</b>
<b>Prevalence of HIV, total (% of adult population)</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010

For historical and linguistic reasons, migration out of Senegal is often directed towards France and the former French colonies in Africa, accounting for almost 58 per cent of departures. (EMUS 1998) However, in the 1990s, other OECD countries – in particular Spain, the US and Italy – became a major destination for Senegalese migrants. It is currently estimated that there are about 2 million Senegalese in the Diaspora.

## Strategies for mainstreaming the diaspora into the national development process

Like many other African governments, the governments of Ghana, Nigerian and Senegal are increasingly acknowledging the fact that their Diaspora population constitutes a huge resource that can be drawn upon for national development. Many in the Diaspora live transnationally, maintaining close connections with family and friends at home, with the capability of influencing developments in their home countries. They undertake short- and sometimes long-term visits home to visit relatives and friends, to attend funerals and other ceremonies and make use of modern ICT facilities to keep abreast of developments and to even participate in decision-making at home. Many of them remit money home for sundry purposes such as livelihood support for their family and relations, purchase of land and other assets, to

make portfolio and other investments and to establish and operate business enterprises. This reaffirms Mohan's theory of how development by the Diaspora – that is to say, how Diasporas' financial and other flows – helps to facilitate homeland transformation and development. The various entry points and strategic actors for Diaspora engagement in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal will be considered in this section of the paper.

### **Ghana**

The Ghanaian government is quite aware of the significance of the human and financial capital of the Diaspora in national development. It is engaged in a continuous effort to explore avenues to harness the human and financial capital of the Diaspora for fighting poverty and to achieve positive socio-economic transformation. This has been demonstrated, particularly in the past ten years, in the creation of new institutions and the adoption of certain policies and programme interventions that acknowledge the vital role of the Diaspora in sustaining socio-economic growth. These steps recognize and integrate the contribution of the Diaspora into Ghana's national developmental process. Among those Ghanaian ministries, departments and agencies involved in Diaspora-related functions are the Ministries of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and NEPAD, Manpower, Youth and Employment, Finance, Interior, Trade and Industry, Women and Children's



Affairs, Health and Education, as well as the Private Sector Development (PSD) and the President's Special Initiatives (PSI). Other formal departments and agencies include the Ghana Statistical Service, the National Population Council, the Ghana Immigration Service, the Migration Bureau and the Bank of Ghana.

A perusal of the functions and objectives of some of these MDAs shows that the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, which was established in 1993, is responsible for making policies and programmes that target the Diaspora as an essential part of Ghana's development process. In the pursuit of Diaspora involvement in the economic and socio-cultural life of the country, the Ministry organizes events such as the Emancipation Day, Panafest, the Homecoming Summit and the Joseph Project. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs looks after the interests of Ghanaian citizens in the Diaspora and plays a key role in facilitating their active involvement in the electoral process by registering and making it possible for them to vote. It also undertakes the task of providing the Ghanaian Diaspora with necessary information and regular updates on trade and investments policies in Ghana, with a view to enticing them to do business and invest in the country.

Also involved in Diaspora related issues is the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE), which is active in providing skills training and

job placement opportunities for the youth who either return from abroad, or are deported from other countries. The Ghana Immigration Service deals with issues of residence and work status of immigrants and the Migration Bureau, which executes its mandate through working groups on migration, remittances and labour migration, designs policies to mainstream the Diaspora into the development programmes of Ghana. A common characteristic of Ghana's formal institutions is that many policies and programmes cut across many ministries, departments and agencies. Many policies, including that of migration are often integrated into other policies of the state and, with both internal and external components, they address political, social and economic issues.

## **Nigeria**

Following the return of Nigeria to civilian democratic rule in May 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo embarked on a series of trips abroad during which he held Presidential Dialogues with Nigerians in the Diaspora. His intention was to create opportunities that would enable the Diaspora to leverage their invaluable human resources into forging a closer relationship with Nigeria. Following the series of dialogues, Nigerians in the Diaspora Organizations (NIDO) Worldwide was established in 2000 with branches across Europe, the United States and Canada. The Organization was housed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the

direct supervision of the Permanent Secretary. Later, it was moved to the Office of the President, with an Administrative Secretariat to oversee and coordinate its activities. The expectation of the Nigerian government is that NIDO will facilitate a systematic and institutionalized relationship between Nigeria and its Diaspora and be a focal point in the overall strategy of involving the Diaspora in national development in the fields of education, science and technology, investment and culture and tourism.

Another institution engaging the Diaspora is the Nigerian National Volunteer Service (NNVS), established in 2003. Housed in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and with offices across the 36 states of the federation, the NNVS is responsible for mobilizing and harnessing the skills and experiences of the Diaspora for national development. A unique feature of the Nigerian scene is the involvement of the legislature in issues relating to the Diaspora through a Committee on the Diaspora in the Federal House of Representatives. A key function of the Committee, which is probably the only parliamentary body of its kind in any African state, is initiating policies for harnessing the potential of Nigerians in the Diaspora in support of national development and growth.

## **Senegal**

It is important to state that Senegal is a pioneering country in terms of creating a nexus between the Diaspora

and development. Among the organs involved in Diaspora related issues in the country are: the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad, which is in charge of promoting the Diaspora; the Ministry of Youth and the Employment of Youth, which handles seasonal labour migration contracts directed at Spain; the Ministry of Interior, which is in charge of issuing travel documents and for managing the security dimension of mobility; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which through its diplomatic missions abroad is concerned with issues such as the registration of births of Diaspora children of Senegalese origin. It is also important to note the Senegal was perhaps the first African state to create a ministerial department specifically devoted to Diaspora issues and to put in place relevant administrative structures for the management of migration. Indeed, the country appointed a Minister responsible for expatriates as far back as 1983, to replace the official who, until then, was the Desk Officer for migration affairs in the Office of the President. Since then, the country has made significant progress in developing a cooperative synergy with its Diaspora population. This is largely done via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Department of Senegalese Abroad, which is responsible for managing all issues relating to Senegalese abroad. Indeed, at the instance of the Department and following a request from the Senegalese Diaspora, a consultative organ – the Council of Senegalese

Abroad – was created in 1995. The Council comprises of 75 delegates, with 60 elected delegates from the five designated emigration zones of Sub-Saharan Africa (30), Europe (16), America (7), Arab countries (6) and Asia (1) and 15 members appointed by the President. Some selected delegates of the Council are members of the Senegalese first Senate.

However, following a political crisis in the country, a series of internal disputes within the Council and the accusation that the Council was too close to the ruling Senegalese Democratic Party, the Council was suspended *sine die* in 2000. (Diop, Diouf & Diaw 2000). The Council was replaced by a newly constituted organization headed by a government-appointed Special Adviser, and later by a Minister Adviser with the rank of a roving Ambassador. It was not until March 2010, following agitations by the Senegalese Diaspora population, that the decree re-instituting the Council for Senegalese Abroad was promulgated. The re-established Council has 75 members, all of whom are appointed by the President. The Council's new administrative structure comprises of the office in charge of the reception, orientation and monitoring of expatriates, (BAOS) as well as an information and consultancy firm to oversee the French repatriation grant programmes initiated under the aegis of the Central Office for Economic Cooperation (Diatta & Mbaw 1999; Mbaye 2000).

There are three main departments in the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad working in close collaboration with the Diaspora. These are: (1) the Department for the Promotion of the Habitat of Senegalese Abroad, which is in charge of supporting international migrants who wish to own developed properties. Indeed, the Department has developed the 'Diaspora City' programme with the aim of selling completed houses in the urban area of Dakar to interested expatriates; (2) the Department of Investment and Projects Support, which is responsible for promoting Diaspora initiatives by studying, monitoring and evaluating their projects and advising them accordingly (see interview SN 2); and (3) the Department of Social Affairs Service, which helps migrants who are experiencing difficulties in their host countries. The Ministry is also responsible for the management of the Funds for the Support of Investments of Senegalese Abroad (FAISE), which is in charge of helping the Diaspora to access financial assistance from Senegal's banking system.

Another institution involved in managing the rather complex (given the nature of its political undercurrents) interactions between Senegal and its Diaspora population is the Technical Assistance Department (DAT). Initially, DAT was preoccupied with the management of international cooperation in relation to the export of Senegalese manpower. Currently, DAT is in charge of managing the Solidarity Initiatives Support Programme for Development (formerly

known as Co-Development Initiatives) funded by Franco-Senegalese cooperation. It is also involved in obtaining support for the Senegalese Diaspora in France and for mobilizing highly qualified Diaspora for homeland development.

## Evidence based examples and concrete cases of diaspora engagement in homeland development

In pursuit of viable and efficient strategies for Diaspora engagement in homeland development, the three selected countries have adopted and embarked on certain concrete policy measures and strategies. For example, in July 2001, the Ghanaian government, through its Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), organized what it termed a *Home Coming Summit* in Accra for Ghanaians living abroad. Held under the theme, *Harnessing the Global Ghanaian Resource Potential for Accelerated Development*, the Summit aimed to bring together Ghanaian Diaspora in order to brainstorm on the development process in the context of current global trends and to get their commitment to lend some support in the drive to accelerate and sustain economic growth in Ghana. The specific objectives of the summit were: (1) to develop a process for the interaction of Ghanaians living abroad and those at home; (2) to explore productive opportunities

between Ghanaians living abroad and their homeland in the areas of export trade, agribusiness, information and communications technology, as well as in the health and education sectors; and (3) to identify the means to tap into the acquired capacities of Ghanaians living abroad for national development. Attended by more than 1,000 expatriate Ghanaian professionals, the Summit recommended the establishment of institutional structures to enhance dialogue and provide support for all measures to mobilize resources from Ghanaian Diaspora for investment in the homeland. It also recommended the simplification of the processes of land acquisition and the recruitment of qualified, skilled and dedicated non-resident Ghanaians (NRGs) and the provision of opportunities for volunteer services.

Another concrete step taken by the Ghanaian government was the establishment of a National Migration Bureau within the Ministry of Interior in 2008, with the overall objective of mainstreaming migration into national development planning. Since its inception, the Bureau has established a steering committee and various working groups, with members drawn from relevant ministries focusing on health, labour, remittances, irregular migration, and migration and development. The most recent legislation in relation to the Ghanaian government's Diaspora-oriented strategy is the *Representation of People (Amendment) Act 699* of February 2007, which recognizes the

right of Ghanaians in the Diaspora to vote. Accordingly, 'a citizen of Ghana resident outside the Republic is entitled to be registered as a voter if the person satisfies the requirements for registration prescribed by law other than those relating to residence in a polling division'. The amendment enabled the Electoral Commission to appoint the Head of a Ghana Mission or Embassy abroad, or any other person or institution, as a registration officer to register those people who qualify to vote in Ghanaian elections.

Before the law was passed, public hearings on this legislative instrument were held in all ten regions of Ghana and in six other countries with a high concentration of Ghanaian Diaspora population: Togo, Nigeria, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany. Many Ghanaian Diaspora organizations and individuals gave overwhelming support to the legislation giving them voting rights. They believe the legislation was necessary in order to help them connect more effectively with the homeland and that it is a manifestation of the Ghanaian government's determination to encourage its Diaspora to participate in political decision-making in the homeland. According to some, investing in places where one has no political decision-making power does not auger well for the protection of such investments. Other strategies aimed at harnessing the resources of the Ghanaian Diaspora include the organization of events such as the Emancipation Day, the Joseph

Project and the Pan-African Festival (Panafest). These activities are highly publicized periodic events with tourism appeal, initiated in collaboration with the African-American Association, Caribbean-Ghana Association and the Diaspora African Forum. They attract the Diaspora and provide avenues for the exchange of ideas among partners.

With regards to Nigeria, the country has adopted a multifaceted approach to the issue of mainstreaming the Diaspora into the developmental process. First, is the continent-wide effort through the Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA). Established in 2001, the DTCA is mandated to enhance continental development by creating an enabling environment and opportunities for the African Diaspora to invest their immense intellect, expertise and skills into the economies of Africa. Funded by the Nigerian government and the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF), (established by Nigeria and the African Development Bank (ADB)), the DTCA is has been given the task of motivating African professionals in the Diaspora to see any African country as an opportunity to invest their expertise on both a short- and long-term basis. The DTCA also encourages these African Diaspora professionals to utilize their various expertise and knowledge in Africa's national economies, in order to improve the respective national economies, contribute to nation building and the preservation of the huge sums in foreign currencies being spent in the engagement of foreign consultants.

Another viable and apparently efficient strategy adopted by the Nigerian government for Diaspora engagement in homeland development is utilizing the skills and expertise of the Nigerians in the Diaspora to effect a positive transformation in the educational sector through a special programme launched in 2007. Known as the Linkage with Experts and Academics in the Diaspora Scheme (LEADS), this programme aims to attract experts and academics of Nigerian origin in the Diaspora in a visiting capacity – over a period of three to twelve months – to the various higher education institutions in Nigeria active in the areas of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Management Science and Business Administration, Mathematics, Medicine and Dentistry, Mining Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Oil and Gas Engineering.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of the Nigerian government's initiatives in relation to the Diaspora is the African University of Science and Technology in Abuja. Established in 2007, the University is a Pan-African Centre of Excellence with the objective of training the next generation of African Scientists and Engineers, who are capable of making a positive impact on the continent's development through the application of science and technology. In carrying out its teaching and research functions, the University has created an extensive network within the African scientific community working in the best universities across the world.

The university utilizes this substantial pool of knowledge to execute its programmes in the fields of science and engineering.

The concrete examples of Senegal's strategy to create a synergy between the Diaspora and development are both political and economic. The most fundamental political initiative adopted, to date, has been giving the Diaspora a voice in the country's political decision-making process. This has been done through the appointment by the President of four Senegalese in the Diaspora to the Senate, to represent the interests of Senegalese abroad. Furthermore, concerted efforts have been directed at creating a new partnership between the government and various Diaspora associations with the aim of promoting a coordinated approach to harnessing the initiatives of the various Senegalese Diaspora communities in homeland development. On the economic front, high level arrangements have long been made, especially at level of bilateral cooperation, to mobilize the financial resources necessary for the establishment of revenue-generating programmes for migrants and members of their families in Senegal. Among these initiatives are The Platform of Support for the Private Sector and the Development of the Senegalese Diaspora in Italy (PLASEPRI), a Senegalo-Italian initiative for the establishment of a financial instrument to support local PMEs/ PMIs, in particular those initiated by migrants. In addition, the Programme

of Support for Solidarity Initiatives for Development (PAISD) is a bilateral partnership arrangement between Senegal and France directed at the creation of economic programmes and the building of basic infrastructure in the various regions of Senegal, especially the source regions of migration. Furthermore, France and Senegal run a joint programme on migration and development aimed at economic initiatives taken by migrants from Senegal, mobilization of well-qualified expatriates living in France for the development of Senegal and local development in the regions of origin. It is estimated that about 123 projects have already been undertaken under this programme, positively touching the lives of some 200,000 people.

## Constraining factors against effective diaspora engagement

A thorough consideration of the Diaspora engagement of the three selected countries reveals the realization of the critical linkage between Diaspora and development and that the countries are making tangible efforts towards integrating and mainstreaming the Diaspora into the homeland developmental process. Nevertheless, there are a number of constraining factors that are inhibiting optimal cooperation, synergy and beneficial outcomes between the home country and the Diaspora population. An examination of the Diaspora

related policy approaches of the three selected countries shows a high level of politicization and personalization of efforts. Evidence from Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal shows that politics often takes a heavy toll on issues such as evolving policy frameworks and strategic options for the execution of policies and programmes in the process of mainstreaming the Diaspora into the pursuit and realization development objectives. Thus, there is a lack of policy continuity and coherence, particularly when new governments take office and sometimes abort or reverse the Diaspora policies and programmes of their predecessors. For example, in Ghana, the new government decided to jettison the highly symbolic phrase, *Diaspora Relations* from the Ministry of Tourism. In the same vein, Diaspora related issues were struck off the schedules of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Private Sector Development (PSD) and President's Special Initiatives (PSI). In the case of Nigeria, it is evident that efforts at mainstreaming the Nigerians in Diaspora into the national development process and programme were, essentially, a pet project of the former President Olusegun Obasanjo. He not only encouraged the establishment of NIDO, he entrusted an Ambassador to personally oversee its activities and operations. However, since his exit from power in May 2009, the successor administration has not paid any particular attention to Diaspora issues. The same malaise is also evident in Senegal where, as we

have learned, the Council of Senegalese Abroad was suspended *sine die* for being too close to the previous government and replaced by a new structure headed by a Minister Adviser appointed by the new President.

Another noticeable constraint in the three selected countries is the proliferation of agencies and institutions dealing with the Diaspora. Indeed, the absence of a well-structured, cost-effective and centralized Diaspora institution to evolve, pursue and implement Diaspora engagement policies and strategies is evident in all three countries. This is perhaps most surprising in the case of Senegal, which has a long history of migration and, consequently, better understanding of the role of the Diaspora in development. There is an apparent functional overlap and bureaucratic in-fighting among the various ministries, departments and agencies and even individual officials of state in a bid to establish proprietorship and control over Diaspora related policies and programmes. This has resulted in frequent changes of mandate and targets relating to harnessing the initiatives of the Diaspora for homeland development as new employees change policy directions to suit their whims and policies are stalled or badly implemented. In the end, the lack of collaboration and duplication of functions not only leads to escalating costs, it undermines the effectiveness and efficiency of designed processes.

Another constraining factor is the general lack of records resulting in a paucity of data, which makes it difficult to accurately examine the impact and effectiveness of the various engagement policies and strategies. This is brought into bold relief by the comparison of remittance data reported by the Ghanaian government in the World Bank's Migration and Remittances Fact book for 2008 and that submitted in a study on the Global Survey on remittance flows. For example, remittance inflow reported to the World Bank in 2007 was US\$117 million, whereas, the figure submitted to the Global Survey was US\$1.8 billion. (Irving et al. 2010). Coupled with this is the fact that many of the policy measures on the Diaspora adopted by the various governments appear not to be based on empirical knowledge and research on the complexities of migration and development. As a result, many of the activities that are designed to mainstream the initiatives of the Diaspora into the development process are very good on paper, but translating them into reality through effective implementation has remained difficult to accomplish. This is particularly true of Ghana and Nigeria where policy inconsistencies and policy reversals remain the bane of governance.



## Lessons learnt

Emerging from a holistic appraisal of all existing policies and programmes of the governments of Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal dealing with their Diaspora population is the need to establish an efficient and effective institution and mechanisms at the national level to facilitate the contributions by the Diasporas to national development. The existing mode and methods of contacts and engagement between the Diaspora and the homeland remain largely informal, ad hoc and are mostly at family, community and home town levels. In spite of the best efforts to articulate and put in place a coherent institutional structure and machinery for engaging the Diaspora, the access of the Diaspora to necessary support and assistance to facilitate fruitful interaction at the national level remains extremely limited, especially in Ghana and Nigeria. Such access continues to depend largely on personal relationships and political connections. This underlines the need for a policy change towards engaging the Diaspora in order to address the vexing policy inadequacies of the past that have frustrated the Diaspora and made it impossible for them to contribute to national development. Another obvious fact in this study is the key role of remittances. Although the actual statistics on the volume of Diaspora remittances to the three selected countries are, at best, an approximation, the inflow of remittances is an important part of

a strategy for national development. This is largely due to the fact that most reported figures on remittances to the various African states do not take into account money sent through informal channels, outside of the banking systems. Certainly, the Diaspora does bring in money into these countries personally and through second and third party messengers. Moreover, they send various goods to the homeland for sale and make direct investments in productive ventures, as well as in stocks, treasury bills and bonds in the capital market. Considering the percentage level of official remittance to the GNI in Nigeria and Senegal (as Shown in Table V and VI), then the potential importance of such flow as a veritable instrument for national development is enormous.

Even in Ghana where remittances contribute less than one per cent of the GDP (Table IV), the housing industry is dependent on remittances. Indeed, most housing estates quote their rents/ prices in US Dollars and target the Diaspora population who are believed to possess the wherewithal to lease or purchase such houses. Furthermore, a government-owned bank in Ghana involved in the money transfer business and mainly focused on the receipt of remittances from the Ghanaian Diaspora was able to raise a loan of US\$40 million, secured by its future remittance receipts. This arrangement allowed the bank to raise a large sum of hard currency financing, over a longer maturity period and at a relatively low

interest rate (UNCTAD 2006). Clearly, there is an urgent need for governments to put in place appropriate policies and strategies for maximizing the benefits arising from remittances. It is

noteworthy that the banking sectors in the three countries are active in providing effective money transfer services for remittances, which are then deployed for family income support.

**Table IV – Ghana**  
**Comparative analysis of the role of remittances**  
(in million us\$ constant value)

	<b>REM</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>	<b>ODA</b>	<b>% of GNI</b>	<b>FDI</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
<b>2000</b>	1391.8	3.03	173.7	0.43	1140.1	2.48
<b>2001</b>	1166.6	2.43	176.2	0.40	1190.6	2.48
<b>2002</b>	1208.9	2.04	297.9	0.56	1874.0	3.17
<b>2003</b>	1062.8	1.57	308.2	0.51	2005.3	2.96
<b>2004</b>	2272.7	2.58	576.9	0.74	1874.0	2.13
<b>2005</b>	3328.7	2.97	6408.7	6.48	4982.5	4.44
<b>2006</b>	5435.0	3.70	11427.9	8.09	8824.8	6.01
<b>2007</b>	9221.0	5.58	1956.2	1.27	6033.0	3.64
<b>2008</b>	9980.0	4.82	1290.2	0.66	5487.5	2.65
<b>2009</b>	9584.7	5.54	1659.1	1.02	5786.7	3.34

Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010

**Table V – Nigeria**  
**Comparative analysis of the role of remittances**  
(in million us\$ constant value)

	<b>REM</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>	<b>ODA</b>	<b>% of GNI</b>	<b>FDI</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
<b>2000</b>	32.4	0.65	597.5	12.37	165.9	3.33
<b>2001</b>	45.9	0.86	639.9	12.30	87.3	1.68
<b>2002</b>	43.5	0.71	684.9	11.36	58.9	0.96
<b>2003</b>	65.1	0.85	982.1	13.17	136.8	1.79
<b>2004</b>	82.4	0.93	1417.3	16.34	139.3	1.57
<b>2005</b>	99.2	0.92	1149.0	10.85	145.0	1.35
<b>2006</b>	105.3	0.52	1213.4	5.99	636.0	3.12
<b>2007</b>	117.4	0.48	1163.7	4.75	970.4	3.94
<b>2008</b>	126.0	0.44	1304.9	4.62	2111.6	7.40
<b>2009</b>	114.5	0.44	1582..2	6.18	1685.7	6.44

Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010

**Table VI – Senegal**  
**Comparative analysis of the role of remittances**  
(in million us\$ constant value)

	<b>REM</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>	<b>ODA</b>	<b>% of GNI</b>	<b>FDI</b>	<b>% of GDP</b>
<b>2000</b>	233.5	4.98	429.3	9.33	62.9	1.34
<b>2001</b>	304.7	6.25	432.0	9.00	31.9	0.65
<b>2002</b>	344.5	6.46	443.1	9.21	78.1	1.46
<b>2003</b>	510.9	7.44	456.7	6.75	52.5	0.76
<b>2004</b>	632.9	7.87	1069.6	13.46	77.0	0.96
<b>2005</b>	788.8	9.06	697.9	8.17	44.6	0.51
<b>2006</b>	925.2	9.87	838.4	9.03	220.3	2.35
<b>2007</b>	1191.8	10.51	872.1	7.77	297.4	2.62
<b>2008</b>	1476.1	11.20	1064.2	8.11	397.6	3.02
<b>2009</b>	1364.7	10.64	1017.6	7.97	207.5	1.61

*Source: World Development Indicators 2009 and 2010*

## Policy recommendations

The above consideration of the policies and strategies for Diaspora engagement for homeland development in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal gives rise to a need to create the necessary political, social and economic conditions and a policy environment conducive to encouraging and attracting the Diaspora. In pursuing this objective, it is important to establish a comprehensive database on the Diaspora, which can be a source of reliable statistics for networking and collaboration. This is particularly relevant in efforts towards the enactment of necessary legislation that could enable the Diaspora access to dual citizenship and also to participate in elections. There is also a need for regular meetings and consultations between officials of the home countries and their Diaspora population in order to encourage the establishment of viable and effective Diaspora Associations to facilitate the return of qualified Diaspora, on a short- and long-term basis, for homeland development. This can be pursued through the inauguration of special incentives and programmes to facilitate visits by academic faculty members, the purchase of land, transfer of scientific and technological knowledge, as well as the encouragement and promotion of trade and investments.

Concerted efforts must be made to integrate migration and development into the National Development Plans

and Development Strategies, especially those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. To this end, the African Diaspora Policy Centre in the Hague has been undertaking capacity building training workshops to train officials and policymakers serving in government ministries, departments and agencies across the African states dealing with Diaspora related matters. This is with the objective of enhancing their knowledge on issues of migration and development, as well as to facilitate their understanding of the unique role that the Diaspora can play in homeland development. So far, about 12 African countries have benefited from the training programme. However, it is a matter of concern that some of these officials and policymakers dealing with Diaspora issues have been given new postings and work schedules, denying them the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge. The various African states would be well advised to keep a core of officials and policymakers permanently employed in Diaspora-related work in the various Diaspora-oriented MDA's in order to enable them apply the acquired capacity training to their work and to mitigate the knowledge and performance deficit, which is evident in most of the newly created Diaspora-oriented institutions and which arises from a lack of personnel continuity. Furthermore, the African states, perhaps working through the instrumentality of the African Union, must strive to institutionalize the ADPC training programme in order to ensure

continual training and re-training to enhance the capacity of the officials and policymakers dealing with Diaspora related matters.

There is also a need to pay attention to the avenues for transferring money not only to the three selected study countries, but to various African states. Currently, money transfers are done through the postal system, the banking system and money transfer operators. These methods are fraught with limitations ranging from long delays to being very expensive and bureaucratic. Senegal is already engaged in evolving an effective solution to this issue by adopting the money transfer model of the Kara International Exchange. This Exchange allows migrants to deposit money with its designated business centre in New York, This money is assigned a code number, which is then communicated to the beneficiary in Senegal who can then cash the transferred money at a designated local business centre (Addy et al. 2003). The arrangement provides for the bundling of many small transactions so that transfers can be effected at lower costs. The services of various microfinance institutions located in rural areas can be secured to actualize this strategy using the benefits of ICT infrastructure.

By and large, it is important to note that Diaspora development related initiatives do contribute to poverty reduction and efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). From the case studies of Ghana,

Nigeria and Senegal, it is evident that the promotion of genuine engagement, based on mutual trust between the government and the Diaspora, can be beneficial in mitigating such critical developmental issues as bridging the infrastructural deficit, creating youth employment and turning brain drain into brain gain.

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