



*Enabling Diaspora
Engagement in Africa:
Resources, Mechanisms
and Gaps*

Case Study: Ethiopia

A study by

**The Association for Higher
Education and Development
(AHEAD)**

May 2007 Ottawa, Canada



**Study conducted by
Bathseba H. Belai**

***Enabling Diaspora Engagement in Africa:
Resources, Mechanisms and Gaps***

Case Study: Ethiopia

A study by

**The Association for Higher Education and Development
(AHEAD)**

May 2007 – Ottawa, Canada

**Study conducted by
Bathseba H. Belai**

© 2007 – AHEAD
ISBN 978-0-9783113-0-8

Foreword

In introducing the Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) to the Ethiopian public through a communiqué published in Addis Tribune in 2000, we made the following bold statement:

“The purpose of [our activities] is not about the past. It is about the future. It is not about mistakes; it is about corrections. It is not about who is wrong and who is right. It is about lessons learned. It is not about failed duties, it is about paying back our country. It is not about brain drain, it is about reversing it. Our long-term objective is to coordinate and channel the resources, expertise and creativity of Ethiopians in the Diaspora toward development efforts in the motherland.”

AHEAD was thus established to contribute towards development efforts in Ethiopia by mobilizing, coordinating and channeling the necessary resources and relevant expertise to Ethiopian higher academic institutions. In addition to the programs that it runs in support of this mandate, AHEAD also seeks to mobilize Ethiopians in the diaspora and facilitate their contributions to, and role in, development undertakings in Ethiopia.

One of the tools available to AHEAD to mobilize Ethiopians in the diaspora to contribute to the capacity building efforts of the country is the conduct of studies and research work, in order to identify how and where diaspora efforts could better contribute to Ethiopia's development. To this end, it may be recalled that AHEAD, with the support of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), conducted a study (*Semantics Aside: The Role of the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building. Case Study: Ethiopia (October 2004)*) inspired by the growing awareness among Ethiopian diaspora communities of their role in the capacity building efforts of their country of origin – Ethiopia.

Not unexpectedly, the findings of our first research could be summarized into two elements: that there was a role for the diaspora in the capacity building efforts of Africa; and, that the diaspora was willing to play its role in this effort. To this, we were able to add the willingness of the States in Africa to welcome the contribution of the diaspora in their efforts for capacity building.

However encouraging the findings of the research were, they raised more questions than that they could answer, including one lingering question: what mechanisms are available – in both home and host countries – to facilitate diaspora engagement? Participants of an AHEAD Stakeholders Roundtable held in November 2004, which included a number of State Representatives from African States and scholars specializing in diaspora and development issues, were unanimous on the need for a follow-up study which would seek to answer the above. In response, AHEAD undertook the present research which aims to

provide a critical review of mechanisms that have been established to facilitate diaspora engagement in African development in general, and Ethiopian development in particular. The study, conducted by Bathseba H. Belai, was made possible through the financial support of IDRC.

In presenting this research, which encompasses studies from a wide range of fields that impact on diaspora engagement in home country capacity development, it is our hope that diaspora members interested in contributing their skills, knowledge and remittances to their country of origin will find valuable information that would help them to do so, as will the Government of Ethiopia in its efforts to refine its diaspora engagement strategies and activities. It is also our wish that Host States such as Canada will find valuable information which would enable them to help facilitate the contribution of their diaspora citizens towards the development of their countries of origin. The study, in our opinion, opens avenues of cooperation for the common good between diaspora members, their home countries and their countries of origin, with the support of relevant African and international organizations.

AHEAD
May 2007
Ottawa, Canada

Research Participants

Funding Agency

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Research Organization

Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)

Researcher

Bathseba H. Belai

Editor

Clyde Sanger

Collaborating Organization

Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)

Logistical Support in Ethiopia

BT Costantinos and Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA)

Workneh Assefa, AHEAD representative in Ethiopia

Acknowledgements

This research project was made possible thanks to the generous support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) which has been a leading Canadian institution in facilitating a serious dialogue about the African diaspora and its role in the development efforts of Africa. A previous AHEAD study, *Semantics Aside: the Role of the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building (Case Study: Ethiopia)*, also supported by IDRC, has made a considerable contribution in generating a dialogue on this subject at different important forums.

It is, therefore, with special thanks, that we say IDRC has been behind the incremental progress AHEAD has made in bringing forth this subject for serious discussion. Our compliments go to IDRC for being a champion of an idea whose time has finally come.

Our very special thanks to Gisèle Morin-Labatut, Senior Program Specialist, Canadian Partnerships, Program and Partnership Branch at IDRC. The role played by Gisèle in bringing the diaspora voice to IDRC, and beyond, cannot be overstated. At a time when this subject was almost unknown, we were lucky to have found Gisèle, an officer with insight, integrity and full of challenging ideas.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the researcher, Bathseba H. Belai, for a study of remarkable quality.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Clyde Sanger for his kind assistance in copy-editing this study under extremely tight time constraints.

We also wish to thank our partners, the Network of Ethiopian Women's Association (NEWA) and the Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), for the cooperation and support provided to AHEAD and the researcher in carrying out the Ethiopian component of the research.

AHEAD
Ottawa
May 2007

The researcher would also like to express her personal appreciation to the following persons who have been instrumental to the successful conduct of the study.

First and foremost, I am most grateful to all AHEAD members for providing me the opportunity to work on an issue as timely and important as is diaspora engagement in the capacity development of the African continent in general and that of Ethiopia in particular. Thank you for believing in me and for your unwavering support, patience and care throughout the research.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation to Gisèle Morin-Labatut who has consistently provided me support beyond the call of duty, taking great care to ensure that I kept abreast of all developments relevant to the research and readily extending her assistance every time I needed it.

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to Tsega Haile Belai whose moral and practical support in the latter stages of the research was central to its good completion. Thank you for the countless hours put in collecting and organizing information, your assistance with drafting the paper, the invaluable insights shared as well as for your patience and steadfast support throughout the entire process.

I would also like to thank Christopher Smart and Caroline Pestieau for the time taken to help me clarify and strengthen the research proposal as well as for contacts and many useful ideas and suggestions provided as the project progressed.

The key part of the research for this paper was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where I benefited enormously from the time, openness and help of a number of people. In this regard, I would especially like to thank BT Costantinos and Guebray Berhane for their kind assistance and support in assembling relevant material, facilitating meetings with key interviewees as well as for generously sharing their insights on diaspora-related issues in the Ethiopian context.

I am particularly grateful to all those who participated in interviews and meetings, both in Ethiopia and in Canada, and whose various perspectives on diaspora engagement in national development efforts uniquely enriched the present study. The time that each participant has taken to share thoughts and experiences on diaspora issues is greatly appreciated. A special mention goes to various representatives of the Ethiopian government for the genuine interest expressed in this study as well as for the candid views shared on various matters related to Ethiopian development over many discussions.

Bathseba H. Belai
Montreal
May 2007

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Acronyms	v
Boxes	vi
1. General Introduction	1
1.1 Background and Objectives of the Study	1
1.2 Methodological Aspects	2
2. International Migration and Development	4
2.1 International Recognition of Inter-Linkages between Migration and Development	4
2.2 Development Potential of International Migration	5
2.2.1 Remittances	5
2.2.2 Diaspora Engagement: Beyond Remittances	9
3. African Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora	13
3.1 Migration and the Brain Drain in Africa	13
3.2 Continental Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora	17
3.2.1 African Union	17
3.2.2 New Partnership for Africa's Development	19
3.2.3 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	20
3.2.4 African Capacity Building Foundation	21
3.2.5 African Development Bank	22
3.2.6 Research and Development Forum for Science in Africa	22
3.3 African National Governmental Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora	22
4. Enabling Diaspora Engagement: Case Study of Ethiopia	28
4.1 Country Information	28
4.1.1 Ethiopia at a Glance	28
4.1.2 Development Oriented Activities	29
4.1.3 Agriculture-Led Industrialization Efforts	30
4.1.4 Transport and Communication	31
4.1.5 Improvements in Investment Environment	33
4.1.6 Tourism	33
4.1.7 Health Sector Concerns	34
4.2 Migration and the Brain Drain in Ethiopia	35
4.3 Ethiopian Governmental Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora	36
4.3.1 Institutional Arrangements	37
4.3.1.1 Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	37

4.3.1.2 Diaspora Coordinating Office, Ministry of Capacity Building	38
4.3.2 Regional Initiatives	39
4.3.3 Constituency Building Activities	40
4.3.3.1 Meetings with Ethiopians in the Diaspora	40
4.3.3.2 Constituency Building Mandates of Ethiopian Embassies	40
4.3.4 Privileges Offered to Diaspora Ethiopians	43
4.3.4.1 Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card	43
4.3.4.2 Duty Free Importation of Personal Items	44
4.3.4.3 Foreign Currency Bank Accounts	44
4.3.5 Measures to Lower Barriers to Investment	46
4.3.5.1 Attractive Investment Incentives	46
4.3.5.2 Measures to Improve Operational Efficiency	46
4.3.5.3 Increased Foreign Investment in Ethiopia	48
4.3.6 Facilitating Remittance Transfers for Development	48
4.3.6.1 Volume of Remittances	48
4.3.6.2 Government Efforts to Facilitate Official Remittance Transfers	49
4.4 Challenges in the Ethiopian Government’s Diaspora Engagement Efforts	50
4.4.1 Resource Constraints	50
4.4.2 Divide between the Government and the Diaspora	51
4.5 The Way Forward: Suggestions for Action Points by the Government of Ethiopia	52
4.5.1 Formulate a Comprehensive National Diaspora Engagement Policy and Strategies	52
4.5.1.1 National Diaspora Engagement Policy	52
4.5.1.2 Targeted Strategies to Attract Different Segments of the Diaspora	53
4.5.2 Establish a Central Diaspora Office	54
4.5.3 Improve Provision of Information to the Diaspora	55
4.5.4 Expand Data Collection	58
4.5.5 Strengthen Public Relations Efforts	59
4.5.5.1 Multiply Efforts to Improve Government-Diaspora Relations	59
4.5.5.2 Mainstream Diaspora Issues with Local Populations and Institutions	60
4.5.6 Increase the Developmental Impact of Remittances	61
4.5.6.1 Improve Data Collection	61
4.5.6.2 Increase Volume of Official Remittances	61
4.5.6.3 Direct Mobilized Resources towards Productive Investments	62
4.5.7 Alleviate Bureaucratic Burden	62
4.5.8 Conduct Regular Monitoring of Diaspora-Related Activities	63
4.5.9 Acknowledge and Fully Support Diaspora Assistance	63
4.6 Observations on the Low Remuneration of Public Servants	64
4.7 Ethiopian Non-Governmental Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora	65

4.8 International Organizations’ Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora	66
4.8.1 International Organization for Migration	66
4.8.1.1 Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals	67
4.8.1.2 Migration for Development in Africa	68
4.8.2 United Nations Development Programme	70
4.8.3 World Bank	71
4.8.4 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	72
4.8.5 International Labour Organization	73
5. Host Country Engagement: The Canadian Perspective	74
5.1 Diaspora Communities in Canada	74
5.1.1 Developing Country Diasporas in Canada	74
5.1.2 Engagement of African-Canadian Diasporas in African Development	75
5.2 Canadian Governmental Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement in Africa	77
5.2.1 Canadian Policy on International Development Cooperation	77
5.2.2 Canadian Policy on Diaspora Engagement	78
5.2.3 Canadian Governmental Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement	79
5.2.3.1 Canadian International Development Agency	79
5.2.3.1.1 Haitian Diaspora Pilot Project	80
5.2.3.1.2 Financial Support for Diaspora-Related Activities	80
5.2.3.1.3 Voluntary Sector Fund	80
5.2.3.1.4 Canada Corps/Office for Democratic Governance	81
5.2.3.1.5 Initiatives Related to Remittances	82
5.2.3.2 International Development Research Centre	82
5.2.3.3 Canadian Heritage – Multiculturalism Program	83
5.3 Canadian Non-Governmental Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement	84
5.3.1 Canadian Development Organizations	84
5.3.1.1 Interest and Practice as Regards Diaspora Engagement	85
5.3.1.2 Constraints in Enabling Diaspora Engagement	86
5.3.1.3 Potential Role of Volunteer Cooperation Agencies	87
5.3.1.4 Volunteer Services Overseas	88
5.3.2 Global Citizenship Grant Program, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation	90
5.3.3 Canadian Foundation for the Americas	91
5.3.4 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada	91
5.3.5 Global College – University of Winnipeg	92
5.4 Assessment of Diaspora-Related Measures in Canada	92
5.4.1 Institutional Disinterest	92
5.4.2 Lack of Effective Capacity Building Mechanism for Diaspora Organizations	93
5.4.3 Issues Related to Remittances	95
Rationale for Host Government Support of Diaspora Engagement	95

5.6 Suggestions for Canadian Action to Enable Diaspora Engagement	97
5.6.1 Promote Diaspora Related Research	97
5.6.2 Support Internal and External Capacity Building of Diaspora Organizations	98
5.6.3 Mainstream Diaspora Participation in International Aid Projects	99
5.6.4 Remove Barriers to the Mobility of Diaspora Professionals	101
5.6.4.1 Immigration and Citizenship Considerations	102
5.6.4.2 Retention of Jobs and Benefits in Canada	102
5.6.4.3 Considerations Related to Career Progress	103
5.6.5 Create Organized Structures to Facilitate Transfer of Knowledge and Skills	104
5.6.6 Remove Barriers to the Full Participation of Diaspora Communities in Canadian Professional Life	107
5.6.7 Facilitate Remittance Transfers	108
5.7 Observations	110
5.7.1 Note on Migrant Taxes	110
5.7.2 Who is the Diaspora?	110
6. Increasing Profile and Ensuring Relevance: Role of Diaspora Groups	112
6.1 Advocating Policy Measures and Programs that Enable Diaspora Engagement	112
6.2 Promoting Unity for Maximum Impact	112
6.3 Promoting Youth Engagement	115
6.4 Bridging Gaps Created by Political Polarization	116
6.5 Ensuring Demand Driven Activities Based on Genuine Partnerships	117
6.6 Tempering Unrealistic Expectations	118
7. Concluding Remarks	119
References	123
Appendices	139
Appendix 1 – Persons and Organizations Consulted	
Appendix 2 – Illustrative Profiles of Ethiopian-Canadian Professionals	
Appendix 3 – Overview of Selected Ethiopian Diaspora Organizations	
Appendix 4 – Overview of Selected African Diaspora Organizations	

Executive Summary

Africans in the diaspora have both the capacity and will to take part meaningfully in the economic, social and political revival of the African continent. An optimal realization of the African diaspora's potential as a full-fledged partner in the continent's development efforts requires, *inter alia*, that the appropriate policies and programs be devised and carried out. In this regard, the many recent initiatives seeking to facilitate diaspora engagement in Africa prove a growing awareness of the considerable asset for development that Africa possesses in its diaspora. However, there remain important gaps in current policies and practices that need to be addressed by all relevant stakeholders if the promise of the "diaspora option" is to translate into a significant and sustainable engagement of the African diaspora, with an appreciable impact on African development.

The African Union has been at the forefront of continental initiatives to formally involve diaspora Africans in developments in Africa. This started with its historic recognition of the diaspora as an integral part of the continent and led on to its official designation of the African diaspora as the "Sixth Region" of the African Union, alongside North, South, East, West and Central Africa. Furthermore, considerations related to diaspora engagement are woven throughout the African Union's various programs, as the organization seeks to translate its mission into effective operations. However, the time has come for the African Union to go beyond supportive declarations and statements and take the leadership – at a continental level – in terms of putting in place concrete mechanisms that will enable a larger and more fruitful diaspora engagement in Africa. In this regard, the recent establishment of a Diaspora Division in the structure of the African Union is a welcome development, provided it results in practical programs that will allow for the application of African capital, knowledge and skills abroad to development efforts on the continent. Other Pan-African bodies such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa also need to adopt a more systematic approach to enabling diaspora engagement in Africa.

At a national level, African governments are greatly increasing incentives to attract their citizens abroad to contribute to capacity building in their homelands. The case study of Ethiopia reveals a wide range of measures taken to facilitate participation by its diaspora in national growth efforts. These include:

- The establishment, within two Ethiopian federal ministries, of departments dedicated to attracting, and cooperating with, the diaspora;
- Activities seeking to bring into the mainstream diaspora-related issues at various levels of government, including the creation of regional diaspora offices;
- Efforts to establish direct communication links between the government and the diaspora, notably through visits by officials to meet with diaspora Ethiopians;

- A revamped role for Ethiopian missions abroad, now expressly charged with community outreach and constituency building responsibilities;
- The granting of the Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card, giving Ethiopians who hold foreign citizenship practically the same rights and privileges as an Ethiopian citizen;
- The right for permanent returnees to import personal belongings free of duty;
- The right for non-resident Ethiopians to open foreign currency accounts;
- The amendment of the Investment Code lowering barriers to investment for both diaspora Ethiopians and other foreign investors, and providing particularly attractive incentives to those investing in priority sectors; and
- Reform of the banking/remittance transfer sector in order to improve the operations of the formal remittance transfer system in Ethiopia by reducing costs and increasing access to cost-effective, reliable, and fast services.

While the political will of the Government of Ethiopia to engage its diaspora in national development efforts, as well as its initiatives in this respect, are highly laudable – especially considering financial limits – there remain important weaknesses. Suggestions to improve existing measures include:

- A clear policy, widely communicated, that will engage the Ethiopian diaspora comprehensively, and will serve to focus the government’s diaspora-related activities;
- Targeted strategies and programs to attract different segments of the diaspora, supported, *inter alia*, by expanded efforts at data collection;
- The establishment of a diaspora office at a level higher than that of a department within a ministry, which would be instrumental in raising the profile accorded the diaspora, as well as streamlining policies and programs designed to channel diaspora resources;
- Provision of clear, accurate and timely information on relevant mechanisms as well as on local conditions and opportunities. The lack of such information remains an important barrier to the engagement of diaspora Ethiopians. This matter should be urgently addressed, giving special attention to the potential of the Internet for effective communication;
- Strengthened efforts in public relations, including moves to improve government-diaspora relations as well as to bring diaspora issues to the forefront among local populations and institutions;
- Development of policies and instruments to improve the use of remittances for productive investments;
- Further efforts to alleviate the bureaucratic burden;
- Regular evaluation of diaspora-related activities, to assess their effectiveness and to fine-tune policies and strategies to engage the diaspora; and
- Full acknowledgement and support of diaspora contributions.

For diaspora groups and individuals to take part effectively in home-country development activities, not only must factors related to their countries of origin be favourable, but the host countries' attitudes must also be supportive. An examination of Canada, as host to many African diaspora communities, has uncovered an increasing awareness of the contribution that diaspora communities in Canada may make – and already are making – to capacity development in poorer areas of the world. However, governmental and non-governmental measures to support current diaspora initiatives remain woefully inadequate and, in the case of Africa, practically non-existent. The role of Canada-based African diasporas in the development efforts of their countries of origin deserves much larger consideration in Canadian international cooperation policy and practices than it has thus far received. If adequate mechanisms within Canada's international aid structure were put in place, the benefits of diaspora engagement could be immense, for Canada as well as for African countries. In this regard, suggestions for consideration by the Government of Canada – and, where applicable, other players in the Canadian international development sector – include:

- Increased promotion and financial support of diaspora-related research;
- Provision of financial and organizational support to development-oriented diaspora organizations that would enable them to build their internal and external capacity;
- Measures to place diaspora participation in the mainstream of international aid projects;
- Efforts to remove barriers to mobility faced by skilled and qualified Canadians of African origin who may be interested in assignments in their home countries on a short- or long-term basis;
- Creation of programs that would lead to such skill transfer assignments;
- Redoubled efforts to integrate members of diaspora communities more functionally in Canadian life, and especially in the professional market; and,
- Measures to simplify remittance transfers as well as increase their use in productive investments.

International organizations – notably the International Organization for Migration – have instituted programs to channel diaspora resources to Africa and other developing areas. However, these programs are not as extensive as they need to be in order to ensure significant engagement, largely due to financial constraints. This points to the need for bilateral and multilateral donors to go beyond the promises made at conferences and provide the means that would enable the translation of their stated goodwill into concrete actions.

While it is clearly the responsibility of home and host country institutions, in partnership with relevant international organizations, to design and implement appropriate mechanisms that would enable the African diaspora to realize its potential as a full-fledged development partner on the African continent, diaspora communities also have a crucial role to play.

They need to increase their visibility so as to improve their standing in the mainstream of international development, as well as ensuring the relevance of their activities to local needs.

Diaspora engagement is not a cure-all for Africa's challenges. Nevertheless, if properly harnessed and effectively exploited, it offers an opportunity for innovative partnerships between diaspora Africans and their local counterparts for a real and sustainable African development. This requires the genuine and full collaboration of all stakeholders. The African continent can ill afford to overlook its resources in the diaspora as it seeks to turn its fortunes around; and, considering the dismal failure of traditional post-colonial development efforts in Africa, neither can international organizations and donor governments that purport to support African development.

Acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ADAC	African Diaspora Association of Canada
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
DBE	Development Bank of Ethiopia
DfID	Department for International Development – United Kingdom
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EEA	Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate
EIA	Ethiopian Investment Agency
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAL	Canadian Foundation for the Americas
GCIM	Global Commission on International Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPS	International Policy Statement, Canada
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa
NBE	National Bank of Ethiopia
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAC	Partnership Africa-Canada
RQAN	Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals
SDPRP	Sustainable Development Poverty Reduction Programme – Ethiopia
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty – Ethiopia
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Voluntary Cooperation Agency
VSF	Voluntary Sector Fund – Canadian International Development Agency
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Boxes

- Box 1** Selected Figures on Global Remittance Flows
- Box 2** Mechanisms to Channel Remittance Transfers toward Development
- Box 3** Modalities of Diaspora Engagement
- Box 4** Remittances in African Countries: Selected Figures
- Box 5** Recommendations Related to Migration and Development, 7th AU Summit
- Box 6** Institutional Arrangements Regarding Diaspora Engagement in Selected African Countries

- Box 7** The Government of Ghana’s Diaspora-Related Activities
- Box 8** The Government of Nigeria’s Diaspora-Related Activities
- Box 9** HIV/AIDS Figures for Ethiopia, 2003
- Box 10** The Ethiopian Brain Drain in Numbers
- Box 11** Ethiopian Embassy in Ottawa, Canada: Diaspora Outreach Activities
- Box 12** Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card: Entitlements and Restrictions
- Box 13** Foreign Currency Bank Accounts: Various Features
- Box 14** Diaspora Investment in Ethiopia: Selected Figures
- Box 15** NBE’s Directive on International Remittance Services: Selected Provisions
- Box 16** Formulating a National Diaspora Strategy to Mobilize Intellectual Resources for Development: Issues for Consideration

- Box 17** Data Collection on Diaspora Expertise: Selected Practices
- Box 18** MIDA Operations
- Box 19** University of Mali TOKTEN Project
- Box 20** Canadian Foreign Born Population, 2001
- Box 21** Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada: Diaspora Engagement Activities

- Box 22** VCAs and Personnel Sending Diaspora Organizations: Areas for Cooperation

- Box 23** VSO UK’s Diaspora Volunteering Initiative
- Box 24** France’s *Programme d’appui aux projets des OSIM* (PRA-OSIM)
- Box 25** Canadian Network of NGOs in Ethiopia
- Box 26** Secondment of Ethiopian-Canadian Professionals to Ethiopian Institutions
- Box 27** Collaborative Effort to Alleviate the Brain Drain in the Congolese Health Sector

- Box 28** Using Existing Networks to Establish a Diaspora Volunteering Program
- Box 29** Young Diplomats’ Diaspora Partnerships Program

1. General Introduction

1.1 Background and Objectives of the Study

In 2004, the Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) completed a study titled “Semantics Aside: The Role of the African Diaspora in Africa’s Capacity Building Efforts (Case Study: Ethiopia)” which examined the potential role of the African diaspora in the capacity building efforts of the continent. In addition to uncovering the alarming statistics on brain drain and its cost to both Africa and Ethiopia, “Semantics Aside” found that there was a growing momentum among Ethiopian diaspora communities in Canada to be actively involved in the development efforts of their birth country and that many groups had already started mobilizing. It also highlighted the fact that, on the Ethiopian side, diaspora engagement was welcome and considered necessary, as was shown by several measures taken by the Government of Ethiopia to formally include the diaspora in its development efforts as well as increased awareness of the diaspora’s actual and potential contribution in academic and other circles.

The research also revealed that there were weaknesses in the engagement of the Ethiopian diaspora in developmental activities in Ethiopia, notably as regards sustainability of efforts. Indeed, largely due to capacity constraints, activities undertaken by diaspora groups and individuals were found to be short-term or *ad hoc*. Recognizing the need for continuity to allow for learning from experience as well as to ensure significant and sustainable diaspora participation with an appreciable impact on national development, AHEAD embarked on the present study to explore mechanisms that facilitate a more effective utilization of diaspora resources.

The purpose of the present research is to provide a critical review of mechanisms that have been established to facilitate diaspora engagement in African development in general, and Ethiopian development in particular, with a view to informing diaspora members who are interested in contributing their skills, knowledge and remittances to their country of origin, as well as to those seeking to devise and implement programs to involve the diaspora. Practical ways forward, addressed to various stakeholders and that would enable to better harness the diaspora’s potential as a full-fledged development partner, are also proposed.

Within this main aim, the study has the following specific objectives:

- To provide an overview of existing policies, programs and initiatives by African continental bodies regarding African diaspora engagement;
- To identify existing policies, programs and initiatives regarding diaspora engagement established in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian government and international organizations, as well as Ethiopian civil society initiatives;
- To identify existing policies, programs and initiatives regarding diaspora engagement established by Canadian governmental and non-governmental

institutions, with a particular focus on those involving the African diaspora in Canada; and

- To identify gaps in current policies and practices regarding diaspora engagement – notably in Ethiopia as the home country and Canada as the host country – and suggest practical ways forward to support the diaspora’s contribution to development efforts.

While this research focuses on Ethiopia as a case study, its findings should prove useful for research to be conducted in other African countries, given that the challenge of effectively harnessing the diaspora’s intellectual, financial and social capital for maximum impact on national capacity development presents many commonalities across the African continent.

1.2 Methodological Aspects

The empirical data of the study was gathered through in-depth interviews in Ethiopia and in Canada with several stakeholders with the purpose of collecting detailed information on current practices as regards diaspora engagement. These included representatives of key governmental agencies in both countries, as well as intergovernmental organizations, where such an arrangement was practicable. Representatives of educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and professional associations were also interviewed in Ethiopia as in Canada. Interviews with Ethiopian – and a couple of other non-Ethiopian African – diaspora groups and individuals in Canada as well as with permanent or temporary returnees in Ethiopia were also conducted. The aim of these discussions was to gain insight into the diaspora’s experiences as they participated in activities in Ethiopia and to assess the opportunities and challenges they face in their engagement. Moreover, a few illustrative cases of Ethiopian-Canadians, who have either undertaken assignments in Ethiopia or who are interested in doing so, are presented in anonymous profiles at the end of the paper.¹ While most interviews were conducted in person, certain were completed by telephone and e-mail. A partial list of organizations and persons consulted – taking into consideration requests for anonymity – is attached in the appendix.²

A review of Ethiopian and Canadian government policy documents and other literature relevant to diaspora engagement was also conducted. Additionally, literature produced by other industrialized countries; research centres; non-governmental organizations, including diaspora associations; as well as by international and African organizations was also consulted. This literature review focused on – but was not limited to – the facilitation of permanent and short-term return of skilled expatriates; channels to steer remittances toward productive investments in developing countries; policies, mechanisms and programs implemented or to be implemented to engage diasporas in developing areas of the world, including in Africa; best practices and lessons learned from developed countries with a

¹ See Appendix 2.

² See Appendix 1.

significant African diaspora as well as those from countries and communities that have managed to apply effectively their resources in the diaspora in national capacity building endeavours. All secondary sources consulted are listed as references at the end of the paper.

2. International Migration and Development

In an increasingly globalized world, international migration has become one of the most important factors that define and govern international relations, and especially those between higher and lower income countries. Indeed, from illegal migration and related security concerns to the protection of migrants' human rights; from the selective immigration policies and practices designed to attract highly skilled developing country professionals to the West, while those that prevent the uneducated and the unskilled from entering become more restrictive; and from the increasing importance of remittances in developing country economies to the growing popularity of diasporas as agents of development, international migration touches all aspects of global interactions, be they social, economic, or political.

2.1 International Recognition of Inter-Linkages between Migration and Development

Every year, 2 to 3 million people leave their countries of origin to settle abroad.³ Currently, over 191 million people – representing 3% of the global population – reside outside their birth country.⁴ Migration affects both developed and developing countries at various levels. There is, however, one aspect that has been garnering increasing political currency across the board: namely, the linkages between migration and development, with a focus on maximizing the positive effects of migration on international development while minimizing negative impacts. The United Nations (UN) High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which took place in September 2006, firmly placed the topic on the global development agenda. Beginning with the UN Secretary-General's introductory remarks, and echoed by one delegation after the other, one of the basic messages transmitted at this meeting is that – properly managed and effectively exploited – international migration presents unparalleled opportunities for reducing poverty and fostering development.⁵

While the UN High-Level meeting is particularly significant as the first ever of its kind to be held at the ministerial, the development potential of migration has been explored by various bodies and at numerous international gatherings. To mention just a few, these include the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), tasked with the formulation of a framework that would enable an appropriate global response to the issue of international migration;⁶ the UNITAR/UNFPA/IOM⁷ Workshop Series on “Key Migration

³ Kuznetsov, 2005.

⁴ United Nations quoted in UNECA, 2006b.

⁵ UN, 2006a.

⁶ Launched by the UN Secretary-General and a number of governments in December 2003, GCIM completed its work with a report to the UN Secretary-General titled *Migration in an Interconnected World: New Directions for Action*, available at <http://www.gcim.org/>. GCIM was dismantled in December 2005.

Issues” launched in 2005, which brought together UN delegates and relevant international organizations and civil society groups in a series of awareness raising meetings on a wide range of migration-related issues;⁸ and the First Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, which gathered 58 African and European countries’ ministers in July 2006.⁹ The interest in international migration as it relates to development is also manifest in related programs established by such international bodies as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.¹⁰ The international research community – whose examination of transnational migration has traditionally tended to focus on the economic and social integration of migrants in their new countries and their impact on international trade relations – has also shown growing interest in exploring the potential of remittances, as well as other intellectual and social resources of developing country diasporas to bolster the capacity building efforts of their homelands. While research on this topic remains skewed in favour of the role of remittances in development, studies published over the past 3 to 5 years by international organizations such as IOM and the International Labour Organization (ILO),¹¹ as well as by research centres and institutes devoted to transnational migration¹² indicate more interest in exploring the diverse roles that diaspora communities could play in economic growth and poverty reduction in their native lands.

2.2 Development Potential of International Migration

2.2.1 Remittances

As the most readily visible outcome of migration from developing countries on local economies, remittance flows have largely dominated the discourse on diaspora and development. Indeed, most of the focus of research and action on the actual and potential contribution of diasporas from developing parts of the world to their countries of origin has been on remittance flows, including considerations regarding impact on home country economies, means through which their volume can be increased, as well as mechanisms to direct them into more productive endeavours.¹³

Remittances are financial transfers made by migrants to their countries of origin. They are largely used to supplement the income of family members or friends back home, help take care of aged parents, support unemployed relatives, or finance the education of younger

⁷ United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Population Fund, and International Organization for Migration

⁸ UNITAR, 2006.

⁹ Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, 2006.

¹⁰ See section 4.8 on international organizations for a detailed discussion of their programs and activities.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² To name a few in the English-speaking world: the University of Sussex Centre for Migration Research; Oxford University’s Centre on Migration, Policy and Society; the Migration and Policy Institute; and the North-South Institute in Canada.

¹³ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

members of the family. Migrants may also use them to buy property in their home country – a house, land, etc. – or to accumulate capital in savings or investment accounts, for future investments or to bankroll their retirement.¹⁴

It is estimated that, on average, migrants remit US\$250 per month.¹⁵ According to World Bank figures, officially recorded remittances amounted to US\$80 billion in 2002, with monies sent through informal channels estimated to be double or triple this amount.¹⁶ Additional figures on remittances are given in Box 1. Financial transfers made by their workers abroad constitute “*the second-largest source of external funding for developing countries after foreign direct investment (FDI)*,”¹⁷ and for certain countries, remittances represent the largest source of foreign currency, easily outstripping exports and FDI.¹⁸

Box 1. Selected Figures on Global Remittance Flows

Total official remittances sent to developing countries, in 2002: US\$80 billion ¹⁹
Share of remittances received, by region, in 2002: ²⁰
- Latin America and the Caribbean: US\$25 billion (1.5% of GDP)
- South Asia: US\$16 billion (2.5% of GDP)
- Middle East and North Africa: US\$14 billion (2.2% of GDP)
- Sub-Saharan African: US\$4 billion (1.3% of GDP)
On average, from 1990-2003, the top 5: ²¹
- Remittance sending countries: United States, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Germany and France
- Remittance receiving countries, in absolute terms: India, Mexico, the Philippines, Egypt, and Turkey
- Remittance receiving countries, relative to their economies: Lesotho, Tonga, Lebanon, Samoa, Jordan – with remittances ranging from about 20% to more than 40% of GDP

The considerable – and increasing – size of the global remittance market, added to the fact that, in comparison with other sources of external funding, remittances have proved remarkably stable even during times of economic downturns,²² has over the years led to growing interest – among home and host country governments as well as multilateral agencies – in how the capital potential of diasporas can be fully harnessed for development purposes.

¹⁴ Robinson, 2005.

¹⁵ Orozco quoted in Robinson, 2005.

¹⁶ World Bank quoted in Commission for Africa, 2005; De Montclos, 2005.

¹⁷ De Montclos, 2005:2.

¹⁸ Higazi, 2005; IMF, 2005.

¹⁹ World Bank quoted in Commission for Africa, 2005; De Montclos, 2005.

²⁰ World Bank quoted in Commission for Africa, 2005:115.

²¹ IMF, 2005.

²² De Montclos, 2005; Higazi, 2005; IMF, 2005.

Remittances can be said to operate at two levels. At the micro- or household level, remittances translate into a higher standard of living for the recipients in the immediate term,²³ while representing investments in human capital through the access they provide to education, healthcare, and better nutrition.²⁴ This latter point is discussed in greater detail later in this paper. At an aggregate level, remittances increase much-needed foreign currency reserves of developing countries, which can be used to fuel imports or to effect debt payment, for instance; provide alternative sources of foreign investment, especially important for those countries that do not attract much FDI and are marginalized from the global trade and investment market; and, lead to poverty reduction through the multiplier effects of capital injection in the local economy as well as community-development projects.²⁵ An example would be diaspora members pooling resources together to provide workers in their home country with the means to start a small enterprise, such as the Organization of Nicaraguans in Canada did when they raised money for a group of Nicaraguan workers to buy tools. With the means of production in hand, the group established a small business, now employing over 20 persons.²⁶

Negative effects of remittances have also been noted. These are mainly linked to the dependency they may create, both at a personal level – where, for instance, recipients come to rely completely on money sent from abroad and stop working – and at the national level. An example of the latter dependency would be the home country ignoring necessary economic reforms as the foreign currency influx from workers’ remittances bolsters the recipient country’s overall balance of payments position.²⁷ Whether or not remittances alleviate poverty has also been a matter of great debate in the research community. Some view the effects of remittances to be solely limited to increasing private consumption power with no commensurate outcome at the macro-economic level. In fact, these familial financial transfers are said to lead to recipient-fuelled inflation, resulting in widening income gaps.²⁸ This view is countered by the camp that argues that private daily consumption in the form of education and health expenses results in long-term human capital development necessary to national growth. Thus, private expenses are seen to have developmental effects that go far beyond the individual or familial sphere.²⁹ In this regard, Dr. Thomson Fontaine, an economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) notes that “*studies conducted in Latin America for instance shows [sic] that remittances increase schooling and reduces the drop-out rate,*” and further adds that recent research has revealed that a higher proportion of remittances than is commonly thought is actually applied toward financing private investment.³⁰

²³ Asmellash, 2006.

²⁴ Asmellash, 2006; Philippa Wiens quoted in FOCAL, 2005a; Fontaine, 2005; UNECA, 2006b.

²⁵ Asmellash, 2006; De Montclos, 2005; UNECA, 2006b.

²⁶ FOCAL, 2005a.

²⁷ Asmellash 2006; Tanner 2005.

²⁸ Sander and Kapur quoted in Tanner, 2005.

²⁹ Philippa Wiens quoted in FOCAL, 2005a; Fontaine, 2005; UNECA, 2006b.

³⁰ Fontaine, 2005:2-3.

Thus remittances are not just used for immediate consumption and, provided they are appropriately channelled, present even greater potential for national growth activities. In that regard, measures and programs seeking to link remittances and investments are gaining in popularity across the developing world. Box 2 provides selected examples.

Box 2. Mechanisms to Channel Remittance Transfers toward Development

Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan: foreign currency denomination government bonds allow the government to channel remittances into priority areas for investment.³¹

El Salvador: “*Programa Unidos por la Solidaridad*” provides for co-financing arrangements between diaspora members and local authorities from a certain community for community social and infrastructure development projects.³²

Ethiopia: aware that unofficial transfers of funds inhibit productive use of remittances, the National Bank of Ethiopia has, in a bid to make the formal remittance transfer system more attractive to diaspora Ethiopians, taken steps to reduce remittance costs, and increase access to reliable and efficient services.³³

Mexico: “*Tres por Uno*” (Three for One) program established in 1999 by Mexican federal, state and municipal governments provide US\$3 for every US\$1 sent in remittances.³⁴

Sierra Leone: channels remittances toward poverty alleviation projects.³⁵

Tunisia: promotes the development of a database of local development projects, for use by potential Tunisian investors abroad.³⁶

International agencies as well as developed country governments have also joined in the efforts “to promote a more equitable, orderly and development friendly remittance marketplace.”³⁷ Leaders in this field include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID) as well as multilateral agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank.³⁸ For instance, DfID launched the “Sending Money Home?” website in March 2005 with the aim of filling the information gap that hinders migrants’ use of official remitting channels.³⁹ The site includes a list of various money transfer agents to help remitters choose the most competitive one, based on price, speed of delivery, convenience, etc. Moreover, community specific information is provided in English and in a migrant’s mother tongue – for example, the page for Ethiopia includes information brochures and instructions in English and in Amharic. There are currently 13 such

³¹ Nunn, 2005.

³² IOM, 2005.

³³ NBE, 2006a.

This is discussed in greater detail in section 4.3.6.2 regarding the Government of Ethiopia’s efforts to facilitate official remittances.

³⁴ IOM, 2005; UNFPA 2006.

³⁵ IOM, 2005.

³⁶ IOM, 2005.

³⁷ Robinson, 2005:113.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ DfID “Sending Money Home?” website.

community specific pages, with more to be added as the site expands. On the regional side, the Multilateral Investment Fund of the IADB has been very active in this arena and has been supporting, since 2000, projects in Mexico and other parts of Latin America seeking to increase the development impact of remittances, notably those seeking to link capital thus transferred with needs in the small and medium enterprise sector.⁴⁰

As various stakeholders continue to assess modalities through which the developmental impact of remittances can be maximized, and even as novel policies and programs are being devised, the cost of transferring money remains generally high, despite having been lowered in the past few years. Indeed, while generally in the vicinity of 5 to 10% of the amount transferred, transaction costs can go as high as 20%, depending on geographic considerations, level of development of remittance transfer system in the recipient market, as well as sum remitted.⁴¹ In this regard, high transfer fees continue to frustrate efforts to channel more transfers through official means. Moreover, while the significance of the role that remittances play in home country economies is undeniable and there is a growing urgency to find mechanisms that better leverage their developmental potential, non-financial transfers that migrants make to their homelands also need to start receiving the level of attention that has traditionally been focused on remittances.

As many developing countries continue to suffer from brain drain and its attendant problems – including severely weakened health and higher education systems, crumbling institutions, and stunted capacity for development – the diverse contributions that diaspora communities could make to national development efforts merit a more comprehensive investigation, including research and action on issues such as intellectual and social transfers. Indeed, as important as they are, remittances do not compensate for the ill effects caused by brain drain on developing countries.⁴² As one concern, there is evidence that the higher the level of educational attainment of the migrant, the lower both the amount remitted and the probability of remitting.⁴³ Thus, the effective utilization of the resources that highly educated and skilled diaspora members may offer to national development suggests the need for measures beyond the facilitation of remittances to be fully taken into consideration at all levels and by all concerned stakeholders.

2.2.2 Diaspora Engagement: Beyond Remittances

The roundtable on “Multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, including remittances”, organized as part of the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, formally recognized that “*in order for international migration to be beneficial for development and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium*

⁴⁰ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

⁴¹ IOM, 2005; UNFPA 2006.

⁴² Tanner, 2005; Séguin *et al.*, 2006b.

⁴³ Lowell and De La Garza quoted in Tanner, 2005; Ratha quoted in Séguin *et al.*, 2006b.

Development Goals, it was necessary to capitalize on the skills accrued by migrants while abroad".⁴⁴ It is impossible to imagine a more dazzling endorsement – at the highest levels – of the role of diasporas from developing countries in maximizing the gains of migration internationally while minimizing its negative impact on their homelands, and not just through financial transfers in the form of remittances.

Brain drain to the developed world has severely weakened the capacity of many developing countries to fuel their growth. The Caribbean region and the African continent have been the most affected in this regard. Indeed, Caribbean countries account for seven of the top 10 countries in the world in terms of rates of emigration of professionals. The top five – Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Haiti – currently have over 80% of their educated and skilled people settled in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.⁴⁵ The exodus of its highly trained manpower has also been a major obstacle for the African continent as it seeks to jump-start its economic growth. Certain areas, such as the health sector, have been particularly affected, with IOM figures revealing that poor nations spend around US\$500 million annually training medical workers who end up migrating to the developed world.⁴⁶ Between one third to half of the developing world's scientists are also estimated to now be living in rich countries.⁴⁷

Faced with the loss of a significant number of their educated and trained professionals to industrialized nations, developing countries are turning towards their citizens abroad to contribute to national growth. Indeed, over the past five years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number and types of initiatives designed to attract diaspora involvement in the development of their homeland, with different countries at various stages of their development adopting various policies and programs in order to enable such contribution.⁴⁸ In this regard, countries such as India and China have proved quite successful in facilitating the return of their skilled nationals from abroad and encouraging major diaspora investment, while others, such as Mexico and other Latin American countries have focused more on encouraging remittances for development purposes.⁴⁹ Various modalities for diaspora engagement are briefly described in Box 3.

⁴⁴ UN, 2006b:1.

⁴⁵ World Bank quoted in Fontaine, 2005; UNFPA, 2006.

⁴⁶ Kramer, 2005.

⁴⁷ UNFPA, 2006.

⁴⁸ IOM, 2005.

⁴⁹ Agunias, 2006; Newland and Patrick, 2004; Robinson, 2005; among others.

Box 3. Modalities of Diaspora Engagement

There can be as many forms of diaspora engagement as there are diaspora groups and individuals interested in contributing to home country capacity development efforts. However, some broad – and not necessarily mutually exclusive – categorizations may be made. These include:

Permanent returns, where the diaspora member relocates to the home country. However, notwithstanding the experiences of countries such as the newly industrialized countries of South East Asia, and large emerging economies such as India and China, permanent returns have generally proved unsuccessful – and especially so in Africa – largely because the same reasons that led to emigration in the first place still persist. These include low salaries, inadequate infrastructure, political instability, etc.⁵⁰

Short-term return assignments, which can be used to fill skills-gap in home country institutions. Experts from the diaspora can be temporarily placed in areas where severe shortage of resources have been identified, such as in education, or the African health sector, for instance.

Resource mobilization, which involves the collection and channelling of financial and other material resources from the diaspora to the country of origin – books to equip a university library or medical equipment for a local hospital, for example – in response to identified needs. In this regard, it is important that resources sent are in tune with the real needs of the recipient party.⁵¹

Virtual participation has wildly gained in popularity as, fueled by rapid developments in the area of Information and Communication Technologies in recent years, it provides opportunities for involvement hitherto unavailable, such as long distance teaching, sharing of information with local counterparts via electronic means, formation of academic, scientific and all types of professional networks for collaboration on researches, and other projects, etc.⁵²

Investments may be effected using a number of channels, including remittances; the purchase of commercial or residential property in the country of origin; depositing savings in home country financial institutions; and, support of local development projects.

Professional linkages between professionals in the diaspora and their local counterparts, allowing them to communicate and work on issues of common interest; provide mentorship opportunities; collaborate on research papers, etc.

Institutional linkages are those that enable long-term partnerships between host and home country institutions, using networks built by diaspora members in their countries of residence. For instance, this could take the form of a multi-faceted cooperation agreement between a home country university and the one to which a diaspora professor is attached in the host country and which might include thesis supervision, faculty exchange programs, scholarships for qualified students from the home country, etc.⁵³

Business and trade linkages are formed when, through their contacts in and knowledge of both home and host country markets, diaspora members facilitate trade

⁵⁰ IOM, 2005; Tettey, 2002; Wickramasekara, 2002.

⁵¹ AHEAD, 2004.

⁵² El-Khawas, 2004; Teferra, 2004.

⁵³ UNESCO, 2004.

⁵⁴ North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 2006.

and investment in the home country, introduce local products to new markets, establish joint ventures with foreign concerns, as well as connect host and home country businesses with one another.⁵⁴ These forms of business linkages not only help promote the development of the private sector in the country of origin but also enhance the sharing of practices and cultural exchanges.

The issue of diaspora engagement is also attracting growing interest in host countries, which are starting to realize the potential of diasporas to facilitate cooperation between their countries of origin and residence, while participating actively in the development efforts of the former and allowing for a streamlined international development assistance of the latter. In that regard, examples of host government initiatives include: the establishment of a federation of diaspora associations financially supported by the French government with the aim of building their capacity – including access to funding channels – to carry out home country development initiatives; the involvement of the Bangladeshi diaspora in the formulation of the United Kingdom’s Bangladesh Country Assistance Plan; financial support provided by bilateral aid agencies such as DfID and the Swedish International Development Agency for diaspora-led development ventures; and the Australian government’s programs to facilitate remittance flows to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.⁵⁵

From the perspective of diaspora communities, many have started thinking about, and have mobilized around, their role as full partners in development cooperation. This has been manifest in the number of diaspora knowledge networks formed with the explicit purpose of connecting the diaspora with their countries of origin, as well as a deliberate move on the part of diaspora associations to tap into their resources – financial, human and social – for the benefit of their home countries.⁵⁶ However, limited by capacity and their role in development not always well understood or recognized, most diaspora groups remain marginal to international development efforts and their potential is not fully realized; this suggests the need for formal and coordinated mechanisms that more effectively harness actual and potential diaspora contributions.

In the following chapter, we examine African initiatives – at both continental and national levels – that seek to engage the African diaspora in the continent’s development efforts.

⁵⁵ Ionescu, 2006.

⁵⁶ Lyons, 2006; Fontaine, 2005; Tettey, 2002.

3. African Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the African diaspora⁵⁷ and its potential role in African development. Indeed, the African continent has witnessed a growing political will to formally include the diaspora in its development efforts as expressed by African bodies such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as through the multiplied efforts of African governments to encourage the full participation of their respective diasporas in national capacity building.

3.1 Migration and the Brain Drain in Africa

Where other developing areas of the world, such as Asia and Latin America, have been able to improve their economic standing over the years, Africa largely remains excluded from the global economy. As AU notes, while Africa accounts for 13% of the global population – 832 million inhabitants – its share in the world's economic activity remains relatively insignificant: 1% of global FDI; 1% global gross domestic product (GDP); and around 2% of world trade. Of the 48 least developed countries, 35 are in Africa and almost half of Sub-Saharan Africans live below the poverty line of US\$1/day per capita.⁵⁸ This troubling situation is further aggravated by the exodus of highly trained African professionals to industrialized nations, a phenomenon which has steadily grown over the past 25 to 30 years, depriving the continent of the very people it needs as it struggles to achieve economic and technological development.⁵⁹ Beyond considerations linked to economic growth, the brain drain in Africa also jeopardizes the social stability of countries that are the most affected, as they lose their elites and middle classes.⁶⁰

According to IOM, Africa has already lost one-third of its human capital and is continuing to lose its skilled personnel at an increasing rate, with an estimated 20,000 professionals leaving the continent annually since 1990.⁶¹ Recent World Bank estimates of those leaving their home countries run as high as 70,000 per annum.⁶² This has led to the continued dependence of the continent on foreign expertise to fill crucial human resources needs, with Africa spending US\$4 billion per year – representing 35% of total official development aid

⁵⁷ AU considers the African diaspora as consisting of “*peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.*” The term as used in this study refers to what might be called the “new” diaspora, i.e., Africans who migrated out of the continent over the past few decades either in search of better opportunities or as asylum-seekers, as well as those who, after studies in the West, elected to remain in the host country.

⁵⁸ AU Commission, 2004a.

⁵⁹ AHEAD, 2004; Tanner, 2005; World Bank, 2004.

⁶⁰ Tanner, 2005.

⁶¹ AHEAD, 2004.

⁶² World Bank, 2004.

to the continent – to employ an estimated 100,000 expatriate professionals.⁶³ It is estimated that the loss of each African-trained professional costs the continent US\$184,000 in non-return on investment on education and training, not to mention sizeable tax losses.⁶⁴ As severe as the consequences of the brain drain have proved to be for the overall development of the African continent, the health sector is particularly affected. Indeed, the desperate shortage of health professionals has become an immense obstacle as Africa tries to tackle HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria effectively as well as support other health programs.⁶⁵ The brain drain has reached mythical proportions in certain African countries. For instance Zimbabwe has lost 50% of its key professionals in the public health sector; in Ghana, figures for 2000 show that twice as many nurses left the country as newly graduated; and, GCIM reports there are a higher number of Malawi-trained doctors in the English city of Manchester than there are in the entire country of Malawi.⁶⁶ Additional figures on the brain drain in Africa are given in AHEAD's previous study.⁶⁷

Reasons behind the African brain drain are many, including push factors such as low wages, unsatisfactory living and working conditions, as well as social and political instability. A higher income and standard of living, better career opportunities and prospects for professional development, and political stability are some of the pull factors that attract skilled Africans to more developed countries.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the selective immigration practices of countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, targeting and recruiting skilled workers – especially from an already weakened African health sector – has further fuelled the phenomenon.⁶⁹

While African migration has had a negative impact on the continent through the ensuing brain drain, remittances sent by migrants to their families present a positive by-product of migration.⁷⁰ Although the importance of remittances greatly varies from country to country, financial transfers from Africans abroad constitute an important source of capital to the continent, and help African countries cover their debt servicing and increase foreign currency reserves.⁷¹ At a household level, they increase African families' ability to meet household needs. Official remittances to Africa amounted to US\$12 billion in 2003, one-third of which – US\$4 billion – went to Sub-Saharan Africa, with North Africa accounting for the remainder.⁷² World Bank figures for 2005 indicate a steep increase in remittance transfers to Sub-Saharan Africa, recorded at US\$8.1 billion.⁷³ In many African economies,

⁶³ AHEAD, 2004; Tanner, 2005.

⁶⁴ UNECA, 2006b.

⁶⁵ Kramer, 2005; UNFPA, 2006.

⁶⁶ Sunday Mail, 2006.

⁶⁷ AHEAD, 2004.

⁶⁸ AHEAD, 2004; El-Khawas, 2004.

⁶⁹ El-Khawas, 2004; Sawahel, 2006.

⁷⁰ UNECA, 2006b.

⁷¹ De Montclos, 2005; Higazi, 2005; Teferra, 2004; UNECA, 2006b.

⁷² Ndiaye quoted in AU, 2004a.

⁷³ UNECA, 2006b.

remittances are playing an increasingly central role – accounting for 5% to 20% of GDP – with remittance flows exceeding those from FDI and official development assistance (ODA) in certain countries.⁷⁴ Box 4 presents illustrative figures for selected African countries.

Box 4. Remittances in African Countries: Selected Figures⁷⁵

Cape Verde: 18% of GDP (1990-2003 average)
Ghana: US\$400 million/year, making it the fourth highest source of foreign exchange
Kenya: US\$600 million/year
Lesotho: 40% of GDP (1990-2003 average)
Mali: €100 million/year in remittances from France versus €60 million/year in French official aid
Somalia: US\$825 million in remittances versus US\$100 million in combined international official aid (2004)

Flows of remittances to African countries and their impact on their economies have gained in importance; however, their full potential remains undeveloped and meagre compared to the volume of transfers recorded in other developing regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, which receives about US\$30 billion/year from diaspora communities in the United States alone.⁷⁶ Moreover, remittances sent to Africa are largely used to supplement household income and their potential for productive investments remains unexploited. However, the capacity of remittances to inject much needed capital to fuel Africa's growth has led to calls for a concerted effort for action from various African stakeholders:

“The need for a policy detour aimed at tapping the financial wherewithal of the African Diaspora is therefore an issue requiring the urgent attention of policy makers and African financial institutions. African countries need to devise strategies and policies that can maximize the harnessing of the African migradollar so that it can serve as a force for growth and development.”⁷⁷

A number of measures need to be implemented in order to facilitate higher levels of transfers as well as to provide mechanisms that would allow for a larger application of remittance flows toward productive ventures. First, there is need for more research on remittances in Africa, by African governments as well as by international organizations. The latter for instance have mostly focused on the Latin American and Caribbean region in their work on remittances. Furthermore, enabling steps need to be taken in both home and host countries. These would include lower transaction fees, an expanded network of remittance transfer facilities, faster service, and information diffusion on how the banking

⁷⁴ Ndiaye quoted in AU, 2004a; Kwenin, 2004; Teferra, 2004.

⁷⁵ Ongile quoted in Africa's Brain Gain Inc., 2005; IMF, 2005; Shinn, 2002; UNECA, 2006b.

⁷⁶ Teferra, 2004.

⁷⁷ UNECA, 2006b:77.

and remittance transfer systems operate.⁷⁸ Steps are already being taken by African governments to create such an enabling environment. For instance, Zambia has set up a residential real estate investment program for Zambians in the diaspora and the Kenyan government established The Kenyans Abroad Investment Fund allowing diaspora Kenyans to invest in development projects in Kenya or transfer funds to their relatives.⁷⁹ The Government of Kenya has multiplied efforts to promote investment opportunities for diaspora Kenyans, including visits abroad by senior level government delegations for consultation with the diaspora, such as the Kenya Diaspora Investment Forum held in London in December 2006.⁸⁰ In Sierra Leone, a new program steering remittances towards poverty alleviation projects has been put in place.⁸¹ The Ethiopian government has also recently enacted investment and remittance facilitating measures.⁸² Ultimately, the African diaspora's full participation in schemes to attract their capital will depend on an overarching business environment that is conducive to investments, regardless of where they originate from,⁸³ as well as "*good governance and transparency on the part of African governments.*"⁸⁴

Let us however note that while remittances doubtlessly present tangible benefits to African countries they do not compensate for the negative effects of the brain drain. As the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) pertinently observed in its report to the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, "*it is pointless for an African household to receive remittances to pay for school and health care costs when there are no teachers and nurses.*"⁸⁵ Indeed, the magnitude of the brain drain problem on the continent presents a growing urgency for action as, in an increasingly knowledge based international economy, this migration stunts the overall development of the continent. This presents a need for Pan-African institutions and African governments to engage the African diaspora as a full-fledged development partner. Traditional post-colonial development endeavours have failed in Africa, the only continent to have grown poorer since the 1960s.⁸⁶ Properly harnessed, the capacity and willingness of diaspora Africans to participate in Africa's long overdue revival presents an opportunity for innovative partnerships between diaspora Africans and their counterparts on the continent for a real and sustainable development of Africa led by Africans.

Recent developments supportive of the formal inclusion of diaspora Africans in Africa's growth initiatives are indicative of a growing awareness of the above, at both continental and national levels.

⁷⁸ Ndiaye quoted in AU, 2004a; El-Khawas, 2004; UNECA, 2006b.

⁷⁹ UNECA, 2006b.

⁸⁰ Kenya High Commission – UK, 2006.

⁸¹ IOM, 2005:240.

⁸² Discussed in greater detail in sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.6.

⁸³ Commission for Africa, 2005.

⁸⁴ UNECA, 2006b:52.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*:51.

⁸⁶ UNECA, 2006b.

3.2 Continental Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora

3.2.1 African Union

AU formally acknowledged the African diaspora's rightful place on the continent with its call for the diaspora to be designated the sixth region of Africa, after North, South, East, West and Central Africa.⁸⁷ Indeed, in February 2003, heads of state meeting at the organization's First Extraordinary Summit amended the AU's Constitutive Act to "*invite and encourage the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of the continent, in the building of the African Union.*"⁸⁸ This historic expression of the continent's political will to ensure that Africans in the diaspora are included in developments in Africa paved the way for continental and national initiatives regarding diaspora engagement. In respect with that, the African diaspora has been given due recognition in the AU Commission's Vision and Mission Statements, as well as in its Strategic Plan for 2004-2007.⁸⁹ Employing an inclusive approach, AU defines the African diaspora as consisting "*of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union.*"⁹⁰ Diaspora engagement is woven throughout AU's priority programs as the organization seeks to translate its mission into effective operations.⁹¹

In 2002, the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network was launched by AU so as to search for means through which the African diaspora in North America, the Caribbean and Latin America could be systematically included in all AU initiatives. To that end, the Network seeks to foster cultural, social and economic linkages between Africa and its diaspora; support the AU through identification of funding sources; and explore ways to institutionalize diaspora representation within AU structures.⁹² Moreover, AU has organized several conferences with a view to promoting and reinforcing its vision for African diaspora engagement on the continent as well as devising various strategies to achieve this vision. These include the AU Technical Workshop on Relations with the Diaspora;⁹³ the First Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and of the Diaspora held on the African continent,⁹⁴ followed by a second one that took place in the diaspora.⁹⁵ The Strategic Framework for a Policy on Migration in Africa, adopted in 2004, proposed that African governments take action on several migration-related fronts, including measures relating to engaging the African diaspora, reducing and reversing the brain drain, as well as

⁸⁷ A status formally granted at the Seventh AU Summit, held in Banjul, The Gambia, in June-July 2006.

⁸⁸ African Unification Front, 2003.

⁸⁹ AU Commission, 2004a; 2004b; 2004c.

⁹⁰ AU, 2005:7.

⁹¹ AU Commission, 2004b; 2004c.

⁹² AU, 2004b.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ AU, 2004a. The conference was held in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2004.

⁹⁵ AU, 2006a. The conference was held in Salvador-Bahia, Brazil, in July 2006.

encouraging remittances.⁹⁶ The Experts Meeting on Migration and Development, held in April 2006 and which resulted in a Draft African Common Position on Migration and Development, firmly placed the issue of African migration and development – including the brain drain and remittances – among important issues related to migration, such as peace, security and stability, and human rights.⁹⁷

Migration and development was also a significant item at the latest AU Summit held in Banjul, The Gambia in June-July 2006. At this meeting, African governments reiterated their commitment to engaging the African diaspora and recommended measures to be taken to accelerate their full participation.⁹⁸ These are given in Box 5. The summit also approved the establishment, in Mali, of the African Centre for Study and Research on Migration to examine issues related to the retention of local scientific skills as well as modalities for transfer of skills and knowledge from the diaspora.⁹⁹

Box 5. Recommendations Related to Migration and Development, Seventh AU Summit¹⁰⁰

Collaboration with African Diaspora

Encourage entities such as the EU/EC,¹⁰¹ AU, ILO and IOM and other organizations and their respective projects to assist in fostering stronger relationships between African States and the African Diaspora.

Create the necessary political, social and economic conditions such as an enabling policy environment, democracy and good governance to serve as incentive to attract Diaspora.

Establish a reliable database on the Diaspora.

Facilitate the return of qualified nationals, resident in developed States, through appropriate re-settlement incentives. Create appropriate institutional mechanisms within relevant ministries to manage relations with nationals abroad and to facilitate transfer of scientific knowledge and encourage trade and investment.

Expand South-South, North-South dialogue and partnerships to foster sharing of human resources, skills, technology, and knowledge in Africa.

Encourage AU Member States to integrate Migration and Development policies particularly Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP, etc), in their National Development Plans.

Develop national plans of action aimed at comprehensive approaches to migration and development in order to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Brain Drain

Counter the exodus of skilled nationals particularly health professionals by

⁹⁶ UNECA, 2006b.

⁹⁷ AU, 2006b; AU Executive Council, 2006b.

⁹⁸ AU Executive Council, 2006c.

⁹⁹ AU Executive Council, 2006a.

¹⁰⁰ AU Executive Council, 2006c:31-33.

¹⁰¹ European Union/European Commission.

promoting the NEPAD strategy for retention of Africa's human capacities; targeting economic development programmes to provide gainful employment, professional development and educational opportunities to qualified nationals in their home countries.

Counter the effects of "brain drain" by encouraging nationals abroad to contribute to the development of their State of origin through financial and human capital transfers.

Foster private sector opportunities to provide alternative employment to the low paying public sector and reduce brain drain

Member States are encouraged to establish policies for the replacement of qualified persons who have left the State of origin and implement retention policies and related strategies.

Maximize the contribution of skilled professionals in the Continent by facilitating mobility and deployment of professionals in a continental and regional framework

Remittance Transfers

Encourage the transfer of remittances by adopting sound macro-economic policies conducive to investment and growth and appropriate financial sector policy.

Strengthen collaboration with relevant stakeholders in civil society, donor community and financial sector to create incentive strategies and investment opportunities for remitters.

Improve the quality of data on remittance and migration statistics to create a solid basis for future policy action on remittances.

Promote the effective mobilization and utilization of the Diaspora funds for investments and development in the public and private sector.

In a notable recent development, AU has officially established the African Citizens Directorate through which it will implement its work with the African civil society as well as the African diaspora.¹⁰² The latter will be addressed by the Diaspora Division with areas of focus on the Americas and the Caribbean on the one hand, and a focus on Europe/Middle East/Asia/Oceania on the other.

3.2.2 New Partnership for Africa's Development

NEPAD was launched in 2001 as an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. Through its secretariat, NEPAD develops and facilitates the implementation of development programs by regional economic communities and African governments as well as the African private and civil society sector.¹⁰³

Although NEPAD does not have an action plan on African migration as such, reversing the brain drain is one of its sectoral priorities.¹⁰⁴ In that respect, the organization calls for the

¹⁰² Adisa, 2006.

¹⁰³ AU Commission, 2004a; NEPAD 2001.

¹⁰⁴ "Reversing the Brain Drain" is a sub-theme in the NEPAD sectoral priority regarding human resource development (under its Education and Training program).

creation of the “*necessary political, social and economic conditions that would serve as incentives to curb the brain drain and attract much-needed investment*,” the establishment of “*a reliable database on the brain drain, both to determine the magnitude of the problem, and to promote networking and collaboration*” between Africans abroad and those in the country of origin; the development of “*scientific and technical networks*” to promote transfer of knowledge and cooperation; as well as placing diaspora involvement in the mainstream of NEPAD projects.¹⁰⁵

As one of its practical steps, NEPAD, in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Business Council, launched AfricaRecruit in 2002. AfricaRecruit is a diaspora mobilization initiative that seeks to fill the skills gap in African public and private institutions through the recruitment of Africans living abroad for employment on the continent. It also encourages diaspora capital investments in Africa, notably through remittances. AfricaRecruit has also been at the forefront of efforts to collect and disseminate information related to African diaspora engagement through the various seminars, focus group discussions and surveys it organizes.¹⁰⁶

3.2.3 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNECA – the regional arm of the UN in Africa – has also recognized the role of diaspora Africans as development stakeholders. While the organization does not have a program that specifically focuses on diaspora engagement, its interest in the question is manifest in its examination of the African brain drain/gain issue. The organization also actively seeks to involve diaspora Africans in various African development processes.

UNECA organized the Regional Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa in February 2000 with the collaboration of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and IOM. This conference – the first of its kind to put the African brain drain on the African development agenda – sought to assess the impact of the brain drain on capacity building in Africa, as well as the means to reverse it, including through the effective utilization of diaspora potential for capacity development.¹⁰⁷ UNECA recently prepared a report on international migration and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in preparation for the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The report, which provides a comprehensive view from the African perspective, reiterates the importance of effective diaspora engagement in order for Africa to maximize the positive aspects of African migration.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ NEPAD, 2001:35.

¹⁰⁶ AfricaRecruit, website; Kaul, undated.

¹⁰⁷ UNECA, 2000.

¹⁰⁸ UNECA, 2006b.

UNECA has moreover sought to ensure that the diaspora perspective is included in gatherings of the African Development Forum (ADF), a forum formed to enable “*dialogue and consensus-building on key development challenges, and for agreeing on implementation priorities and strategies at national, subregional and regional levels,*” through the participation of diaspora participants.¹⁰⁹ The Africa Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF), which provides technical support to the ADF process, also includes the diaspora in carrying out its mandate of “*knowledge-sharing and research partnerships for Africa*”.¹¹⁰ Its latest meeting, held in December 2006, specifically looked at means through which knowledge can effectively be brought to bear on African development, including, among one of its three avenues of exploration, a “*close look at the accomplishments of and challenges faced by research institutions and the African Diaspora in sharing knowledge for development.*”¹¹¹ UNECA has also sought to reach out to the diaspora in a bid to involve all key stakeholders in discussions and events related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Africa, including through electronic mailing lists, discussion lists for African diaspora and online discussions involving the diaspora.¹¹² Moreover, in recognition that African governments require assistance to effectively harness their diasporas’ potential, UNECA is, in partnership with IOM exploring means through which it can provide such support.¹¹³

3.2.4 African Capacity Building Foundation

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) was established in 1991 to address the capacity problem in Africa; it seeks to be the lead African agency for the development of sustainable human and institutional capacity on the continent. As one of its principal objectives, ACBF seeks to “*contribute to programs for the reversal of brain drain from the continent and encourage retention as well as intensive utilization of existing capacity.*”¹¹⁴ To that end, it provides support to diaspora-related initiatives, through, for example, funding for activities such as IOM’s Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) program.¹¹⁵ Moreover ACBF is compiling a comprehensive Directory of African Development Management Professionals for use by governments and other development organizations, with a focus on African experts on the continent and in the diaspora.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ ADF, website.

¹¹⁰ UNECA, 2003:2.

¹¹¹ UNECA, 2006a:3.

¹¹² UNECA, 2006a.

¹¹³ Amoako, 2005.

¹¹⁴ ACBF, website.

¹¹⁵ ENDA-TM, 2005:17.

¹¹⁶ ACBF, website.

3.2.5 African Development Bank

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is a regional multilateral development bank established with the intention of promoting economic and social development in Africa. AfDB has started looking at the issue of brain drain and brain gain as part of its focus on capacity building and training activities on the continent.¹¹⁷ In a recent workshop on best practices and challenges in African capacity building, AfDB, in partnership with ACBF, was asked to “*strengthen databanks of consultants and create a network of African experts in the Diaspora and within Africa with the aim of utilizing more African consultants.*”¹¹⁸

3.2.6 Research and Development Forum for Science in Africa

The Research and Development Forum for Science in Africa was established in 1999 to explore means for the repatriation of African scientific knowledge and skills abroad. In that regard, it was mandated with identifying African scientists in the diaspora and gauging their interest in returning to their countries of origin, in collaboration with ACBF. Another aspect of its program includes the transfer of African scientists, displaced by internal national unrest, to other African countries instead of to refugee camps, so as to avoid wasting the precious resource they represent for the continent.¹¹⁹

3.3 African National Governmental Initiatives to Engage the African Diaspora

Mindful of the considerable potential for development that Africans in the diaspora present, African governments are increasingly turning towards their citizens abroad to contribute to capacity building efforts in their countries of origin. As a result, various supportive policies and initiatives have been undertaken in a bid to attract diaspora resources for African development, even as many countries continue to grapple with how best to harness the diaspora’s intellectual, financial and social capital for maximum impact.

The multiplication in recent years of institutional bodies established across the continent to serve the diaspora is indicative of African governments’ commitment to engage their nationals abroad in their development plans and processes and attests to improved relations between home governments and their nationals abroad. For instance, Burkina Faso has set up a special department within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs dedicated to diaspora *Burkinabé*, as has Ethiopia, while others – such as Benin, Ghana and Mali – have gone as far as establishing ministries dedicated to their diasporas. It should however be noted that, despite the increasing number of African governments who have made institutional arrangements as regards their diasporas, many more have yet to formally integrate diaspora affairs in their governmental structures, as revealed by an online search of African

¹¹⁷ AfDB, website.

¹¹⁸ AfDB, 2006.

¹¹⁹ UNESCO, 2004:27.

government websites. A partial list of African government agencies charged with coordinating diaspora affairs at the national level is provided in Box 6.

Box 6. Institutional Arrangements Regarding Diaspora Engagement in Selected African Countries

Benin: Representation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Deputy-Minister charged with African Integration and Beninese Abroad ¹²⁰
Burkina Faso: High Council of Expatriate <i>Burkinabé</i> , Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation ¹²¹
Egypt: Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration ¹²²
Ethiopia: Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs Directorate General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ¹²³
Ghana: Ministry of Tourism & Diasporean Relations ¹²⁴
Mali: Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration ¹²⁵
Morocco: Representation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation by the Deputy-Minister charged with Moroccan Community Living Abroad ¹²⁶
Nigeria: Office of the Special Assistant to the President on Diaspora Activities (advisory body) & Nigerian National Volunteer Service, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (implementing agency) ¹²⁷
Senegal: Ministry for Senegalese Living Abroad ¹²⁸
Tunisia: Ministry of Social Affairs, Cooperation and Tunisians Abroad ¹²⁹

Beyond the creation of agencies concerned with diaspora affairs, African countries have also put in place measures to encourage and facilitate diaspora contributions, be they through permanent returns, short-term skills transfer schemes, virtual participation or investments.

Aware of the necessity of establishing and strengthening communication linkages with their respective diasporas, African governments are intensifying their diaspora outreach efforts, notably through the use of their embassies abroad, now widely recognized as key to building bridges between the diaspora and the home country. Thus, Ghana's newly appointed High Commissioner to Canada has indicated she will be exploring “ways to

¹²⁰ [http://www.gouv.bj/ministere.php?id_rub=36&lib_rub=Ministère%20Délégué%20Chargé%20de%20l'Intégration%20Africaine%20et%20des%20Béninois%20de%20l'Extérieur%20auprès%20du%20Ministre%20des%20Affaires%20Etrangères%20\(MDCIABE/MAE\)](http://www.gouv.bj/ministere.php?id_rub=36&lib_rub=Ministère%20Délégué%20Chargé%20de%20l'Intégration%20Africaine%20et%20des%20Béninois%20de%20l'Extérieur%20auprès%20du%20Ministre%20des%20Affaires%20Etrangères%20(MDCIABE/MAE))

¹²¹ <http://www.burkinadiaspora.bf/>

¹²² <http://www.emigration.gov.eg/Index.aspx>

¹²³ http://www.mfa.gov.et/Ethiopians_Origin_Abroad/Ethiopia_Origin.php

¹²⁴ <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/governing/ministries/economy/tourism.php>

¹²⁵ <http://www.maliensdelexterieur.gov.ml/cgi-bin/index.pl>

¹²⁶ <http://www.marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/>

¹²⁷ <http://www.fmst-nnvs.com/>

¹²⁸ <http://www.gouv.sn/ministeres/msen/contacts.cfm>

¹²⁹ <http://www.ministeres.tn/html/ministeres/documentation/sociales.html>

connect with Ghanaian-Canadians to brainstorm on how the High Commission can be of help,”¹³⁰ and creating “partnerships to aid development in Ghana,” as part of her priorities. These thoughts are echoed by Burundi’s Ambassador to Canada who considers involving the estimated 4,000 Burundians residing in Canada in the “reconciliation and reconstruction process in Burundi” chief among her ambassadorial duties.¹³¹ Community outreach and constituency building also play a central role in the mandate of Ethiopian missions abroad,¹³² while the South African High Commission in Ottawa has been actively involved in diaspora-related events, including its collaboration with two African diaspora groups in the organization of an African Diaspora Community Forum held in Ottawa, in 2005, and out of which came the impetus for the creation of the African Diaspora Association of Canada.¹³³

A visit with the resident diaspora community has also become *de rigueur* whenever African leaders go on official visits abroad. Examples include Paul Kagame of Rwanda meeting with the Rwandan diaspora in the United Kingdom in early December 2006;¹³⁴ briefing meetings for the Ghanaian diaspora organized with President Kufuor, designed to promote dialogue and get diaspora input in national development issues;¹³⁵ as well as Nigeria’s Olusegun Obasanjo’s – possibly the most active on this front among all African leaders – extensive travels in North America, Europe, and Asia to meet with Nigerian professionals in the diaspora.¹³⁶ These visits play an important role in cementing the relations between the diaspora and their homelands as not only do they provide an opportunity for exchange on modalities of contribution to national development, but show also the high level of consideration accorded to the diaspora by certain governments.

Concrete measures taken to facilitate diaspora engagement are wide-ranging, including the establishment of investment funds to channel diaspora capital into productive investments – such as the Kenyans Abroad Investment Fund;¹³⁷ data collection efforts such as the promotion of agencies in Europe and North America to establish databases of South African expertise abroad;¹³⁸ as well as partnerships with other stakeholders to facilitate the temporary placement of diaspora African professionals in local institutions, an example of which is the collaborative effort between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Belgium, IOM and Congolese-Belgian health practitioners to alleviate the brain

¹³⁰ Adebayo, 2006.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² This is discussed in greater detail in section 4.3.3.2 regarding the revamped roles of Ethiopian missions abroad in line with the Government of Ethiopia’s efforts to engage the diaspora.

¹³³ AHEAD, SARA-O and South African High Commission in Ottawa, 2005.

The potential role that the African Diaspora Association of Canada may play in increasing the profile of African diaspora associations in Canada is discussed in section 6.2.

¹³⁴ Musoni, 2006.

¹³⁵ Grey, 2006.

¹³⁶ See Box 8.

¹³⁷ UNECA, 2006b.

¹³⁸ Shinn, 2002.

drain in the Congolese health sector.¹³⁹ An array of incentives, ranging from duty free privileges to dual citizenship and voting rights are also offered by various African governments to their nationals abroad.

Boxes 7 and 8 provide a brief overview of diaspora engagement activities in Ghana and in Nigeria, two of the African countries most active in this area, before we turn to the case study of Ethiopia in the next section.

Box 7. The Government of Ghana's Diaspora-Related Activities

Homecoming Summit

The Homecoming Summit, held in 2001, gathered more than 1,000 diaspora Ghanaians in Accra with the aim of promoting their involvement in Ghana's development efforts. This event marked the beginning of the Ghanaian government's formal efforts to engage its nationals abroad.¹⁴⁰

Dual Citizenship and Voting Rights

Ghana now allows dual citizenship; moreover, non-resident Ghanaians were awarded voting privileges in February 2006. Ghana's Citizenship Act also provides for Indefinite Stay for those Ghanaians who cannot hold dual citizenship due to host government restrictions, while extending the Right of Abode to people of African descent in the diaspora.¹⁴¹

Ministry of Tourism and Diasporean Relations

In recognition of diaspora Ghanaians' actual and potential contribution to the country's economy, the Ministry of Tourism and Diasporean Relations – formerly the Ministry of Tourism – was established in April 2006.¹⁴²

Collection of Information on Ghanaian Expertise Abroad

- Ghana Skills Bank

A project of the Embassy of Ghana in Washington D.C., this online database of Ghanaian professionals and business persons worldwide provides information on Ghanaian expertise in the diaspora to the Ghanaian government as well as international organizations seeking for qualified personnel. Information is collected through a questionnaire posted on the Ghana Skills Bank website.¹⁴³

- National Identification Project

A more ambitious project seeking proactively to collect information on the Ghanaian skills base both in Ghana and abroad is slated to begin in 2007.¹⁴⁴

Investment Facilitation

Investments in Ghana – whether from non-resident Ghanaians or other descendants of Africans in the diaspora – have been greatly facilitated through the extension of Dual Citizenship, Indefinite Stay or Right of Abode to the diaspora, allowing them investment opportunities similar to resident Ghanaians'.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ See Box 27 for details.

¹⁴⁰ Grey, 2006; Shinn, 2002.

¹⁴¹ Grey, 2006.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Ghana Skills Bank, website.

¹⁴⁴ Grey, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Collaboration with IOM on Skill Transfer Schemes

The Ghanaian government, through IOM's MIDA program seeks to alleviate the effects of the Ghanaian brain drain through placements of qualified diaspora Ghanaians where there is need for their expertise. A recently announced Ghanaian Ministry of Health/IOM/Government of the Netherlands initiative targets Ghanaian health professionals practicing in the Netherlands and other European countries for short-term assignments – lasting from 3 weeks to 3 months – in Ghanaian hospitals. This 2 ½ year-long project, involving 30 diaspora health practitioners, will also include an exchange program whereby some 20 health professionals from Ghana will train in the Netherlands and aims to establish linkages between Dutch and Ghanaian health institutions.¹⁴⁶

Box 8: The Government of Nigeria's Diaspora-Related Activities

Office of the Special Assistant to the President on Diaspora Activities

An office to advise the President on matters relating to diaspora engagement has been established.¹⁴⁷

Nigerian National Volunteer Service Office

The Nigerian National Volunteer Service – under the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation – is the implementing agency set up to initiate and to coordinate activities of diaspora Nigerians, in line with the Federal government's policy on diaspora engagement, so as to facilitate their significant and sustainable involvement in Nigerian development.¹⁴⁸

President Obasanjo's Personal Commitment to Diaspora Engagement

Possibly the most active and visible proponent of diaspora engagement among all African leaders, President Obasanjo has made it his mission to reach out to Nigerians in the diaspora wherever he travels.¹⁴⁹ He is the initiator of the Nigerians In Diaspora Organization, which regroups Nigerian professional groups and individuals in Europe and in the Americas. Indeed, these two groups – which operate independently from the Nigerian government – were formed following meetings held in 2000 by the President with diaspora members in Atlanta and in London, where he encouraged them to form an umbrella organization of all existing Nigerian groups so as to streamline and facilitate their engagement in national development efforts.¹⁵⁰

Annual Nigerian Diaspora Day and Conference

July 25 has been designated Nigerian Diaspora Day. The first one was celebrated in 2006, in conjunction with numerous diaspora-related activities, chief among which was the second conference on “Bridging the Digital and Scientific Divides: Forging Partnerships with the Nigerian Diaspora”, organized by the Nigerian National Volunteer Service in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology.¹⁵¹

The Nigerian Experts and Academics in Diaspora Scheme

The “Nigerian Experts and Academics in Diaspora Scheme” was devised by the Nigerian National Universities Commission as a mechanism to enlist lecturers and

¹⁴⁶ Ghana News Agency, 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Shinn, 2002.

¹⁴⁸ Nigerian National Voluntary Service, website.

¹⁴⁹ Shinn, 2002.

¹⁵⁰ Nigerians in Diaspora Organization Americas, website; Nigerians in Diaspora Organization Europe, website.

¹⁵¹ Nigerian National Voluntary Service, website.

researchers in the Nigerian diaspora in the development of the Nigerian University System through short-term academic appointments at a local university of their choice. This program offers participants round-trip economy airfare and a monthly salary of US\$1,200. Accommodation and local travel costs related to the assignment are also covered.¹⁵² The Nigerian government is currently trying to recruit diaspora academics – through this scheme – in support of its Nigerian University Teachers’ Improvement Project, introduced in December 2006 with the aim of building local teaching and research capacity in priority areas.¹⁵³

The significant impact that diasporas in general – and diaspora Africans in particular – may have in the development efforts of their countries of origin is a matter that is now widely accepted and recognized by various stakeholders, including international and regional bodies, host and home country governments, as well as diaspora communities themselves. The challenge remains in designing effective channels through which diaspora resources may be fully brought to bear on national capacity development.

Using Ethiopia as a case study, the following section provides an overview of programs and mechanisms established at a national level in order to facilitate diaspora engagement. This will be followed by suggestions for practical ways forward based on gaps identified.

¹⁵² Nigerian National Universities Commission, “Nigerian Experts and Academics in Diaspora Scheme” website.

¹⁵³ Ajoa, 2006.

4. Enabling Diaspora Engagement: Case Study of Ethiopia

4.1 Country Information

4.1.1 Ethiopia at a Glance

One of the world's oldest countries, Ethiopia is unique among African countries in that it has never been colonized.¹⁵⁴ Regarded as "the cradle of civilization", Ethiopia is at the intersection of the civilizations of North Africa, the Middle East and the rest of Africa.¹⁵⁵ The landlocked Horn of Africa country shares its borders with Eritrea to the north, The Sudan to the west, Kenya to the south and Somalia and Djibouti to the east. The region's topography is diverse, resulting in a wide range of ecological and climatic conditions.¹⁵⁶ Ethiopia is home to a multitude of peoples, nations and nationalities, composed of distinctive cultural, linguistic and religious groups. The Ethiopian calendar year begins in September¹⁵⁷ and is composed of 12 months of 30 days and an additional month of five or six days depending on leap year.

For most of its history, Ethiopia was a collection of kingdoms ruled by emperors and King of Kings. In 1974, a military junta, the *Derg*, deposed the monarchy and established a socialist state. Torn by bloody uprisings, wide scale droughts, and massive refugee problems, the regime was toppled in 1991 by a coalition of rebel forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, which is the party currently in power. A constitution was adopted in 1994, and Ethiopia held its first multiparty elections in 1995.¹⁵⁸

Ethiopia is a federal republic. Its government structure comprises the federal government, nine regional governments¹⁵⁹ and the self-governing administrations of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa,¹⁶⁰ 66 zonal administrations and 556 *woreda*¹⁶¹ administrations through which basic public services are dispensed.¹⁶²

Ethiopia's economy is among the weakest in the world; annual national income per capita is US\$130 and 36% of the population live below the poverty line of US\$1/day. Although economic indicators have shown encouraging improvements in recent years, these have been overshadowed by the high rate of population growth, leaving Ethiopia ranked 170th of

¹⁵⁴ Save for a five-year occupation (1936-1941) by Italy.

¹⁵⁵ Pankhurst, 1955.

¹⁵⁶ AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ Ethiopia follows the Julian calendar. The year 1999 (equivalent of 2006-2007 in the Gregorian calendar) started on 11 September 2006.

¹⁵⁸ CIA, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Known locally as *kilil* (pl. *kililoch*).

¹⁶⁰ Known locally as *astedader* (pl. *astedaderoch*).

¹⁶¹ Equivalent of districts.

¹⁶² AfDB and ADF, 2006; CIA, 2006.

174 in UNDP's Human Development Report of 2005.¹⁶³ Ethiopia's 78 million inhabitants¹⁶⁴ make the country the second most populous in Africa, with an estimated annual growth rate of 2.4% reflecting a fertility rate of 5.6 children per woman.¹⁶⁵

Various factors have compounded to create the vicious cycle of poverty in which the country is mired and the hurdles to development it faces today. These include generations of bad governance; natural disasters, chief among which are frequent droughts; wars and other man-made disasters; weak infrastructure; low agricultural yield; high population growth; structural food insecurity; land degradation and deforestation; and lack of financial as well as human capacity.

The following sections further explore some of the weaknesses mentioned above as well as progress made in recent years.

4.1.2 Development Oriented Activities

The Government of Ethiopia recently finished implementing the first phase of its development program through the completion of its Sustainable Development Poverty Reduction Programme (SDPRP). The SDPRP strategy for the period 2002-2005 focused its efforts on four major areas of immediate concern:¹⁶⁶

- Agricultural-led industrialization ensuring food security;
- Justice system and civil service reform;
- Governance, decentralization and empowerment; and
- Capacity building in public and private sectors.

The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) – covering the years 2006 to 2010 – is currently in effect. PASDEP's eight areas of focus are:¹⁶⁷

- Boosting the economy to accelerate growth;
- Instituting regionally appropriate strategies;
- Addressing challenges posed by unabated population growth;
- Promoting and facilitating the realization of Ethiopian women's potential;
- Strengthening the infrastructure system;
- Managing exposure to risk and volatility;
- Intensifying efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals; and
- Alleviating unemployment.

¹⁶³ AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁶⁴ Estimates of the Ethiopian population in 2006 range between 75 million and 82 million, depending on sources consulted.

¹⁶⁵ AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁶⁶ MOFED, 2002.

¹⁶⁷ Italian Development Cooperation in Ethiopia, undated.

Over the past 15 years, Ethiopia's primary and secondary school coverage has risen from 30% to 79.8%; its high school coverage from a mere 6% to a still inadequate 25.2%; and higher education capacity has increased from 6,000 to 37,000 students,¹⁶⁸ to be soon enhanced with the opening of an additional 13 universities across the country.¹⁶⁹ This development, among others, has led the World Bank's "Africa Development Indicator 2006 Report" to point out that Ethiopia has made remarkable progress towards attaining UN's Millennium Development Goals through continuous improvement in the areas of education, policies of social inclusion, and equity in public sector management and institutions with particular emphasis on the civil service.¹⁷⁰

As pro-poor budget allocation increased alongside poverty reduction programs, Ethiopia has, over the past five years, registered systematic improvement in numerous human development indicators. Such sustained strides towards poverty reduction have afforded Ethiopia large scale debt cancellation agreements, which, according to the Ethiopian Minister of Finance and Economic Development, amount to US\$9.2 billion in the past 15 years.¹⁷¹

4.1.3 Agriculture-Led Industrialization Efforts

Contrary to common perception, Ethiopia's vast, varied and rich land constitutes its largest untapped resource. Only about 15% of its arable land is currently cultivated, mostly with rudimentary technology. Ethiopia also possesses vast amounts of inland water resources which can support large scale irrigation for agriculture as well as provide hydroelectric power.¹⁷² Notwithstanding its under-utilized potential, the agricultural sector accounts for "50% of the GDP, 90% of the total foreign exchange earnings, 85% of employment and 70% of raw material requirements of local industries."¹⁷³ Improving this sector is thus vital to Ethiopia's sustainable development.

Under Ethiopia's land tenure system, the government owns all land and provides long-term leases to the tenants. This system continues to hamper growth in the industrial sector as entrepreneurs are unable to use land as collateral for loans.¹⁷⁴ In spite of this, Ethiopia has in recent years posted significant improvement in the agricultural sector and expects to be self-sufficient in food production in the near future. Indeed, in the three years leading up to

¹⁶⁸ WIC, 2006c.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Teferi Melesse; WIC, 2006c.

¹⁷⁰ Business in Africa, 2006a.

¹⁷¹ WIC, 2006b.

¹⁷² AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁷³ MOI, 2006:12.

¹⁷⁴ CIA, 2006.

1996 E.C.,¹⁷⁵ Ethiopian agricultural production registered a growth of 18.9% while agro-industrial manufacturing had grown to represent 22% of agricultural exports by 2004.¹⁷⁶

Coffee represents Ethiopia's number one export, generating "over 40% [sic] foreign currency earning and 25% of GNP [gross national product] of the nation. It also supports directly or indirectly the lives of 25% of the population."¹⁷⁷ The textile and garment sectors, the leather industry and the food processing industry have been identified as priority sectors for private investment initiatives by the Industrial Development Strategy. These sub-sectors are showing budding development, with the leather industry generating 14% of foreign exchange earning and constituting 67% of manufactured exports; a rapidly growing food stuff sub-sector; and a livestock and meat processing sub-sector that accounts for 12-15% of the country's foreign exchange earning and 16% of GDP.¹⁷⁸ Ethiopia also has developed a horticulture production sector, whose meteoric rise has caught the interest of a significant number of investors. In its infancy only four to five years ago, the sector now includes 32 commercial farms producing flowers, fruit, and vegetables; half of these farms are already involved in export activities, with the other half preparing to do so.¹⁷⁹ Horticulture currently employs some 12,000 people directly, with another 48,000 people indirectly supported.¹⁸⁰

The importance the government accords to agriculture-led industrialization is further emphasized by the agricultural training centres that have been established throughout the country in order to graduate young, educated farmers.¹⁸¹

4.1.4 Transport and Communication

Lack of an adequate transport and communication infrastructure remains a major obstacle to economic growth in Ethiopia, with most of the hinterland still difficult to reach. Understanding that investment in Ethiopia's road system is critical to the country's development, and particularly in the rural areas,¹⁸² the Ethiopian government has accorded road building high priority and is currently implementing the second phase of its 10-year Road Sector Development Program.¹⁸³ As a result of efforts made thus far, the network of roads in good condition has increased from 30% to 45% in the two years following the beginning of Ethiopia's SDPRP in 2002/2003, while road density increased from 29 to 33.3 kilometres (km) per 1,000 square km in the same period.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁵ E.C.: Ethiopian Calendar. This period is equivalent to 2000/2001 to 2003/2004 in the Gregorian calendar.

¹⁷⁶ MOI, 2006.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*:12.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ As per Tsegaye Abebe, Chairman of the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association, in Doney and Wroe, 2005.

¹⁸⁰ Doney and Wroe, 2005.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

¹⁸² AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁸³ World Bank, 2003.

¹⁸⁴ AfDB and ADF, 2006.

Inadequate access and distribution of electricity is another major constraint to development, with only 16% of Ethiopians having access to modern energy sources of energy. Yet, it is estimated that Ethiopia possesses vast hydroelectric potential, less than 5% of which is currently exploited. In a bid to remedy this situation, the government is currently undertaking several dam construction projects.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, properly harnessed, Ethiopia's hydroelectric potential would not only cover domestic needs but also presents opportunities for large scale export to neighbouring countries.¹⁸⁶

Ethiopia has one of the world's lowest rates of telephone per capita, with only 740,250 fixed and 410,000 mobile lines in 2005.¹⁸⁷ Access to telecommunication thus remains sparse, especially in the rural area, where, on average, one must travel 30 km in order find a telephone.¹⁸⁸ Efforts are being made by the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation to reduce the average travel distance of rural inhabitants to five km.¹⁸⁹ The government has moreover identified investment in the development of an ICT infrastructure a top priority on which the country's economic growth depends.¹⁹⁰ With a mere 113,000 Internet subscribers in 2005, and about 88 Internet hosts as of 2006¹⁹¹, this is indeed an area that requires immediate attention, especially given today's information society. Government action in that regard includes participation in the construction of the East African Submarine Cable System, which upon completion¹⁹² will provide 21 Eastern and South African countries with cheaper and more reliable fibre optic based telecommunication.¹⁹³ In addition, Ethiopia has thus far managed to network all of its 500 high schools and 12 universities; it also participates in *SchoolNet Africa*, a multipurpose internet-based educational network, linked to the African Virtual University, the Kenyan-based virtual higher learning centre which operates in 31 countries.¹⁹⁴

Although landlocked since Eritrean independence in 1993, Ethiopia maintains a marine fleet consisting of 10 ships.¹⁹⁵ Until the beginning of hostilities with Eritrea in 1998, the Ethiopian marine fleet operated out of the Eritrean ports of Massawa and Assab;¹⁹⁶ since then, Ethiopia has mostly relied on the port of Djibouti. However, recent upgradings of the ports of Berbera in Somaliland and Port Sudan in The Sudan have allowed Ethiopia to reduce its dependency on Djibouti.¹⁹⁷ The state owned Ethiopian Airlines, one of the most reputable in Africa, connects Ethiopia with over 30 international capitals, in addition to 40

¹⁸⁵ MOI, 2004.

¹⁸⁶ AfDB and ADF, 2006.

¹⁸⁷ CIA, 2006.

¹⁸⁸ WIC, 2006b.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Limbach, 2005.

¹⁹¹ CIA, 2006.

¹⁹² Expected to be completed by March 2008.

¹⁹³ Xinhua, 2006a.

¹⁹⁴ Mutume, 2006.

¹⁹⁵ ENA, 2007.

¹⁹⁶ IRIN, 2005.

¹⁹⁷ Reporter, 2006; World Investment News, 1999.

or so domestic destinations it flies to. Ethiopia has 14 airports with paved runways and 68 airports with unpaved runways.¹⁹⁸

4.1.5 Improvements in Investment Environment

Several factors work to Ethiopia's advantage as an emerging destination for investments: its large population, which not only constitutes a large potential market but also a pool of skilled and unskilled labourers; its climatic diversity resulting in 18 different ecological zones allowing for diverse agricultural activities; an insignificant crime rate; and one of the least corrupt bureaucracies among less developed countries.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, measures to make the country friendlier to investment through ongoing private and public sector reforms recently earned the country recognition as the "second most improved business environment in the world"²⁰⁰ in the Economic Freedom Index 2004, based on improvements in trade policy, foreign investment, fiscal burden and government intervention.

Investment friendly reforms include:²⁰¹

- Extensive civil service reform, including massive overhaul of the legislative framework as well as working procedures;²⁰²
- Infrastructure upgrade;
- Tax break incentives;
- The Ethiopian Investment Agency's improved service delivery time;
- Lifting of restrictions for expatriate workers;
- Stringent anti-corruption laws;²⁰³ and
- Increased privatizations, led by the Ethiopian Privatization Agency.

4.1.6 Tourism

Ethiopia, with its numerous historic and natural sites, and over 80 distinct cultural groups, presents an enormous potential for tourist investment. Indeed, Frommers Travel Guide, one of the top online travel agencies, has named Ethiopia one of the top 10 destinations to travel to in 2007²⁰⁴. However, even as tourist arrivals have grown by 72% from 1990 to 2000, basic infrastructures which can support a massive influx of tourists are sorely lacking.²⁰⁵ In light of Ethiopia's tourism potential, it would be a wise consideration to invest in infrastructure and services for tourism as a development tool.

¹⁹⁸ Ethiopian Airlines, website.

¹⁹⁹ UNCTAD and ICC, 2004.

²⁰⁰ UNCTAD and ICC, 2004:1.

²⁰¹ UNCTAD and ICC, 2004.

²⁰² Implemented by the Civil Service Reform Programme Office of the Ministry of Capacity Building.

²⁰³ The Federal Anti-corruption Commission was set up in May 2001.

²⁰⁴ Frommer's Staff, 2006.

²⁰⁵ UNCTAD and ICC, 2004.

4.1.7 Health Sector Concerns

Like other lower income countries, Ethiopia suffers from a weak public health system characterized by shortages of facilities, equipment, medicine as well as medical personnel, and further aggravated by widespread poverty, low education levels, inadequate access to clean water, lack of sanitation facilities and unequal distribution of health services, where they exist. Health facilities in Ethiopia are highly limited, even in the capital city, and severely inadequate outside the capital. Most health concerns are associated with infectious diseases and nutritional deficiencies.²⁰⁶ However, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is probably the most important health challenge Ethiopia faces today as it is not only damaging the social fabric of the country, but also leading to further impoverishment.²⁰⁷

Box 9. HIV/AIDS Figures for Ethiopia, 2003²⁰⁸

- Adult prevalence rate: 4.4%
- Rural prevalence rate: 2.6%
- Urban prevalence rate: 12.6%
- Urban prevalence rate for women: 12-13%
- 91% of infected are between the ages of 15 and 49
- At least 500,000 AIDS orphans
- Total infected: 1.5 million
- 30% of adult death
- Cumulative death by 2003: 900,000
- Estimated cumulative death by 2008: 1.8 million
- 90% do not have access to anti-retroviral drugs

If present trends continue unabated, AIDS-related deaths will dramatically rise in the coming years. However, with proper sensitization programs, it may be possible to drastically reduce the number of new infections. This need be given high priority as AIDS-related deaths mostly affect the economically active segment of the population.²⁰⁹ The socio-economic impact of death from HIV/AIDS on Ethiopian society is catastrophic as it decimates productive and able-bodied members of the society. It also leads to an increased population of orphaned children. Recent data indicate there are over 1.2 million AIDS orphans in Ethiopia – a quarter of a million of whom are believed to have been infected by the virus, and many of whom abandon their education, resort to prostitution or become street children as neither the Ethiopian government nor the society can meet their needs.²¹⁰

The Ethiopian government, through the implementation of the Strategic Framework for the National Response to HIV/AIDS²¹¹ program, has demonstrated strong commitment in preventive and responsive measures. Its prevention program is supported by the United

²⁰⁶ United States Department of State, 2006.

²⁰⁷ AfDB and ADB, 2005.

²⁰⁸ UNAIDS, 2004; UNAIDS, 2005.

²⁰⁹ UNAIDS, 2005.

²¹⁰ P2P, 2006.

²¹¹ The framework was implemented between 2001 and 2005.

States of America's "President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief", through which it received US\$47.9 million and US\$84.4 million respectively for 2004 and 2005.²¹² Additionally, in order to tackle the new and alarming trend which shows that an increasing number of the newly infected are women,²¹³ the Ethiopian government has, with initial funding from the UNDP, launched the Women's Coalition Against HIV/AIDS, with the purpose of tackling traditional gender relations and harmful practices that make women vulnerable to infections.²¹⁴

4.2 Migration and the Brain Drain in Ethiopia

Migration in Ethiopia is a relatively new phenomenon and gained in magnitude in the 1970s, with the advent of the *Derg*. Initially Ethiopians left their country for political and safety reasons, but over time economic hardship has become the main motivator to emigrate.²¹⁵ There are no exact figures for Ethiopians abroad and estimates range from 1 to 2 million,²¹⁶ with the bulk of diaspora Ethiopians found in North America, the Middle East, and Europe.²¹⁷ The Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate (EEA)²¹⁸ estimates that 250,000 to 500,000 persons of Ethiopian origin reside in North America.²¹⁹

Along with other factors such as drought, wars, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and structural deficiencies, the Ethiopian brain drain is a major stumbling block to the country's development efforts. Indeed, Ethiopia has been losing its professional and skilled workers to Western and Gulf countries – but increasingly to other wealthier African countries such as Botswana and South Africa as well²²⁰ – resulting in a self-perpetuating cycle of decline as the brain drain erodes the capacity of the very same key institutions the country needs to address the problems of underdevelopment and poverty that it faces, not to mention the loss of investment on education incurred by the departure of those trained with public funds.²²¹ A more complete treatment of the Ethiopian brain drain and its impact on national development is provided in AHEAD's previous case research.²²²

²¹² AfDB and AFD, 2005; UNAIDS, 2004.

²¹³ UNAIDS 2004; 2005.

²¹⁴ IRIN, 2003.

²¹⁵ Nega *et al.*, 2004.

²¹⁶ Ethiopia Today Focus, 2004; Ionescu, 2006; Nega *et al.*, 2004.

²¹⁷ Nega *et al.*, 2004.

²¹⁸ EEA is the country's lead agency dealing with diaspora Ethiopians. Its activities are discussed in detail in section 4.3.1.1.

²¹⁹ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

²²⁰ Interviews with BT Costantinos and Ermias Dagne.

²²¹ AHEAD, 2004.

²²² *Ibid.*

Box 10. The Ethiopian Brain Drain in Numbers²²³

- From 1980-1991, Ethiopia lost 74.6% of its skilled manpower from various establishments, including universities, hospitals and other key institutions.
- In that same period, only 25% of those who had gone abroad for further studies returned to Ethiopia.
- By 2002, the country had lost more than one-third of its medical doctors.
- Ethiopia spends about US\$5.3 million/year on expatriate professionals to fill its human resources gap resulting from the brain drain and shortage of trained Ethiopians.²²⁴

In view of the above and in recognition of the Ethiopian diaspora's potential for capacity building in a wide range of areas, the Ethiopian government has, over the past few years, multiplied its efforts to include the diaspora formally in its development efforts. We now turn to the measures taken by the Government of Ethiopia to bring the knowledge, experience, skills, and financial resources of Ethiopians in the diaspora to contribute to national growth.

4.3 Ethiopian Governmental Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora²²⁵

The potential role of the Ethiopian diaspora in development efforts has, in recent years, gained unprecedented recognition by the Ethiopian government. Indeed, like many developing countries, Ethiopia is increasingly turning towards its citizens abroad to contribute to national growth.

This interest in the actual and potential contribution of the diaspora to development in Ethiopia is manifest in the explicit reference to diasporas in the country's poverty reduction program (SDPRP), including recognition of the positive impact that remittances have on the country's service account as well as the need for facilitating mechanisms to encourage direct investment from Ethiopians abroad.²²⁶ The importance that the Ethiopian government accords to diaspora Ethiopians as development partners is also echoed at the highest government levels.²²⁷

Recognizing that making the maximum use of diaspora resources requires that the relationship between Ethiopia and its diaspora be institutionalized, the Government of

²²³ AHEAD, 2004 (except where indicated otherwise).

²²⁴ Ethiopian Ministry of Education quoted in IOM, 2003.

²²⁵ References are to the Federal Government except where indicated otherwise.

²²⁶ MOFED, 2002.

SDPRP ran from 2002 to 2005. The current poverty reduction program – PASDEP – began in 2006 and will be completed in 2010. It is most probable that it also does include mention of the Ethiopian diaspora's role in national development efforts, as did SDPRP. However, this has not been verified as the researcher was unable to gain access to the full PASDEP document by publication time.

²²⁷ Interviews with President Girma Wolde-Giorgis, Minister Seyoum Mesfin (Foreign Affairs) and Minister Tefera Waluwa (Capacity Building).

Ethiopia has sought to establish formal mechanisms to encourage and facilitate diaspora engagement. An overview of existing measures follows.

4.3.1 Institutional Arrangements

The Ethiopian government has set up specific departments mandated with attracting and cooperating with the diaspora within two of its federal ministries.

4.3.1.1 Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs²²⁸

EEA was established in January 2002 within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the mission of working closely with diaspora Ethiopians and facilitating their activities in Ethiopia. Its aim is to ensure that diaspora issues are considered in the nation building process, “*while seeking to avoid or ease bottlenecks the diaspora might face through purposeful facilitation and communication network linked with Federal ministries, Regional governments and NGOs as well.*”²²⁹

The stated objectives of the Directorate are to:²³⁰

- *Serve as a liaison between different Ministries and Ethiopians in Diaspora;*
- *Encourage the active involvement of the Ethiopians in Diaspora in socio-economic activities of the country;*
- *Safeguard the rights and privileges of Ethiopian expatriates; and*
- *Mobilize the Ethiopian community abroad for a sustained and organized image building.*

To that end, the Directorate seeks to disseminate accurate information to the Ethiopian community abroad through various media outlets and to keep them informed of issues relevant to them. It also conducts research intended to inform policy as regards the diaspora’s increased participation in nation building.

A technical committee of federal government institutions on diaspora issues was established in June 2006 under the auspices of EEA. The committee is chaired by the State Minister of Foreign Affairs and is composed of department heads from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Revenue, the Department of Immigration, as well as the National Bank of Ethiopia. Instituted to enable better coordination and information sharing among various authorities, the main responsibility of this committee is to follow up on the provision of efficient and effective services to the

²²⁸ Interviews with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene and Teferi Melesse; MOFA, EEA website.

²²⁹ Teferi Melesse, quoted in Ethiopia Today Focus, 2004: 4.

²³⁰ MOFA, EEA website.

diaspora as per each agency's annual plan with regards to diaspora engagement. The committee meets monthly to review activities performed and identify matters for follow-up.²³¹

In addition to its role of ensuring effective interaction between the diaspora and various government agencies, EEA is also behind such initiatives as the Person of Origin card for Ethiopians who hold foreign citizenship,²³² and more generally, leads the country's efforts as regards diaspora engagement.

4.3.1.2 Diaspora Coordinating Office, Ministry of Capacity Building

As Ethiopia seeks to accelerate its economic growth and the democratization of its society, capacity constraints remain a major challenge. In recognition of this, the Ministry of Capacity Building of Ethiopia was established to facilitate the development and implementation of a national capacity development policy. This includes overseeing capacity building initiatives within government services across the board, as well as within the private and civil society sectors.

In order to enhance national institutional capacity, the Ethiopian government has put in place a wide-ranging National Capacity Building Program. Currently, the Ministry of Capacity Building oversees 15 programs – including education sector development, justice systems reform, civil service reform, higher education reform, private sector development, and ICT development – with the aim of forming a knowledgeable and trained human resource force as well as shoring up the working system and organizational set-up within specific institutions in order to allow them to fulfill their mandates effectively and efficiently.²³³

In recognition of the potential for diaspora involvement in various national capacity building programs, the Ministry of Capacity Building established in 2004 the Diaspora Coordinating Office.²³⁴ The main objective of this office is to build and foster relationships with groups and individuals in the diaspora, with a focus on attracting knowledge and material transfer for capacity building.

The involvement of educated, skilled and knowledgeable experts that can be attached to various institutions is sought and encouraged through a number of activities and initiatives. These include facilitating medical missions to perform surgeries and provide training – such as those conducted by the Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association – by covering airfare and accommodation as well as working in cooperation with ICT

²³¹ E-mail communication with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene.

²³² Discussed in detail in section 4.3.4.1.

²³³ Interviews with Kedir Ali and Tefera Waluwa.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

professionals to train local counterparts, either through short missions or through virtual means. It has also organized workshops – such as the one on “Working towards a National Capacity Development Policy for Ethiopia”, held in March 2003 with the collaboration of IOM and UNDP – to discuss with various stakeholders on effective use of human resources, both at home and in the diaspora, to ensure capacity building.²³⁵ In order to publicize better the Diaspora Coordinating Office, there are plans for its head to tour North America and Europe in 2007. A website targeting diaspora professionals is also in the making.²³⁶

4.3.2 Regional Initiatives

Recognizing the need to involve regional states fully in diaspora engagement activities, EEA seeks to replicate its federal level initiatives and system at the regional level.²³⁷

To that end, it held a meeting in June 2006 at which representatives from each regional state gathered in order to discuss and agree on how to engage diaspora Ethiopians. Following this meeting, each region has created an office specifically to deal with diaspora activities.²³⁸ Moreover, each has devised and submitted its annual plan of action as concerns the diaspora. This includes:

- Modalities to provide efficient and effective services;
- Guidelines for formulating clear directives as regards the provision of land for building houses, investments, and the such;
- Plans to open diaspora desks in major towns and districts within each region; and
- Establishment of regional databases regarding implemented and planned development projects so as to provide diaspora Ethiopians information on activities in each region.²³⁹

Involving regional governments in efforts to engage the diaspora is an important move. To start with, it facilitates provision of pertinent information and service to diaspora members at various levels of government. Moreover, it allows for the regions to directly appeal to their populations abroad, a segment of which might otherwise be unreachable if only federal channels were to be used. This is especially true of traditionally marginalized communities.

²³⁵ Interview with Kedir Ali.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ E-mail communication with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene; interview with Teferi Melesse.

²³⁸ Including the diaspora desk of the Addis Ababa City Government Investment Authority, already in existence.

²³⁹ E-mail communication with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene.

4.3.3 Constituency Building Activities

In addition to the offices established in Ethiopia to facilitate diaspora engagement, the Government of Ethiopia also seeks to deepen its linkages with its diaspora through the organization of official visits to meet with Ethiopians living out of the country as well as through the work of its missions abroad.

4.3.3.1 Meetings with Ethiopians in the Diaspora

The Ethiopian government has multiplied its efforts to communicate directly with members of the diaspora, notably through the organization of meetings that bring together Ethiopians abroad with government officials.

Government officials – at federal and regional levels – as well as scholars and elders have held discussions with Ethiopian diaspora members in Europe, North America and Saudi Arabia. These trips mainly took place in the summer and fall of 2006 and are part of a new plan to meet with the diaspora on an annual basis.

For example, in September 2006, a high level Ethiopian delegation, led by Deputy Prime Minister Addisu Legesse visited seven states in the United States to hold face to face dialogues with various Ethiopian community members on a number of issues related to the political and economic situation of the country.²⁴⁰

Regional government representatives and other elders also visited areas where major numbers of their local diaspora reside earlier in the summer. The regions that sent such delegations include Afar, Amhara, Harari, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray.²⁴¹

These types of initiatives are essential to give those in the diaspora a clearer picture of developments in the country. Moreover, the active involvement of regional representatives reaching out to Ethiopians from their respective communities serves to provide pertinent and region specific information.

4.3.3.2 Constituency Building Mandates of Ethiopian Embassies²⁴²

As stated in the survey on “Engaging Diasporas as Agents for Development” carried out by IOM among its member states, “*consulates remain the main vehicles of communication and interaction with diasporas abroad.*”²⁴³ 76% of respondents stated that they had consular

²⁴⁰ ENA, 2006.

²⁴¹ E-mail communication with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene.

²⁴² Interviews with Birtukan Ayano, Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam and Teferi Melesse form the basis for the information provided in this section, except where a different source is explicitly indicated.

²⁴³ IOM, 2005:219.

services directed towards their diasporas abroad and “*consulates appear to be the most important interlocutors and actors to interact with diasporas.*”²⁴⁴

Ethiopia, in a bid to establish systematic links between its diaspora and their homeland, has also defined a new role for its missions abroad. Indeed, community outreach and constituency building are central to the revamped mission of Ethiopian embassies as the country multiplies efforts to involve its diaspora in national growth initiatives. Ethiopian missions abroad constitute the linchpin in the implementation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ recently formulated master plan on diaspora engagement. This includes the deployment of new ambassadors whose mandates focus on forming links with diaspora Ethiopians, the registration of Ethiopians abroad as well as the establishment, within selected embassies, of departments dedicated to diaspora engagement.

After preliminary information had been gathered by various embassies and missions indicating the presence of a significant Ethiopian diaspora population in certain localities, 13 embassies were selected for special attention, leading to the establishment of desks there that are dedicated to diaspora outreach. The purpose of these newly established offices is to:

- Adapt the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ general plan on diaspora engagement to the local context and implement the ensuing specific plan of action;
- Provide accurate, correct and updated information on Ethiopia;
- Organize research on their respective communities through questionnaires and meetings;
- Create links with and within the diaspora; and
- Inform the diaspora about privileges set up by the government in order to attract them to contribute to Ethiopian development.

Box 11. Ethiopian Embassy in Ottawa, Canada: Diaspora Outreach Activities²⁴⁵

Due to the sizeable Ethiopian population residing in Canada, the Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa was one of the 13 embassies selected to host a constituency building department.

Through this department, the Embassy seeks to provide timely information on developments in Ethiopia to Ethiopians in Canada; inform the diaspora of incentives and support available to those interested in investing, returning or contributing in any manner to capacity building efforts; and, conduct surveys in a bid to remedy the paucity of data on the size and composition of the diaspora as well as gauge interest in engagement. The office also solicits feedback on the diaspora’s needs and how it can best facilitate their efforts to serve their country of birth.

So far, the community outreach office has collected preliminary information, through questionnaires, to assess diaspora organizations active in Canada as well as the type of assistance they require from the Embassy to organize and participate in

²⁴⁴ IOM, 2005:232-233.

²⁴⁵ Interviews with Birtukan Ayano and Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam.

developmental endeavours. A more in-depth study, seeking to gather elements for an appropriate communication strategy as well as input to inform policies relevant to the diaspora, will soon follow.

Several information meetings have been held with diaspora members in Toronto and Ottawa, with more planned for the New Year (including in Calgary and Edmonton, also identified as hubs for Ethiopians in Canada). These meetings, which provide an opportunity for interaction between diaspora members, organizations and community leaders, and Embassy staff are led by the Ambassador and are open to all Ethiopians. The Embassy also facilitates similar meetings between the diaspora and various regional administrators to discuss about and provide information on the development needs of and investment opportunities in specific regions. Thus far, representatives from Harari, Afar, Somali and Oromiya regions have traveled to Canada to meet with the diaspora.

Moreover, there are plans afoot to upgrade the Embassy's website²⁴⁶ so as to use it more effectively for information dissemination purposes.

Convincing diaspora members that the Embassy can provide valuable services is a major challenge. In recognition of this fact, the primary message that the Ambassador and the First Secretary in charge of constituency building seek to communicate to Ethiopian-Canadians is that the Embassy is open to, and genuinely seeks to work with, any diaspora individual or group that is interested in constructively contributing to development initiatives in Ethiopia, irrespective of political views or affiliations.

The Ambassador's personal assessment of progress made so far suggests that diaspora engagement with the Embassy is growing, with attendance in embassy-organized meetings on the rise, characterized not only by mere numbers but also by active participation and interest in guiding the agenda through questions and issues raised in the lead-up to meetings.

In addition to officers dedicated to diaspora outreach, there has also been a drive for economic counsellors – solely charged with promoting trade and investment – to be attached to embassies.²⁴⁷

The role of diplomatic missions in channelling the diaspora's development oriented efforts as regards their countries of origin cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, more often than not, diaspora Africans feel their embassies are not "*able to provide relevant information on the basis of which Diaspora Africans can initiate, and implement, plans that have potential to help their home countries. It is important that the capacities of these missions be improved to serve as centers of resource mobilization.*"²⁴⁸

The Ethiopian government's move to make better use of the information provision and facilitation role of its embassies is thus a timely development. Signs that the Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa is seeking to become more responsive to the diaspora's needs and to reach out actively to this community are encouraging.

²⁴⁶ <http://www.ethiopia.ottawa.on.ca/>

²⁴⁷ Interview with Hailu Abebe.

²⁴⁸ Tetey, 2002.

4.3.4 Privileges Offered to Diaspora Ethiopians

4.3.4.1 Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card

Granting dual citizenship rights enhances diasporas' involvement in development initiatives of home countries.²⁴⁹ Although many countries remain cautious on the issue, some, such as Burundi, Ghana, India and The Philippines now allow dual citizenship.²⁵⁰ However, this practice remains “*less common in Africa and is often identified by respondents as a field of ongoing restructuring and reflection,*” as indicated in IOM’s survey on “Engaging Diasporas as Agents for Development.”²⁵¹

In the case of Ethiopia, granting dual nationality is considered problematic due to issues concerning border populations.²⁵² In light of this particular situation, the Ethiopian government found it best to issue a Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card – also known as the “Yellow Card” – as a convenient way of granting Ethiopians that hold foreign citizenship practically the same rights and privileges as an Ethiopian citizen.²⁵³

Box 12. Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card: Entitlements and Restrictions²⁵⁴

Legal restrictions to the full participation of foreign citizens of Ethiopian descent were lifted in February 2002, through a proclamation decree, with a view to encouraging their participation in development efforts.

Rights and privileges thus granted are:

- Entry to Ethiopia without a visa;
- Abolition of residence permit requirement to live in Ethiopia;
- Right to own residential property;²⁵⁵
- Access to national private and public employment opportunities without need for a work permit
- Access to all of the economic, social and administrative benefits and services available to Ethiopian citizens;
- Right to invest as a domestic investor, with corresponding benefits;
- Right to pay local rates where applicable;²⁵⁶ and
- Right to import personal belongings free of duty when permanently relocation to Ethiopia.

Restrictions:

- Ban on working in sensitive areas such as National Defense, Security, Foreign Affairs and other similar political establishments; and
- Ban on voting or standing for election for any office at any level of government.

²⁴⁹ IOM, 2005; Ionescu, 2006.

²⁵⁰ Ionescu, 2006.

²⁵¹ IOM 2005:233.

²⁵² This alludes to border populations of neighbouring countries that may claim Ethiopian citizenship in addition to their existing ones. This presents security concerns as there are many border skirmishes between Ethiopia and its neighbours and thus the importance that border populations declare a single citizenship.

²⁵³ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

²⁵⁴ FDRE, 2002b.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

The initial cost of acquiring the Person of Ethiopian Origin Identity Card is US\$500, valid for five years. It is renewable every two years thereafter for a fee of US\$200.

This ID card greatly facilitates foreign citizen Ethiopians' participation in all local activities, while serving as a source of foreign currency for Ethiopia. It can also be instrumental in compiling much needed data on Ethiopian professionals in the diaspora and their qualifications. In addition, the sense of belonging that the ID card imparts to its holder should not be underestimated. Indeed, even if one has a citizenship other than Ethiopian and resides abroad, this formal recognition of the diaspora gives one a sense of having a stake in developments in Ethiopia.

4.3.4.2 Duty Free Importation of Personal Items

The right that returnees have to import personal belongings – such as furniture, appliances, and personal vehicles – free of duty has been in place since 2001. This edict covers Ethiopian citizens or foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin – including migrants, students, diplomatic assignees, international civil servants, as well as employees of Ethiopian Airlines and the Ethiopian Shipping Lines – who had lived abroad for more than five years.

However, a directive was issued by the Ministry of Revenue – under which the Ethiopian Customs Authority operates – on 24 July 2006 lifting the privilege of duty free car imports. This is reportedly due to abuse of the privilege, such as illegal transfers to third parties without taxes paid to the government.²⁵⁷ This directive does not affect the privilege of importing other personal belongings tax free.

4.3.4.3 Foreign Currency Bank Accounts

Non-resident Ethiopians – whether Ethiopian or foreign citizens – have been allowed since May 2004 to open foreign currency accounts in Ethiopia. These include fixed accounts, with varying maturity terms, as well current accounts that allow for withdrawals to be made at any time.²⁵⁸

Originally, the maximum amount one was allowed to deposit in current accounts was US\$5,000. However, upon recognition that this limit was curtailing potential deposits, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE)²⁵⁹ raised it to US\$50,000 in August 2006.²⁶⁰ This is a most welcome development since setting a maximal cap as low as US\$5,000 was highly

²⁵⁶ This includes the ability to pay in local currency as well as benefit from lower rates reserved for Ethiopian citizens when, for example, booking flights and hotel rooms, visiting tourist areas, etc.

²⁵⁷ Mekuria, 2006b.

²⁵⁸ NBE, 2004.

²⁵⁹ Ethiopia's central bank.

²⁶⁰ NBE, 2004; NBE, 2006b.

limiting to those wishing to invest larger sums. The rationale behind placing such limits is scarcity of foreign currency and ensuing concern that a sudden withdrawal of a large amount of foreign currency would create pressure on the balance of payment. However, this limit proved to be an obstacle to attracting Ethiopians abroad to open foreign accounts. For example, only about 100 or so people have opened accounts with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia since May 2004.²⁶¹

Box 13. Foreign Currency Bank Accounts: Various Features²⁶²

Types of accounts: <i>Current account</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does not bear interest- Maximum deposit of US\$50,000 <i>Fixed account</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interest set by each commercial bank – but not exceeding LIBOR rate²⁶³ – paid out provided the account maturity period is longer than three months- No income tax to be paid on interest Modalities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can be maintained in three selected currencies: US Dollar, Pound Sterling and Euro²⁶⁴- Can be opened in person or via post, as long as authenticated documents are provided

By allowing non-resident Ethiopians to open foreign currency accounts, Ethiopia injects much needed hard currency into its economy. Moreover, it is likely that savings deposited in Ethiopia will lead to future diaspora investments in the country, be it purchasing a house or setting up a business.

In recognition of the potential of foreign currency accounts to encourage investment, bolster the international foreign exchange reserves and ease the balance of payments problems of the country, all commercial banks have been asked by NBE to focus on the generation of foreign currency deposits and step up their efforts to work with the diaspora by facilitating their ability to bank their money in Ethiopia.²⁶⁵

While it is commendable that NBE reacted so quickly to raise the maximal caps on foreign currency accounts, some weaknesses remain. For instance, these accounts are automatically converted to a local currency account if and when the account holder acquires permanent residency in Ethiopia, irrespective of citizenship.

²⁶¹ Mekuria, 2006d.

²⁶² NBE, 2006a.

²⁶³ Rate of interest at which banks borrow funds from each other.

²⁶⁴ Deposits in other convertible currencies – Canadian Dollar, Saudi Riyal, Japanese Yen, etc. – may be accepted, although they have to be converted, upon deposit, to one of the three currencies mentioned above.

²⁶⁵ E-mail communication with Anteneh Mekonnen Maru.

4.3.5 Measures to Lower Barriers to Investment

The Ethiopian government has taken a series of measures – aimed at both diaspora Ethiopians and other foreign investors – to lower barriers to investment, and especially so in priority sectors. The Investment Code has thus been amended accordingly.²⁶⁶

Diaspora Ethiopians, unlike other foreign investors, are afforded the opportunity to be considered domestic investors if they so choose. This allows them to not be constrained by requirements made of foreign investors, such as the stipulation that the latter invest at least US\$100,000 on a single investment project in order to be allowed to invest.²⁶⁷

4.3.5.1 Attractive Investment Incentives

In Ethiopia, agro-industry has been given precedence as the country seeks to develop its industrial capacity.²⁶⁸ Thus, those willing to invest in this sector are provided with a particularly attractive package of incentives. These include:

- Income tax exemption for anywhere between two and seven years, depending on volume of export and location of investment;²⁶⁹
- 100% customs exemption on importation of machinery and equipment for investment projects;²⁷⁰
- 100% customs exemption on spare parts whose value does not exceed 15% of total value of capital goods imported;²⁷¹ and
- Long-term loans of up to 70%.²⁷²

4.3.5.2 Measures to Improve Operational Efficiency

In addition to incentives provided, efforts have also been made to simplify the investment process. As part of the Ethiopian government's Civil Service Reform and Business Process

²⁶⁶ FDRE, 2002a; 2003a.

²⁶⁷ FDRE, 2002a; interview with Tilahun Gemechu.

²⁶⁸ MOI, 2006.

²⁶⁹ FDRE, 2003b.

For example, if at least 50% of the production is meant for export, an investor would be tax exempt for five years, and up to seven years under special circumstances; if it is less than 50%, then the tax break will be for two years. Moreover, in a bid to attract investors to relatively underdeveloped areas such as Gambella, Afar, etc., the Government of Ethiopia awards an extra year tax free for those involved in activities in these regions.

²⁷⁰ FDRE, 2003b.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² MOI, 2006; DBE, undated.

The Development Bank of Ethiopia can provide up to 70% financial assistance on a project in form of long-term loans, with the remaining 30% to be matched by the investor. Its current focus is on activities that produce exportable commodities, such as leather and leather products, textile and garment manufacturing and horticulture.

Re-engineering programs, government-owned financial institutions are making efforts to alleviate bureaucratic red tape and improve the provision of services and delivery time.²⁷³

The Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA), which handles all foreign investments, aims to be a “one-stop shop”. It thus seeks to provide pre-investment services to investors²⁷⁴ as well as post-investment support and liaison with other relevant agencies. A special department for investment follow-up has been established in order to address any problems encountered by investors, with the aim of facilitating investors’ interactions with other bureaus. For example, EIA would write letters of support to other governmental agencies whose assistance is required with installing electricity or water, providing telecommunication services, etc. EIA staff might even accompany investors in their dealings with these other agencies, as needed, in order to expedite certain procedures. EIA also provides industry specific expertise to investors.²⁷⁵ EIA is thus reorienting its focus toward resolving bottlenecks that investors may face, while providing an all-encompassing support system. Service delivery times have also been drastically reduced. Thus, issuance of an investment permit or a business license now takes four hours, while renewal of permits and licenses only takes one hour.²⁷⁶

The Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) – which supplies financial support for local development projects – recognizes the potential of the diaspora for investment, be it their financial means or their knowledge of foreign markets as well as other expertise. It thus seeks to entice them by facilitating access to credit and offering faster service.²⁷⁷ Measures taken to simplify the credit delivery mechanism include:

- A recently approved and soon to be implemented loan policy which seeks to shorten the time it takes to process a loan, from loan approval to disbursal,²⁷⁸
- Allowing all branch offices to appraise, grant and disburse loans on their own, up to a certain limit;²⁷⁹

Moreover, in order to attract more diaspora investments, a committee has been put in place to look at better ways and means to publicize DBE initiatives to the diaspora. A public relations office has also been recently established and a website is currently under construction.²⁸⁰

Non-resident Ethiopians and foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin who are interested in investing in Ethiopia can also turn to commercial banks in order to obtain loans relatively

²⁷³ WIC, 2006a.

²⁷⁴ These include the provision of information on investment opportunities and potential; on the investment climate; on investment laws and regulations; as well as assistance with obtaining investment licenses.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Tilahun Gemechu.

²⁷⁶ EIA, 2006; interview with Tilahun Gemechu.

²⁷⁷ DBE, undated; interview with Yewondwossen Teshome.

²⁷⁸ Mekuria, 2006a.

²⁷⁹ DBE, undated.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Yewondwossen Teshome.

quickly. Additionally, the revised directive on foreign currency accounts stipulates that holders of such accounts can use them as collateral to get loans from commercial banks.²⁸¹

4.3.5.3 Increased Foreign Investment in Ethiopia

Foreign investors, of Ethiopian origin or otherwise, seem to be responding positively to the series of measures taken to attract them to the Ethiopian market and the past few years have witnessed rapid growth in FDI. Indeed, 91% of all local investment projects since 1992 were licensed in the past five years and, for the period 2003-2005, FDI rose up to US\$4.35 billion. Total FDI recorded since 1992 amounts to US\$26.6 billion.²⁸²

Box 14. Diaspora Investment in Ethiopia: Selected Figures²⁸³

Current value of investment activities involving diaspora: US\$863 million
Value since July 1992: over US\$1.3 billion
Licenses for 1,057 projects have been issued thus far and there currently are over 800 active projects.
Main areas of activity (from 1998 to 2004):
- Manufacturing: US\$253 million
- Construction: US\$79 million
- Education: US\$28.7 million
- Agricultural: US\$16 million

As indicated in Ethiopia's SDPRP, the Government of Ethiopia is dedicated to creating a favourable and credible environment for foreign investment.²⁸⁴ In particular, the number of policy measures taken in recent years to encourage private capital flows from Ethiopians in the diaspora, is a testament to the government's growing appreciation of the diaspora's potential as a motor for development.

4.3.6 Facilitating Remittance Transfers for Development

As remittances grow and continue to gain in significance as a source of foreign exchange earning for Ethiopia, attention has focused on their role in stimulating the Ethiopian economy.²⁸⁵

4.3.6.1 Volume of Remittances

Data for officially recorded remittances, while inconsistent from source to source, generally paint a positive picture of what has become the second largest earner of foreign currency

²⁸¹ WIC, 2006a.

²⁸² Abi Woldemeskel, EIA Director General, quoted in Xinhua, 2006c.

²⁸³ Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, quoted in Xinhua, 2006b; Tilahun Gemechu quoted in Business in Africa, 2006b.

²⁸⁴ MOFED, 2002.

²⁸⁵ Kamu, undated; MOFED, 2002.

through services after Ethiopian Airlines.²⁸⁶ Figures for official remittances range from US\$220 million per annum²⁸⁷ to 3,207.4 million ETB²⁸⁸ (about US\$370 million) for 2004/2005.²⁸⁹ The latter amount represents 3.65% of GDP, showing an increase in both volume of remittances since 1999/2000 (958.5 million ETB) and in share of GDP (1.61%).²⁹⁰ Moreover, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development figures show that gifts and remittances represented 4.1% of household income for 1999/2000.²⁹¹ The total amount of remittances – both those sent through official and unofficial channels combined – are estimated to reach US\$600 million annually.²⁹²

However, as noted by Ethiopian economist Dejene Aredo:

“Ethiopia has not fully tapped its potentials for mobilizing remittances. The current flows of remittances are estimated at only one-sixth of remittances that could be mobilized potentially. If fully mobilized, remittance flows to Ethiopia could be raised to a level greater than the current amount of ODA²⁹³ flows into the country.”²⁹⁴

The significant amount of remittances that are transferred through unofficial means²⁹⁵ partly explains the above. Indeed, funnelling a higher proportion of remittance transfers through formal channels would greatly enhance their developmental potential.²⁹⁶

4.3.6.2 Government Efforts to Facilitate Official Remittance Transfers

Recognizing that unofficially transferred funds deter from productive uses of remittance monies, NBE conducted a study assessing the reasons behind diaspora Ethiopians’ decision to resort to unofficial channels. The main problems identified with the use of official channels were: high commission charges, delay in effecting payments and inflexibility as regards the transfer agents that can be used.²⁹⁷

Responding to the findings mentioned above and aware of the importance of a clear guideline regarding the transfer of remittances that takes into account the need to boost the volume of remittances as well as to regulate the transfer process, NBE issued a directive on

²⁸⁶ Mekuria, 2006d.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Ethiopian Birr, the local currency.

²⁸⁹ NBE figures for formally recorded figures, quoted in Asmellash, 2006.

²⁹⁰ Asmellash, 2006.

²⁹¹ MOFED, 2002.

²⁹² NBE, quoted in Kamu, undated.

²⁹³ Official Development Assistance.

²⁹⁴ Aredo, 2005:3.

²⁹⁵ Asmellash, 2006; NBE, quoted in Kamu, undated; Nega *et al.*, 2004.

²⁹⁶ Nega *et al.*, 2004.

²⁹⁷ WIC, 2006a.

“International Remittance Services” in August 2006. This directive seeks to improve the operations of the formal remittance transfer system in Ethiopia by reducing remittance costs and increasing access to cost-effective, reliable, and fast services.²⁹⁸

Box 15. NBE’s Directive on International Remittance Services: Selected Provisions

- Increase transparency of remittance services, including full disclosure of all terms and tariffs applicable, estimated time for the money to reach the receiver, as well as the exchange rate.
- Ensure competitive rates by banning exclusive contracts between international money transfer operators²⁹⁹ and domestic commercial banks while also limiting contractual agreements to two years, renewable upon NBE’s consent. Any commercial bank entering into new agency agreement with international money transferring operators need also obtain prior approval from NBE.
- Use cost-effective and faster mechanisms of money transfers, such as bank-to-bank transfers through SWIFT.
- Call for NBE and all commercial banks to open separate work units to facilitate remittance transfer services in all their branches throughout Ethiopia and to provide such services within 24 hours.
- Call for all remittance service providers to advertise their services and all related information through brochures, websites and Ethiopian missions abroad.

4.4 Challenges in the Government of Ethiopia’s Diaspora Engagement Efforts

As it multiplies efforts to harness the Ethiopian diaspora’s intellectual, financial and social capital for maximum developmental impact, the Government of Ethiopia is faced with two major challenges, regularly mentioned by government officials across the board. These are resource constraints on one hand and the political divide and polarization within a segment of the diaspora on the other.

4.4.1 Resource Constraints

Lack of resources – both financial and human – severely limits the government’s ability to engage the diaspora at the desired level. In fact, most government representatives interviewed for this study were keenly aware of the various improvements that could be brought to the current initiatives so as to exploit better diaspora resources for development. However, budgetary constraints, including lack of staff, are a major impediment to expanding current activities regarding the diaspora.

A case in point is the Head of the Diaspora Coordinating Office of the Ministry of Capacity Building who intends to tour areas of the world – mainly Europe and North America – where a significant Ethiopian diaspora population resides in order to publicize the work of

²⁹⁸ NBE, 2006b.

²⁹⁹ There currently are four international money transfer agents operating in Ethiopia: Western Union, MoneyGram, Manifo, and Adam Funds.

his office. However, he was – up to the time of the interview – unable to do so as his office is understaffed. Moreover, plans to expand services offered to the diaspora, including a website, have yet to come to fruition due to lack of funds.³⁰⁰

Financial and human resources constraints were also mentioned as impediments to the full implementation of the diaspora outreach mandate of the Ethiopian Embassy in Canada. For instance, organizing information meetings with Ethiopians in Canada wherever they reside is central to the Embassy's mission of providing timely information on developments in Ethiopia to the diaspora as well as apprising them of various incentives and support available to those interested in investing, returning or contributing in any manner to capacity building efforts in Ethiopia. However, the frequency with which meetings are held, as well as cities covered, is limited by budgetary considerations. Lack of manpower is also a concern because engaging the diaspora requires extensive efforts as well as the assistance of organizers, researchers, IT experts and others.³⁰¹

4.4.2 Divide between the Government and the Diaspora

Despite the supportive policies and initiatives undertaken to attract diaspora resources for Ethiopian development, mistrust between the government and a segment of the diaspora remains an issue, and especially so in the aftermath of the May 2005 national elections.³⁰² For instance, both the Ambassador of Ethiopia to Canada and the First Secretary in charge of constituency building mentioned the challenge in getting past the negativity expressed by some in the diaspora regarding any outreach activity undertaken by the Embassy. They suspect that even those interested in interacting with the Embassy, whether by attending functions or information meetings, sometimes refrain from doing because of social intimidation and fear of being labelled pro-government.³⁰³ Even among those who are not actively campaigning against any type of association with the incumbent government, there exists suspicion that the government is simply paying-lip service to the idea of diaspora engagement as a means of furthering its own political interests rather than genuinely seeking to mobilize diaspora resources for national development.

It is however essential to recognize that there is another part of the diaspora that – regardless of how it feels about the current government or its practices – seeks to go beyond politics and is either already actively engaged in the economic life of the country or is

³⁰⁰ Interview with Kedir Ali.

³⁰¹ Interviews with Birtukan Ayano and Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam.

³⁰² The period leading to the elections left a part of the Ethiopian diaspora politically polarized. The aftermath of these hotly contested elections saw diaspora groups supporting opposition parties actively organizing against the present government, including campaigning for the donor community to withhold foreign aid and other assistance provided, asking Ethiopians in the diaspora and non-Ethiopians alike not to invest in Ethiopia, and calling for tourists not to visit the country.

³⁰³ Interviews with Birtukan Ayano and Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam.

searching for opportunities to do so.³⁰⁴ This view is echoed by the Returnees Caucus³⁰⁵ whose members – despite their diverse political affiliations – seek to unite around basic issues of national interest that transcend political partisanship. In that vein, the Caucus took a position formally rebuking undertakings that call for the suspension of economic and humanitarian aid to Ethiopia by certain members of the diaspora.³⁰⁶ It should thus be noted that the Ethiopian diaspora is not politically homogeneous and that no one group is representative of the diaspora as a whole, a fact of which the Ethiopian government – to its credit – is well aware as it pursues its efforts to engage those Ethiopians in the diaspora that can make positive contributions to their homeland.

4.5 The Way Forward: Suggestions for Action Points by the Government of Ethiopia

The political will of the Government of Ethiopia to engage its diaspora in national development efforts, coupled with a range of policy reforms and bold measures taken to facilitate diaspora participation, is highly commendable. There is room for improvement, however, as even countries such as India and China, considered leaders in tapping and channelling the financial, technical, and intellectual resources of their diaspora communities for capacity development, continually fine-tune related policies and strategies.

The discussion in this section suggests different areas in which the Government of Ethiopia may want to develop policy and advances some action points for consideration. As indicated above, one of the major challenges the Ethiopian government faces as it seeks to translate diaspora-related policy into concrete action is lack of resources. While mindful that some suggestions may be impracticable due to budgetary and human resources constraints, it is hoped that others will prove actionable in the near future.

4.5.1 Formulate a Comprehensive National Diaspora Engagement Policy and Strategies

4.5.1.1 National Diaspora Engagement Policy

While the Government of Ethiopia has undertaken several initiatives to enlist the diaspora for capacity development, including a range of directives benefiting Ethiopians abroad, it is difficult to discern a comprehensive national diaspora engagement policy.³⁰⁷ Despite the political will expressed to involve the diaspora formally and the many incentives provided,

³⁰⁴ Appendix 3 showcases selected Ethiopian diaspora groups that are actively involved in the country's capacity development efforts.

³⁰⁵ Formed in late 2005 by temporary and permanent returnees from the diaspora presently engaged in various business and professional activities in Ethiopia.

³⁰⁶ Returnees Caucus; 2006.

³⁰⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' recently formulated master plan on diaspora engagement might form the nucleus of such a policy; however, it is difficult to tell as the document is not available for review.

measures taken appear to be *ad hoc* and unfocused, with more emphasis seemingly on encouraging remittances and investments, to the neglect of attracting diaspora intellectual capital.³⁰⁸

The lack of a cohesive policy is a barrier to engagement; thus the need for a diaspora policy framework for Ethiopia. Such a policy would serve to identify and form a list of select agendas so as to link national development needs with diaspora capacities more systematically.³⁰⁹

4.5.1.2 Targeted Strategies to Attract Different Segments of the Diaspora

An effective mobilization of the diaspora necessitates the development of targeted strategies that take into account the diversity of diaspora capacities and interests. Focusing on one aspect, such as investment generation for example, while neglecting another, such as attracting the highly skilled, undermines the optimal use of diaspora resources for capacity development.³¹⁰

Measures taken so far to entice the Ethiopian diaspora – including various incentives offered – are a good start. There is, however, a need to move away from a dominantly one-size-fits-all approach to a more effective strategy that would revolve around the establishment of programs targeting specific segments of the diaspora.

Different groups to consider when devising programs to attract the diaspora include the highly skilled and educated; those with money to invest; entrepreneurs; retired professionals; those engaged in low wage sectors; the youth, etc. For instance, while a young professional might be motivated by financial considerations when deciding to get involved in local activities, a retiree might be willing to share his or her knowledge and experience, without expectations of financial compensation, in the interest of contributing towards the development of the country. Thus, incentives offered to each would, of necessity, be different. Diasporas involved in low wage sectors are traditionally ignored, wrongly considered “unskilled”³¹¹ and their potential assessed, at best, in terms of the remittances they send to their families. However, properly targeted, this group can transfer valuable skills acquired abroad, whether in the service industry or in manufacturing, share their knowledge of production and distribution processes, etc. Diaspora youth – another important group – may be involved through the creation of work/study abroad programs and internships that would allow them to contribute their skills to Ethiopia while affording them the opportunity to gain personal experience and form deeper linkages with their

³⁰⁸ Shinn, 2002; Yacob, 2005.

³⁰⁹ IOM, 2005.

For example, Benin launched a National Policy Plan for Beninese abroad in 2001, supported at the presidential level and which includes a National Policy Declaration on the subject matter.

³¹⁰ Ionescu, 2006.

³¹¹ Agunias, 2006.

country of origin.³¹² Moreover, there is a need to be proactive and approach highly skilled Ethiopians in the diaspora, and implement specific schemes and programs directed at professionals,³¹³ such as doctors, engineers, professors, information technology experts, etc.

Box 16. Formulating a National Diaspora Strategy to Mobilize Intellectual Resources for Development: Issues for Consideration³¹⁴

Mobilizing the Diaspora: tapping into the diaspora's full potential
Gauging capital: assessing diaspora groups' intellectual capital potential
Mobilizing platforms: effectively engaging diaspora groups in the absence of formal structures
Government commitment: establishing cooperative relations between governments and their intellectual diaspora
Perception of home communities: establishing cooperative relations between the intellectual diaspora and local counterparts
Inherent ecology: assessing existing policies, infrastructure, and resources to involve diaspora communities
Technical and logistical issues: identifying potential logistical and technical challenges in mobilizing the diaspora, as well as strategies to address them
Collaborative environment: promoting an environment conducive to effective cooperative engagements between diaspora and the home country

4.5.2 Establish a Central Diaspora Office

As indicated above, there are two main federal bodies in Ethiopia that deal with the diaspora: EEA, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Diaspora Coordinating Office of the Ministry of Capacity Building. There are, in addition, diaspora desks instituted at the regional level, such as the Addis Ababa City Government Investment Authority. While the establishment of such offices within existing structures shows considerable policy interest in diaspora-related issues,³¹⁵ the diversification of institutions may lead to lack of coordination among government agencies.³¹⁶

The concern is that, in the absence of a central institution dealing with all issues pertinent to diaspora engagement, interested diaspora members may not know which channels to use in order to become involved or to receive comprehensive information relevant to their needs. Moreover, the lack of a strong diaspora coordination office encompassing all government initiatives affecting the diaspora leads to mismatched directives and practices. For example, when the Ministry of Revenue nullified returnees' privilege to import personal vehicles free of duty in July 2006, it did so without taking into consideration the need to honour

³¹² Young Diplomats, 2006.

³¹³ Nega *et al.* 2004.

³¹⁴ As discussed in Teferra, 2004.

³¹⁵ IOM, 2005; Ionescu, 2006.

³¹⁶ Ionescu, 2006.

privileges already granted by Ethiopian diplomatic missions abroad to prospective returnees. This left those who had already shipped their cars in a lurch as they were now obliged to pay duty and excise tax on them. The matter was further complicated by the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to validate claims to import duty free cars past the date of the Ministry of Revenue directive lifting that privilege.³¹⁷

Aware of the need for better coordination and sharing of information among various authorities, the Government has instituted a technical committee on diaspora issues that gathers various federal agencies on a monthly basis.³¹⁸ It is expected that the work of this committee will help smooth interaction between departments tasked with diaspora issues within government ministries. However, further measures leading to the establishment of an office – at a level higher than that of a department within a ministry – would serve to increase the profile accorded the diaspora as well as streamline policies and programs to channel diaspora resources. In this regard, it is interesting to note that some governments have gone as far as establishing ministries that cater to the interests of their nationals abroad, with a focus on harnessing their potential for the benefit of their home countries. In Africa, these include Benin, Mali, Morocco and Senegal.³¹⁹

4.5.3 Improve Provision of Information to the Diaspora

Diaspora communities require timely and accurate information on which to base decisions as to where and how to allocate their resources as regards development initiatives in countries of origin.³²⁰ This is also true for diaspora Ethiopians, for whom lack of information remains an important barrier to engagement.

Responses to a question posed to a number of Ethiopian-Canadians as to what would facilitate their participation in professional assignments in Ethiopia³²¹ bear this point out: *“I think the biggest barrier is lack of information. People don’t really know what opportunities are available in their respective area. I think a website that would aggregate such information would be useful;”*³²² and *“there should [...] be clear and coherent information on the possibilities, opportunities and challenges of work environment back in Ethiopia.”*³²³ Findings from a recent research conducted by Young Diplomats – an Ethiopian diaspora group based in Canada – among Ethiopian-Canadian youths in Toronto corroborate the above: *“Youth in our study unanimously felt a sense of responsibility to*

³¹⁷ Mekuria, 2006c.

³¹⁸ Previously discussed in section 4.3.1.1.

³¹⁹ Asmellash, 2006; IOM, 2005.

³²⁰ Tetey, 2002.

³²¹ Part of the questionnaire presented to anonymous profilees and which sought to showcase resources available among Ethiopian-Canadians, their interest in participating in development initiatives in Ethiopia as well as issues related to such an engagement. Profiles collected are presented in their entirety in Appendix 2.

³²² Profile 4, Appendix 2.

³²³ Profile 5, Appendix 2.

*contribute to the betterment of Ethiopia; but were largely unaware of ways in which to do this.*³²⁴

The information needs of Ethiopians in the diaspora are essentially two-fold: (1) information on mechanisms, policies and programs targeting diaspora engagement; and (2) information on conditions on the ground, including opportunities for involvement as well as local needs. Information provision on both counts remains deficient. Diaspora-related policies and activities of the Government are not as visible as they should be to the diaspora, the very group they are targeting. For instance, most in the diaspora remain unaware of the existence of EEA, the main office in charge of facilitating diaspora activities in Ethiopia.³²⁵

EEA as well as other relevant agencies are aware that lack of information has been a major impediment to diaspora engagement³²⁶ and efforts to improve communication linkages with the diaspora have been made. These include publicizing the work of EEA as well as other institutions dealing with the diaspora through interviews granted to various media outlets; plans to create a more substantive and regularly updated EEA website;³²⁷ the new community outreach mandates of Ethiopian missions abroad; and organizing regional governments so as to enable them to provide information at both regional and district levels.

As efforts to improve information provision continue, the potential of the Internet as an effective communication medium need to be exploited better. The fact that Internet communication as well as the use of computers is not widespread in Ethiopia has meant that the potential that the World Wide Web presents is not always readily recognized.³²⁸ However, Ethiopians in the diaspora are accustomed to getting information online, and it is important that the government adapts to this new reality. This is especially crucial in establishing communication links with the younger generation. For instance, the Young Diplomats survey mentioned above revealed that the youth rely heavily on the Internet to get information on Ethiopia.³²⁹

It is thus important for all government agencies to have a user friendly, informative, functional, dynamic and regularly updated website.³³⁰ The latter aspect is most important as

³²⁴ Young Diplomats, 2006:42.

³²⁵ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

³²⁶ Interviews with, *inter alia*, Birtukan Ayano, Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam, Kedir Ali and Teferi Melesse.

³²⁷ The current EEA website does provide basic information on the Directorate's functions as well as a list of directives relevant to diaspora members. However, it is not very dynamic nor does it present the type of comprehensive information required by the diaspora.

³²⁸ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

³²⁹ Young Diplomats, 2006.

³³⁰ An example of comprehensive and well organized government information online can be found on the Government of South Africa's website, at <http://www.gov.za>.

a website that reflects outdated information undermines the credibility of the entire site with the user.³³¹ A uniform structure across government websites, including among those of missions abroad, is advised as it would facilitate information location. For instance, there are plans afoot to upgrade the website of the Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa.³³² This could be an opportunity to review all embassy websites and move towards synchronizing the information provided to diaspora Ethiopians as well as any other interested parties.

One option the government might consider in its bid to appeal to the diaspora is the creation of a dynamic website that would centralize all pertinent information. This website, which will need to be actively publicized, could serve as a “one-stop” information provider and include, among other items:

- Updated and accurate information on policies, programs and directives related to the diaspora;
- Information on local development projects where diaspora skills and capital may be applied;
- A section where employment and other opportunities for diaspora involvement are announced and which would serve as a mechanism to relate local needs with resources available abroad;
- Information on investing and establishing a business in Ethiopia, as well as related financial and legal matters;
- A forum that would provide opportunities for networking among the diaspora as well as between diaspora and local organizations and individuals;
- A section which would allow members of the diaspora to register themselves, thus aiding the government in compiling information on resources available in the diaspora; and
- A regular newsletter to keep subscribers apprised of new developments.

Another suggestion related to information provision concerns the lack of readily available documentation on government activities as regards diaspora engagement, including research conducted and meetings held. Indeed, meeting reports and agendas as well as results of studies on the diaspora are considered internal and are not publicly shared.³³³ While it is understandable that some of the matters contained therein may be politically sensitive, efforts to provide public versions should be made.

The challenge in improving information provision to the diaspora is closely linked with that of data collection and management, to which we turn next.

³³¹ An example is the list of government cabinet members provided on the website of the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, DC and which, at the time of last viewing on 20 January 2007, still showed pre-May 2005 information (see <http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/agencies.shtml>). Such oversights lead to questions regarding the reliability of other information provided.

³³² Interview with Birtukan Ayano; Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa, website.

³³³ E-mail communication with Fesseha Tesfu Beyene.

4.5.4 Expand Data Collection

Availability of reliable data is central to the successful engagement of the diaspora in home country development. The collection of such information poses governments several key challenges, as identified by participants in IOM's survey on "Engaging Diasporas as Agents for Development".³³⁴ Difficulties cited include:

- Proper definition and determination of the diaspora;
- Collection of data on diaspora organizations;
- Definition and measurement of diaspora flows – both financial and human transfers;
- Lack of financial resources to undertake extensive data gathering activities;
- Identification of institutions responsible for gathering data on diasporas; and
- Diaspora populations' disinclination to divulge personal information.

There are shortcomings in the Ethiopian government's data collection practices, further hampered by difficulties such as the ones mentioned above. For instance, DBE does not maintain separate statistics on funds granted to diaspora entrepreneurs.³³⁵ Similarly, there is lack of statistical data and research on the impact of diaspora activities in national development efforts,³³⁶ on the size and composition of the diaspora, on the expertise available in the diaspora, as well as on various modalities to target different segments of the diaspora according to their interest and capacity. Suggestions to remedy the paucity of data include:

- Government agencies with a diaspora engagement mandate to partner with relevant local and foreign academic and research institutions to commission studies on major issues related to migration and development;
- Government-sponsored initiatives, in partnership with diaspora organizations, to conduct research on Ethiopians abroad, with an emphasis on assessing diaspora potential; and
- Intensified efforts at the level of embassies to assess, in partnership with diaspora organizations, diaspora activity in various countries as well as identify the type of assistance required to facilitate their participation in developmental endeavours. In this regard, moves by selected embassies to collect preliminary information as well as plans for further studies are noted.³³⁷

³³⁴ IOM, 2005.

³³⁵ Interview with Yewondwossen Teshome.

³³⁶ Including the number of returnees and their activities; the volume and significance of capital, intellectual and social transfers from the diaspora; their actual and potential contributions, etc.

³³⁷ Interview with Birtukan Ayano.

Box 17. Data Collection on Diaspora Expertise: Selected Practices³³⁸

- Benin: database of health professional nationals residing in France
- El Salvador: database of 150 high profile Salvadorians in the diaspora; a database of 400 Salvadorian diaspora organizations; a database of companies run by Salvadorians abroad, as well as a Virtual Database of Talents Abroad
- Kenya: record of education and health professionals abroad
- Nigeria: database of professional human resources
- Pakistan: National Talent Pool of qualified Pakistanis in the diaspora
- Uruguay: skills/knowledge database formed through voluntary registration of its diaspora on the website established by the government for Uruguayans abroad

4.5.5 Strengthen Public Relations Efforts

In their efforts to ensure a significant and sustainable engagement of their diasporas in home country endeavours, governments are often faced with the challenge of overcoming the reluctance of certain diaspora members to work with them or even outright hostility. Tensions may also exist between diasporas and local populations and institutions. As noted in the previous section on data collection, another potential challenge is the concern of some diaspora individuals and groups with privacy or how governments they may not totally trust might, in the present or future, use the data collected.

4.5.5.1 Multiply Efforts to Improve Government-Diaspora Relations

In a recent IOM paper discussing key policy challenges in engaging diasporas for development, Dina Ionescu notes:

*“Negative perceptions can be real obstacles to diaspora policy development, given that bitterness, suspicion, reluctance, resentment, stigmatization or discrimination can equally arise from diasporas, populations in the home country or governments. Trust can be strengthened through positive communication and through particular measures responding to diasporas’ requests [...]. Establishing dialogue through media, virtual networks, websites, visits to diasporas and building a common agenda with diasporas through regular meetings and visits favour positive communication.”*³³⁹

As discussed earlier, the period after the strongly contested 2005 national elections exacerbated divisions between the Ethiopian government and a part of its diaspora, leading to further mistrust and resentment between both parties. Prior to the elections, the momentum for real diaspora involvement could be felt on all sides. The ensuing political instability dampened the enthusiasm for engagement.

³³⁸ IOM, 2005.

³³⁹ Ionescu, 2006:56.

In the interest of maximizing diaspora involvement in national development, it is important that the Ethiopian government go beyond simply facilitating activities of interested diaspora members. It needs to communicate, widely and consistently, the message that it stands ready to work with any diaspora individual or group interested in contributing constructively to development initiatives in Ethiopia, irrespective of political views or affiliations. Proactive measures to stimulate involvement of all diaspora Ethiopians in a shared vision for development in Ethiopia, such as recent trips of federal and regional government representatives to meet with diaspora members and the new outreach mandate of Ethiopian embassies, need to be multiplied. Needless to say, ensuring political stability is central to attracting diaspora members of all ilks.³⁴⁰

4.5.5.2 Mainstream Diaspora Issues with Local Populations and Institutions

For diaspora contributions to be accepted, implemented and utilized to their full potential, the buy-in of locals – including key individuals, institutions and various levels of government – is crucial.³⁴¹ Steps to sensitize local institutions and populations on diaspora issues and contributions are thus needed. For instance, diaspora involvement in local activities may not always be well understood or appreciated due to tensions between “those who stayed” and “those who left”.³⁴² This was expressed by one diaspora member on temporary assignment in Ethiopia as follows: *“there exists resentment; sometimes people don’t like diasporas because they think we get all the privileges and come back and look down on them, even if that is not the case.”*³⁴³

Measures taken to enhance the diaspora’s profile in the local environment may include the organization of national dialogues on developmental issues, bringing together various levels of government, the diaspora, the civil society and private sector in genuinely interactive sessions where real partnerships can be forged and practical ways forward devised. Policies seeking to enhance all parties’ respective strengths – such as the diaspora’s financial, human and social capital gained abroad and their local counterparts’ domestic expertise – while providing opportunities for synergy, also need to be considered.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ See, for instance, comments given in Profile 2, Appendix 2.

³⁴¹ IOM, 2005.

³⁴² Agunias, 2006.

³⁴³ Interview with a temporary diaspora returnee to Ethiopia.

³⁴⁴ Agunias, 2006.

4.5.6 Increase the Developmental Impact of Remittances

As discussed previous, the Government of Ethiopia has recently taken important measures in order to facilitate official remittance transfers. Suggestions to further increase remittance flows and to boost their developmental impact are outlined below.

4.5.6.1 Improve Data Collection

The collection of better data on remittances in Ethiopia is a matter of priority since, without accurate information on remittance flows, it is difficult to assess their impact on the country's economy³⁴⁵ or to realize fully their developmental potential.

Attracting remittances and putting them to productive use require that research be conducted on remittances and related effects on the local economy in order to enable the development and implementation of appropriate products and initiatives. Such studies could explore a range of issues such as how the money sent by diaspora Ethiopians is used (consumption versus productive use, for instance); mechanisms that would aid to direct remittances toward productive investments; and lessons that could be learned from other developing countries that have managed to successfully apply monies received from their nationals abroad to local development endeavours.

4.5.6.2 Increase Volume of Official Remittances

While remittance flows to Ethiopia have increased in recent years,³⁴⁶ there remains a lot to be done in terms of attracting a still higher volume of remittances to the country.³⁴⁷ We have seen that the Government of Ethiopia is trying to boost the volume of remittances by facilitating the transfer process. While this is a most welcome development, it also suggests that substantial opportunity exists to pursue more aggressively initiatives to increase remittance flows.

For instance, Ethiopian embassies and consulates abroad could be tasked with promoting remittances and identifying potential investors among the communities to which they are assigned. There is also room for the capital potential of remittances – beyond simple money transfer – to be better exploited, through the provision of supplementary financial services and products. Indeed, cross-sold with transfers, financial products such as savings, loans, mortgages, etc., could prove particularly attractive to potential remitters.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Asmellash, 2006.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ Aredo, 2005; Nega *et al.*, 2004.

³⁴⁸ Sander and Mainbo, 2005.

Efforts to boost official remittance figures must also take into consideration the necessity to expand transfer services across the country, and especially in rural and other areas that are underserved by the traditional banking system. One suggestion in that regard is allowing post offices and micro-finance institutions, which are well represented in the Ethiopia rural area, to operate as remittance service providers.³⁴⁹

4.5.6.3 Direct Mobilized Resources towards Productive Investments

While remittances are private funds, the development of policy and instruments for their utilization in productive investments would magnify their impact on economic development. Indeed, simply increasing the volume of remittances may not have a significant effect on the country's development prospects beyond an increased standard of living of recipient families, while attracting resources for investment purposes would allow the government to direct scarce financial capital in priority sectors.³⁵⁰ Government-backed development bonds, such as those issued by the Government of Jordan, present an example of instruments that facilitate remittance mobilization for investment purposes.³⁵¹

Another suggestion in relation to attracting remittances for productive purposes is the establishment of business institutions in Ethiopia and abroad that would facilitate the formal flow of remittances, with the foreign-based institutions working on resource mobilization for investment while the local counterparts would channel the resources into domestic development projects.³⁵²

4.5.7 Alleviate Bureaucratic Burden

Simplifying bureaucratic procedures is fundamental to encouraging diaspora activities, ranging from the acquisition of real estate to investments and the establishment of a business. In Ethiopia, the bureaucratic burden remains heavy despite efforts made to alleviate it through ongoing programs such Civil Service Reform and Business Process Re-engineering. Through these reforms, the government seeks to orient its focus towards providing public service of the highest quality, including reducing service delivery delays. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has managed to shorten the time necessary to authenticate a foreign document from one day to 20 minutes. However, such a major overhaul of public services is a painstaking process and it will take time for the reforms to trickle down and permeate the entire civil service apparatus.³⁵³

Meanwhile, the bureaucracy continues to frustrate diaspora and local Ethiopians alike. One of the major obstacles faced by those trying to establish organizations is the level of

³⁴⁹ Asmellash, 2006.

³⁵⁰ Nega *et al.*, 2004.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ Interview with Teferi Melesse.

complexity of requirements and procedures. For instance, asked what would facilitate diaspora participation in Ethiopia, one respondent commented on the need for simpler and more transparent procedures, saying: “*many people, including myself, are startled by the sheer bureaucratic complications – from customs to various offices,*”³⁵⁴ with similar thoughts echoed by another person profiled for this study.³⁵⁵ Another diaspora member, who returned to establish a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Addis Ababa, mentioned legal and bureaucratic hurdles as one of two major impediments to operations, adding that, in order to expedite matters, one needs to get through to someone within the civil service system who is able and willing to break the bottlenecks.³⁵⁶

Diaspora members – especially those from developed countries – are used to governmental processes that run smoothly and transparently. Inability to predict the experience they will have when interacting with government bureaucracies – as a result of a lack, or non-implementation, of clear governmental processes – is a deterrent to diaspora engagement. It is therefore extremely important that the government continues its efforts to allay their concerns in this regard.³⁵⁷

4.5.8 Conduct Regular Monitoring of Diaspora-Related Activities

Evaluation exercises of ongoing diaspora-related policies, activities and incentives need to be conducted periodically in order to assess their effectiveness.³⁵⁸ For example, it is important that cost-benefit analyses of skill transfer missions, such as those administered through the Ministry of Capacity Building, are carried out to ensure that resources spent are commensurate with benefits gained.³⁵⁹ Regular assessments would also allow for continuous fine-tuning of policies and practices. For example, this would help prevent the misuse of certain privileges at great cost to the government, such as the one allowing for importation of duty free cars which was abruptly discontinued upon discovery of abuse.³⁶⁰ Such occurrences give the impression of inconsistency in, and unreliability of, the government’s diaspora-related initiatives to the very same diaspora they seek to attract.

4.5.9 Acknowledge and Fully Support Diaspora Assistance

There is anecdotal evidence of disinterest on the receiving side in making use of assistance offered by diaspora members. Some examples include: an initiative by an Ethiopian-Canadian professor to support the Department of Statistics of Addis Ababa University through the provision of graduate student guidance and collaborative research with faculty,

³⁵⁴ Profile 5, Appendix 2.

³⁵⁵ Profile 3, Appendix 2.

³⁵⁶ Interview with study participant.

³⁵⁷ FIELD, 2005; interview with BT Costantinos.

³⁵⁸ Yacob, 2005.

³⁵⁹ Interviews with Kedir Ali, Tefera Waluwa and Zufan Lakew.

³⁶⁰ Mekuria, 2006c.

which failed to “*materialize due to lack of interest from the receiving side*”;³⁶¹ efforts made by another Ethiopian-Canadian professional to facilitate the entry of Ethiopian graduate students in Canadian universities, also met with insufficient interest and support on the Ethiopian side;³⁶² another informant – an education specialist and a returnee – also related her negative experience in seeking to volunteer her expertise with the Ministry of Education, saying that all her efforts to get in touch with the relevant persons within the Ministry were ignored. She also adds that she sent her curriculum vitae to the Addis Ababa University for consideration for which she never received acknowledgement.³⁶³ This lack of interest is further evidenced by the experience of another diaspora member who, in between degrees, sought to volunteer with the Department of Social Anthropology of the university. Unable to garner interest from the Department, she ended up finding remunerated employment with an international aid agency based in Addis Ababa.³⁶⁴

Occurrences such as the above lead to disenchantment among the diaspora and undermine the government’s efforts to attract and utilize skills available abroad. Thus, various institutions, including those in the academic sector, need to be fully engaged in implementing government initiatives as regards the diaspora.³⁶⁵ Moreover, there need to be well planned strategies that allow for timely and optimal use of diaspora assistance. The need to make effective use of diaspora skills is fittingly expressed in the following quote:

*“The worst thing that can happen to a receiving country is for Diaspora professionals to come back with negative experiences and discourage others from going. It is, therefore, important that Diaspora professionals are assigned to areas where they can make relevant contribution, they are provided the support they need to carry out their responsibilities and are recognized for their role and contribution.”*³⁶⁶

4.6 Observations on the Low Remuneration of Public Servants

The problem of low salaries is recurrent as the Government of Ethiopia seeks to use diaspora professionals to fill gaps in various public sector institutions, including those in higher education.³⁶⁷ This does not solely affect efforts to attract diaspora expertise but is also fuelling the brain drain of qualified professionals, leading many to leave the civil service to practice in the non-governmental and private sectors or migrate to foreign countries.³⁶⁸ In addition to the often mentioned budgetary constraints, higher salaries are

³⁶¹ Profile 1, Appendix 2.

³⁶² Profile 2, Appendix 2.

³⁶³ Interview with Tsion Mariam Dawit.

³⁶⁴ Profile 6, Appendix 2.

³⁶⁵ Teferra, 2004.

³⁶⁶ Joseph Manyoni, former professor at Carlton University in Canada, who has participated in several short-term assignments to work with Natal University in South Africa.

³⁶⁷ Interviews with BT Costantinos, Ermias Dagne, Gashaw Haile, Kedir Ali and Tefera Waluwa.

³⁶⁸ ActionAid International, 2005; Costantinos, 2006.

difficult to achieve across the public sector due to a large civil service that does not differentiate between “*the core [civil service] and public service employees such as teachers, health workers and agricultural extension workers.*”³⁶⁹

As regards diaspora involvement, even though local salaries remain unattractive, it is important to note that financial rewards are not the sole motivators for engagement. Other considerations, such as greater professional responsibility, a sense of meaningful contribution as well as a moral responsibility felt towards the Ethiopian people also contribute to diaspora decision to participate in local activities in Ethiopia.

4.7 Ethiopian Non-Governmental Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora

Despite the fact that the contribution of the diaspora is sought and much needed – a sentiment expressed in interview after interview with local NGOs, large and small – non-governmental efforts and capacity to systematically engage the diaspora have been limited. Contact and collaboration between diaspora and local organizations remain haphazard and non-institutionalized, predicated for the most part on personal contacts. In this regard, the government has a major role to play in enhancing the ability of local NGOs to access diaspora resources in a structured manner, as several of the suggestions made to the government in the section above attest. However, it is also incumbent upon the non-governmental sector to push the government to implement more adequate measures to attract the diaspora, and to advise on possible initiatives as they are best placed to identify the types of diaspora support most relevant to their needs.

Some have already thought about how best to tap into diaspora resources through independent initiatives. For instance, the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), an umbrella organization of over 200 local and international NGOs that operate in Ethiopia, has, in recognition of the need to expand its linkages with the Ethiopian diaspora, opened a branch office in Atlanta and is considering doing the same in the Netherlands.³⁷⁰ These branches are established with the core purpose of forming official links between CRDA and diaspora individuals and organizations. CRDA, whose membership includes the Ethiopian office of Canadian NGO Partnership Africa-Canada (PAC), had also made overtures to the latter with respect to partnering on a diaspora cooperant program that would place Ethiopians in Canada in short- and longer-term skill transfer placements in Ethiopia. This showed great initiative on the part of CRDA as well as PAC but the program unfortunately never came to fruition as there was no support for it, at the time, among Canadian funders.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Costantinos, 2006:2.

The paper cited presents an extensive analysis of the Ethiopian Civil Service as well as reforms suggested to make it leaner and more accountable.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Kebede Asrat.

³⁷¹ Interview with Bernard Taylor.

Professionals based in Ethiopia also have an active role to play in promoting diaspora engagement; *“they do not always have to wait to be ‘discovered’ as partners, but can initiate joint activities with their compatriots in the Diaspora.”*³⁷² An interesting development in that respect includes the Ethiopian Multidisciplinary Professionals Association, an organization based in Ethiopia that was recently established with the aim of synergizing and maximizing the contributions of Ethiopian professionals from various sectors to the development process of the country. Mobilizing diaspora professionals is one of the ways in which it aspires to reach its overall mission. In that regard, the Association seeks to fill the apparent gap in the establishment of mechanisms to mobilize diaspora professionals and provide them with the necessary information and support to effectively contribute their skills in their homeland.³⁷³

The short-lived Forum International for Ethiopians Living in the Diaspora is another example of a locally-initiated venture which, in collaboration with a well established Ethiopian diaspora organization, sought to raise the profile of the Ethiopian diaspora among the Ethiopian political, academic and research circles as well the civil society and private sectors. Its efforts culminated in a well received conference held in January 2005.³⁷⁴

Interest in the actual and potential contribution of Ethiopian diaspora members to Ethiopian development is also manifest in related programs established by such international bodies as IOM, UNDP and the World Bank. The following section presents an overview of international organizations that have initiatives targeting the engagement of diaspora Africans in African capacity development, with a focus on their activities in Ethiopia, where applicable.

4.8 International Organizations’ Initiatives to Engage the Ethiopian Diaspora

4.8.1 International Organization for Migration

Established with the mandate of resettling European displaced persons, refugees and migrants at the end of World War II, IOM is the principal international organization addressing issues pertaining to migration. One of the program areas that IOM focuses on is migration and development, through which it addresses the issue of diaspora contributions to capacity development in their countries of origin. This includes projects regarding the return and reintegration of qualified nationals and the improvement of remittance management.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Tetey, 2002.

Tetey was referring to professionals based in Africa in general.

³⁷³ E-mail communication with Getahun Tafesse.

³⁷⁴ FIELD, 2005.

³⁷⁵ Mosca, 2005.

In Africa, IOM has over the years initiated several programs in a bid to address the shortages of skilled professionals caused by the brain drain. These include the Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals (RQAN), the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) and the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa.³⁷⁶

4.8.1.1 Return and Reintegration of Qualified African Nationals

RQAN³⁷⁷ was implemented in three phases between 1983 and 1999³⁷⁸ with a mandate to facilitate the return of skilled diaspora Africans to their countries of origin, with the aim of filling the capacity gap in local public and private sector institutions. RQAN provided financial and other support to participants under the condition that returnees committed to a minimum of two years and to effecting capacity transfer through training provided to their local counterparts. Assistance given to returnees included airfare, relocation allowances, initial salary support, and placement in positions suitable to their areas of expertise.³⁷⁹ In Ethiopia, RQAN began in 1995 with funding by the European Union. Although it covered returnees' travel and relocation expenses as well as supplying them with monthly salary supplements of up to US\$800 for a period of six to 12 months, it met with limited success – only 66 diaspora Ethiopians participated in RQAN – mainly due to diaspora professionals' disinterest in long-term or permanent placements.³⁸⁰

The RQAN program was widely criticised on several fronts, including:

- Its high cost relative to results yielded;³⁸¹
- The disconnect between diaspora members and their networks of resources formed in host countries that resulted upon their repatriation;³⁸²
- Lack of sustainability as governments and institutions in participating countries failed to take over once the IOM support period ended, partly due to the high cost of maintaining return programs,³⁸³ and
- Effectiveness of the program was only evaluated during its third phase.³⁸⁴

³⁷⁶ RQAN and MIDA are discussed in greater detail in the sections that immediately follow. The Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa was set up with the aim of facilitating dialogue and cooperation on migration policy issues amongst the governments of the Southern African Development Community. For more information, see <http://www.queensu.ca/samp/midsa/>.

³⁷⁷ One of several similar IOM programs worldwide, including RQNLA (Reintegration of Qualified Latin American Nationals) and RQA (Return of Qualified Afghans).

³⁷⁸ ENDA-TM, 2005.

The three phases lasted from 1983-1987, 1988-1991 and 1995 to 1999.

³⁷⁹ Mosca, 2005.

³⁸⁰ AHEAD, 2004.

³⁸¹ ENDA-TM, 2005; Wickramasekara, 2002.

Only 2,000 professionals in 41 African countries participated in RQAN, all phases combined.

³⁸² ENDA-TM, 2005.

³⁸³ Agunias, 2006 ; ENDA-TM, 2005; Wickramasekara, 2002.

³⁸⁴ ENDA-TM, 2005; Wickramasekara, 2002.

In the particular case of Ethiopia, a former volunteer with the program cited several obstacles faced by RQAN participants including: bureaucracy at all levels which impeded the participants' smooth settlement; a lengthy hiring process; inefficiencies in the provision of financial support; and the predominance of participants in the scientific field to the neglect of other fields.³⁸⁵

4.8.1.2 Migration for Development in Africa

In an effort to address the shortages of RQAN, IOM launched its MIDA program in 2001. Unlike its predecessor, MIDA seeks to encourage the mobility of people and resources instead of focusing on permanent physical relocations.³⁸⁶ With this in mind, MIDA seeks to help recipient countries achieve their development goals by strengthening their institutional capacities – in line with the priority sectors they have identified – through the facilitation of vital human and financial transfers from their respective diasporas.³⁸⁷ Based on IOM's experience with RQAN and in recognition of skilled migrants' preference for mobility, MIDA limits the length of its missions to a maximum of 12 months. Similarly to RQAN, participants are required to provide training to their local counterparts, in exchange of which the program covers airfare, health insurance, allowances, salary and, depending on length of stay, housing and transport costs.³⁸⁸

MIDA operates through the following mechanisms.³⁸⁹

- Permanent returns for those who express interest in such an option;
- One-time short-term missions;
- Sequenced short-term visits. These allow for the effective transfer of skills and knowledge;
- Virtual participation. MIDA recognizes the importance of ICTs as an effective means of knowledge and technology transfer and seeks to build capacity by using ICTs to facilitate access to resource and services that are not available in the home country as well as supporting virtual exchanges and partnerships; and
- Investments.

³⁸⁵ E-mail communication with an IOM volunteer regarding his personal experiences working with the organization in 1997.

³⁸⁶ Agunias, 2006; Wickramasekara, 2002.

³⁸⁷ Asmellash, 2006; ENDA-TM, 2005; Kwenin, 2004; Mosca, 2005.

³⁸⁸ ENDA-TM, 2005.

³⁸⁹ Kwenin, 2004.

Box 18. MIDA Operations³⁹⁰

- In host countries: identify available skills, financial and other resources of Africans in the diaspora.
- In home countries: identify priority skill needs and investment possibilities; compile assignments, job vacancies and investment opportunities; build synergies between all stakeholders.
- Within IOM: match identified skill needs with identified skills in the diaspora; establish and maintain an updated data bank of needs and skills identified; manage the transfer of skills and other resources of Africans in the diaspora for development programs in Africa; provide assistance where required with travel arrangements pre-departure; transit and on-arrival reception; and post-arrival adjustment.

As part of its current projects in Africa, IOM runs a MIDA program endorsed by the Government of Ethiopia that seeks to assist Ethiopian institutional capacity building through the temporary and permanent placements of skilled diaspora members as well as through virtual transfers of skills using ICTs.³⁹¹

A preliminary study on the potential for engagement of the Ethiopian diaspora in national development – titled “Research Report on Skills Inventory and Remittances Hows in Ethiopia” – was conducted in 2003 by IOM with the financial support of the Government of Italy. Following the encouraging results of the study – which found that the Ethiopian diaspora is highly educated and keen to participate in development efforts – IOM has established a country strategy for Ethiopia, which includes:³⁹²

- A general program to match the skills of interested diaspora individuals with the needs of governmental, educational and private institutions;
- A health program seeking to alleviate the effects of Ethiopia’s significant medical brain drain; and
- A youth pilot program targeting Ethiopian and Ghanaian youth in the diaspora to participate in exchange programs.

The MIDA-Ethiopia website³⁹³ was launched in March 2004 in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia with the aim of providing information for Ethiopians in the diaspora on various issues, including travel, employment in Ethiopia, business investments, etc. From information provided by respondents of an online questionnaire, MIDA-Ethiopia is compiling a database of Ethiopians in the diaspora, including their professional and educational qualifications. While the site received high interest when first launched,³⁹⁴ its lack of dynamic content and updated information

³⁹⁰ Kwenin, 2004.

³⁹¹ Asmellash, 2006; IOM, 2005.

³⁹² Interview with Cecilia Cantos.

³⁹³ IOM, “Mobilizing Ethiopians Living Abroad for the Development of Ethiopia” website.

³⁹⁴ Kwenin, quoted in Ethiopia Today Focus, 2004.

For instance, from March to August 2004, the MIDA-Ethiopia website registered about 22,000 Ethiopians in the diaspora.

relevant to Ethiopians in the diaspora has led to a decrease in its use. Other activities have included the creation of a job vacancies database, a sensitization workshop on remittances for investment, a technical assistance program to the Addis Ababa City Government's Investment Authority and the placement of two professors from the United States at Gondar and Debu Universities in Ethiopia.³⁹⁵

Challenges faced by MIDA-Ethiopia have included a high turnover rate of civil servants which disrupts ongoing projects as it undermines the establishment of long-term relationships and lack of response from recipient institutions involving several instances where universities did not respond to possible matches. Funding problems have also stalled some of MIDA-Ethiopia's activities.³⁹⁶

4.8.2 United Nations Development Programme

Under the umbrella of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program since 1994, UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) program provides short-term consultancy opportunities of one to three months for highly skilled diaspora members that are interested in serving in home country institutions.³⁹⁷ TOKTEN was established in 1977 with the aim of alleviating the burden placed on developing countries by the brain drain. With a budget of US\$20 million, TOKTEN operates in 40 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.³⁹⁸ TOKTEN specifically targets those who are highly educated – with a master's degree and above – and possess extensive professional experience. They replace the expatriate consultants who would normally fill these posts, at a lower cost, since they volunteer their expertise in return of which they are provided with a stipend, airfare and medical insurance.³⁹⁹ In Africa, TOKTEN operates in several countries, including Algeria, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. The example of the TOKTEN-Mali project is given in Box 19.

Box 19. University of Mali TOKTEN Project⁴⁰⁰

Through TOKTEN-Mali – a collaboration between the Government of Mali, UNDP and UNESCO⁴⁰¹ – diaspora Malian professors participated in 12 missions at the University of Mali in 2000-2001. These assignments sought to alleviate the university's acute shortage of lecturers and researchers.

In Ethiopia, there is no TOKTEN program in place, although one is currently under consideration. However, a National UNV scheme, in line with Ethiopia's national capacity building strategy was launched in September 2003 in collaboration between the

³⁹⁵ Kwenin, 2004.

³⁹⁶ Interview with Cecilia Cantos.

³⁹⁷ Newland and Patrick, 2004; UNESCO, 2004.

³⁹⁸ ENDA-TM, 2005.

³⁹⁹ Agunias, 2006; Newland and Patrick, 2004.

⁴⁰⁰ El-Khawas, 2004; Newland and Patrick, 2004; UNESCO, 2004.

⁴⁰¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Government of Ethiopia and UNDP.⁴⁰² This program places Ethiopian volunteers in agencies at various levels of government in a bid to fill identified capacity shortages.⁴⁰³ Currently, some 120 volunteers assigned in various regions of the country are working in a “*diverse range of fields including agriculture, health, environment, education, water and environment, and ICT at federal, regional and woreda levels will be carried out.*”⁴⁰⁴ Although the National UNV is not a program targeting diaspora engagement, it could potentially serve as a mechanism to do so.

4.8.3 World Bank

Unlike IOM and UNDP, the World Bank’s focus in the area of migration and development has mainly been on financial remittances. In this regard, the World Bank has been most active in conducting and advocating policy oriented research on remittances, including how to increase the volume of remittances and how to direct them toward productive investments.⁴⁰⁵ However, through the work of the World Bank Institute,⁴⁰⁶ it has began looking at the issue in a more holistic manner, including research and pilot programs on capacity building through human capital transfers. “Knowledge for Development” is a special initiative of the World Bank Institute which, through its Diasporas of Highly Skilled and Migration of Talent program, provides support to countries that seek to develop networks of their highly skilled nationals in the diaspora in order that they may enhance the home country’s capacity for innovation as well as reduce some of the effects of brain drain. Several such pilot projects are currently underway, including GlobalScot in Scotland as well as programs in Argentina, Chile and Mexico.⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, the Bank’s International Migration and Development Research program has been instrumental in expanding much needed knowledge on migration and development issues through research focusing on how migration and remittances impact development; the brain drain; temporary migration; as well as on the links between migration, trade and FDI.⁴⁰⁸

In Africa, the World Bank’s initiative on mobilizing the African diaspora for development started at the beginning of 2005 upon the request of AU for assistance in mobilizing, coordinating and channelling the efforts of African diaspora groups and other stakeholders towards Africa’s capacity building. Combined with active interest expressed by several diaspora African groups to establish closer ties with their countries of origin, this gave the World Bank the impetus to start examining how it could support channels through which the diaspora could contribute to African development efforts in a systematic manner. As a

⁴⁰² UNDP, 2003.

⁴⁰³ UNDP-Ethiopia, “United Nations Volunteers” website.

⁴⁰⁴ UNDP, 2003:12.

⁴⁰⁵ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

⁴⁰⁶ The World Bank Institute is the capacity development arm of the World Bank. It delivers training and knowledge sharing activities to developing countries.

⁴⁰⁷ World Bank, “Diasporas of Highly Skilled and Migration of Talent” website.

⁴⁰⁸ Fontaine, 2005.

first step, the World Bank conducted case studies on diaspora organizations from selected African countries,⁴⁰⁹ followed by a series of videoconferences held in Spring 2005 with select diaspora communities with the aim of introducing the Bank's initiative on Africa and discussing means through which the World Bank and other donors could support diaspora efforts. A working group which gathered participants from various African communities then met to brainstorm a plan of action on not only how to mobilize African diaspora efforts but, more importantly, on how to support, coordinate, and scale up existing efforts and ensure sustainability.⁴¹⁰

Based on the priorities identified by Ethiopian diaspora groups through a videoconference organized by the World Bank – such as ICTs for virtual participation; missions by diaspora health practitioners to provide various medical services as well as build the capacity of the Ethiopian health system; investment and trade facilitation – a proposal was circulated for a pilot project involving selected active diaspora groups to collaborate on capacity building ventures in the Ethiopian health and education sectors, with the support of the World Bank. However, this proposal did not come to fruition due to divisions among the diaspora groups.⁴¹¹

4.8.4 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) does not possess any program that seeks to engage the Ethiopian diaspora. However, an innovative initiative to alleviate the brain drain in five other African countries deserves mention. The UNESCO/Hewlett Packard joint project “Piloting Solutions for Reversing Brain Drain into Brain Gain for Africa” was announced in November 2006. Its aim is to help reduce brain drain in Africa by providing grid computing technology⁴¹² to universities in Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Zimbabwe. This will allow for the establishment of “*links between researchers who have stayed in their home countries and those who have left, connecting scientists to international colleagues, research networks and potential funding organizations.*”⁴¹³ This program, developed by UNESCO's Education Sector in response to requests by its member states, is a commendable initiative since, not only does it allow for virtual diaspora participation, but it also provides an incentive for local researchers and teachers to remain in their home countries as it gives them access – without leaving their universities – to global research networks and resources.

⁴⁰⁹ Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.

⁴¹⁰ The researcher was part of this working group; it met in Washington, DC in June 2005.

⁴¹¹ Researcher's personal experience.

⁴¹² “*Grid computing is a hardware and software infrastructure that clusters and integrates high-end computer networks, databases and scientific instruments from multiple sources to form a virtual environment in which users can work collaboratively.*” (UNESCO, 2006)

⁴¹³ UNESCO, 2006.

At a global level, UNESCO has established the “Diaspora Knowledge Networks” project through its International Migration program. This initiative seeks to examine the diaspora option for development, with the intention of assessing the extent to which highly educated diaspora members do, in actual fact, contribute to capacity building in their home countries through skills and knowledge transfer schemes.⁴¹⁴

4.8.5 International Labour Organization

ILO’s program in Ethiopia is focused on strengthening the capacity of the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in terms of legislation and practices regarding domestic workers’ labour rights.⁴¹⁵ However, its interest in the actual and potential contribution of diaspora communities to development in their countries of origin is manifest in projects and activities such as an extensive research project on skilled migration from developing countries⁴¹⁶ as well as a technical cooperation project on “Labour Migration and Development in West Africa.”⁴¹⁷

As the IOM survey on “Engaging Diasporas as Agents for Development” indicated, partnerships with international organizations can enhance developing countries’ efforts to exploit effectively resources available in the diaspora through the provision of financial support as well as good international practices. However, the onus to establish effective programs to attract the diaspora remains with the home countries.⁴¹⁸ In addition to assistance from international organizations, support provided by host countries to their resident diaspora communities is an important factor in facilitating the use of diaspora resources to fill capacity gaps in their countries of origin. In that regard, even as African countries are increasingly turning towards their populations abroad to contribute to national growth, the engagement of diaspora Africans residing in the developed world has also caught the interest of host country governments and societies, “*as immigrant communities establish themselves, grow in number, and begin to reflect on how they can contribute to development in their homeland.*”⁴¹⁹

We now turn to the case of Canada, a traditionally immigrant receiving country where the role of diaspora communities in international development cooperation and their potential influence in shaping Canada’s profile abroad has begun to receive attention.

⁴¹⁴ UNESCO, “Diaspora Knowledge Networks” website.

⁴¹⁵ Interview with Christina Holmgren.

⁴¹⁶ ILO, “Skilled Labour Migration (the ‘Brain Drain’) from Developing Countries: Analysis of Impact and Policy Issues” website.

⁴¹⁷ ILO, 2003.

⁴¹⁸ IOM, 2005.

⁴¹⁹ Forget, 2004:2.

5. Host Country Engagement: The Canadian Perspective

The participation of diaspora groups and individuals in home country development activities depends not only on factors related to their countries of origin, but also on the host countries' environment. Indeed, "*the host country government, markets, private sector firms, academic institutions and mainstream international development organizations affect transnational migrant communities' capabilities and capacity for engagement in homeland development.*"⁴²⁰

5.1 Diaspora Communities in Canada

5.1.1 Developing Country Diasporas in Canada

Canada is a country built on immigration, with over 5.6 million foreign born residents. Recent immigrants to Canada increasingly stem from developing countries; indeed, compared with Australia and the United States – the other two traditionally immigrant receiving countries – Canada admits a higher proportion of developing country immigrants relative to its population.⁴²¹

Box 20. Canadian Foreign Born Population, 2001⁴²²

All countries	5,647,125
Developing areas:	
- Asia	2,072,690
- Latin America and Caribbean	625,110
- Africa	304,680

Immigrants to Canada are divided into three categories: those admitted for family reunification purposes; refugee-class immigrants; and economic migrants admitted under a point system designed to attract skilled workers from abroad.⁴²³

Although Canada has a long history of immigration, it is only of late that the Canadian government and society at large have started reflecting on the immigrant population's potential in advancing Canada's foreign engagement. The state of disengagement of the federal government with diaspora groups and the urgent need to establish linkages with them was recently acknowledged by a member of the government.⁴²⁴ While the focus of the government's engagement with immigrant communities appears to be on ensuring their effective integration in Canadian life, this renewed interest opens the door for the Canadian

⁴²⁰ Robinson, 2005:47.

This is also echoed in COMPAS, 2004; Newland and Patrick, 2004; University for Peace, 2006.

⁴²¹ Robinson, 2005.

⁴²² MPI, "Country and Comparative Data" website.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ Conservative Member of Parliament Rahim Jaffer, in Berthiaume, 2006.

government and public to start thinking in earnest about how diaspora communities can contribute to the development of their homelands. Indeed, it has been noted that:

“While helping diaspora groups in Canada and other host countries is one aspect of the issue, another is the impact they have on their home countries. Many members of diasporas regularly send money back to their native countries, called remittances, to support family and friends. Others may return to share knowledge, expertise and values they acquired while living in Canada. According to Carlo Dade, senior policy adviser at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, diaspora groups in Canada have traditionally contributed far more money for development assistance in their home countries than donor countries. In the case of Haiti, he said, ‘the diaspora is keeping the country alive.’ Private contributions have, until recently, amounted to six times more money flowing into the beleaguered Caribbean nation than through international development efforts, Mr. Dade said.”⁴²⁵

Recent diaspora-related activities – including increased interest from academic and policy circles – attest to a growing awareness of the role that transnational communities in Canada can play in promoting Canada’s profile and interests abroad while considering the contribution to development that immigrants from lower income countries could make.⁴²⁶

5.1.2 Engagement of African-Canadian Diasporas in African Development

African-born Canadians are estimated to number 304,680,⁴²⁷ representing around 5.4% of all immigrants to Canada, based on figures for 2001. Despite the relatively small size of the community, many in the African diaspora are thinking about their role in African development and several groups have already started mobilizing. Canadian-based African diaspora organizations active in capacity development endeavours of their home countries include AHEAD; the *Association de Solidarité Canada-Maroc*; the *Association Marocaine des Professionnels et des Scientifiques de Québec*; the Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association; the *Force Leadership Africain*; People to People Aid Organization – Canada; the Nigeria-Canada Development Association of British-Columbia; and the South African Rainbow Association.⁴²⁸ While Africans in the diaspora have traditionally contributed to their homelands through the transfers of remittances to families and friends who remained behind, they now increasingly seek to play a more active development role, fuelled by a feeling of moral responsibility to “give back”⁴²⁹ as well as

⁴²⁵ Berthiaume, 2006.

⁴²⁶ Discussed in greater detail in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

⁴²⁷ MPI, “Country and Comparative Data” website.

⁴²⁸ Selected active Ethiopian and African diaspora groups – based in Canada as elsewhere in the world – are briefly profiled in Appendices 3 and 4.

⁴²⁹ Ainalem Tebeje, Vice-President of AHEAD, quoted in UNITAR, 2006:8. See also the findings of AHEAD, 2004.

the interest displayed by African governments to formally engage them as development partners.

As noted above, awareness of the potential of Canadian-based diaspora communities for capacity development in poorer areas of the world is a fairly new phenomenon. In addition, most of the interest and efforts in this regard have centred on Latin American and Asian diasporas, who are older and possess higher visibility in Canada than does their African counterpart. This is not only due to their larger size but, more importantly, to their higher level of unity and organization also.⁴³⁰ Thus, the actual and potential contribution of diaspora Africans to their homelands has not been as readily recognized in Canada as it has been elsewhere in the developed world – notably in Europe – nor has it received as much attention as Latin American and Asian communities in Canada have.

Even with little or no institutional assistance for action in their homelands, several African diaspora groups and individuals are successfully involved in practical development projects in their countries of origin. However, “*the dominant form of engagement has been ‘people to people’, small groups of individuals who engage in sector specific voluntary work, such as HIV prevention in Ethiopia.*”⁴³¹ This is because lack of resources and capacity restrict the African diaspora to small scale, fragmented and volunteer-run activities, limiting its potential for significant and sustainable impact on development.⁴³² Support from the international community at large – including home countries and African and international organizations – as well as from host governments, such as Canada, would enable a more effective utilization of African diaspora resources for African development.

The extent and manner in which diaspora members in Canada participate in activities in their countries of origin is affected by policies and programs put in place by the Government of Canada as well as initiatives of other international development players, such as volunteer cooperation and other development agencies, educational institutions, professional associations and policy oriented establishments. While this research’s focus is on mechanisms to facilitate African diaspora engagement, the following sections on Canadian governmental and non-governmental initiatives regarding diaspora engagement in home country development efforts discuss issues related to diaspora engagement in Canada in general, as the field is not well developed enough to allow for separate treatment. Issues and recommendations specific to African engagement will be included as appropriate.

⁴³⁰ A call for unity among African diaspora groups, necessary in order for the community to raise its profile and exert more influence, is made in section 6.2.

⁴³¹ Ainalem Tebeje, Vice-President of AHEAD, quoted in UNITAR, 2006:8.

⁴³² AHEAD, 2004.

5.2 Canadian Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement in Africa

5.2.1 Canadian Policy on International Development Cooperation

The Canadian government's recognition of "*the uniqueness of Canada's diversity and its multiculturalism as a major advantage in a globalized and rapidly changing world*" is articulated in its International Policy Statement (IPS).⁴³³ As concerns the specific issue of diaspora engagement, one of the recommendations of IPS is to "*support the efforts of Canadian diasporas to forge transnational political, economic and cultural links*";⁴³⁴ which, if acted upon, could significantly strengthen Canada's influence and profile abroad.⁴³⁵

The section dedicated to Canada's international development cooperation policy states that "*Canada's role in development cooperation cannot be defined exclusively on the basis of self-interest*,"⁴³⁶ adding the need to consider the needs of development partners, especially those in the poorest countries while highlighting Canada's sense of global citizenship, which it notes is reflected, among other means, "*through the human ties of Canada's many diaspora communities to their countries of origin*."⁴³⁷

This indicates a growing awareness of diaspora communities' potential as partners in Canada's international development endeavours. However, as Rudi Robinson of the North-South Institute notes⁴³⁸ "*IPS-Development appears foggy as to how to mesh international development cooperation strategy for poverty reduction with the development resources embedded in these communities, or how to engage transnational migrant communities as partners in development cooperation*."⁴³⁹ Indeed – as pointed out by Robinson and as the findings of primary research conducted in Canada for the present study confirm – the emphasis of Canadian international development cooperation policy and practices remains squarely on government partnership with mainstream organizations. This lack of active engagement of diaspora communities might be evidence of the difficulty in "*determining*

⁴³³ Mafinezam, 2005:3.

IPS, which came out in April 2005, details Canada's foreign policy in the areas of diplomacy, defence, development and commerce.

⁴³⁴ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, "Canada's International Policy Statement – Overview – Changing How We Work" website.

⁴³⁵ Mafinezam, 2005.

⁴³⁶ CIDA, 2005:1.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ In his seminal study that seeks to go beyond the traditional focus on the integration of migrants in Canada and argues that migrant communities, in light of the domestic and international policy implications of their rise and spread as well as their actual and potential roles in the national growth efforts of their home countries, be considered by the Canadian mainstream international development sector as full partners in development cooperation.

⁴³⁹ Robinson, 2005:182.

the modality of engaging transnational migrant communities as partners in development cooperation” or the government’s “[ambivalence] about such partnership.”⁴⁴⁰

5.2.2 Canadian Policy on Diaspora Engagement

Despite the growing interest that Canada’s diverse make-up is attracting and the nascent awareness of the role of diaspora organizations in home country development initiatives – notably by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)⁴⁴¹ – and diaspora groups’ thrust for involvement in development endeavours, an official Canadian policy on diaspora engagement does not exist. For instance, although CIDA informally recognizes the positive contributions that diaspora organizations may make to international development and, in some instances, has expressed increased interest in involving diaspora organizations in its operations, there is nothing in place exclusively to guide their engagement in a systematic manner.⁴⁴² In this regard, Canada lags behind other developed countries. Certain European countries in particular have taken multiple proactive transnational policy initiatives that seek to involve immigrant communities in the development of their countries of origin.⁴⁴³

One concern mentioned in considering the elaboration of a federal policy on diaspora and diaspora engagement may be the possible resistance of some in the diaspora to the idea of being targeted for Canadian development efforts separately from the general population. Indeed, new Canadians might resent being designated as diasporas or take exception to the assumption that they are obligated to engage in the affairs of the countries they left behind, sentiments often influenced by the conditions that led to their migration in the first place. While the concern that the government may have about foisting the diaspora identity on immigrants to Canada is valid, let us note that diaspora identity is self-declared; thus, policies and practices supportive of diaspora engagement need only implicate those interested in actively organizing for development in their homelands. Another consideration relates to the perceived conflict of interest between Canada’s domestic policy of immigrant integration into Canadian society, such as that pursued by the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage,⁴⁴⁴ with a potential international development policy that would seek to specifically engage diasporas in their countries of origin.

However, there is room at the nexus of Canada’s multiculturalism, international development and immigration priorities for policy options as regards the diaspora. In fact, an effective diaspora engagement policy cannot be formulated separately from the above

⁴⁴⁰ Robinson, 2005:182-183.

⁴⁴¹ CIDA is Canada’s lead agency for development assistance.

⁴⁴² Interview with CIDA representative.

⁴⁴³ Interview with Marjan Montazemi.

⁴⁴⁴ Canada became, in 1971, the first country in the world to adopt an official multiculturalism policy which recognizes – as official social policy – the rights of immigrants to maintain their cultural identity as they integrate in the Canadian society.

and could potentially reinforce their respective mandates.⁴⁴⁵ This was highlighted by participants at the recently held UN-affiliated University for Peace's expert forum on the role of diasporas in capacity building for peace and development, who, in their call for concrete national and international policies to ensure effective diaspora engagement, noted that:

*“Mobilizing ethnic newcomers to support a major public policy priority such as international development assistance and other aspects of foreign relations is not only beneficial to homeland development and diaspora capacity building but can generate a sense of belonging and allegiance to their new homeland.”*⁴⁴⁶

A formal policy on diaspora engagement would firmly establish the issue on Canada's international development agenda. Canada's efforts to reorient its overall development cooperation policy towards the “use [of] non-aid instruments in support of development cooperation goals,”⁴⁴⁷ open the door for systematic facilitation of diaspora engagement in assistance provided to developing countries, including those in Africa. This would be a well considered measure as it would align Canadian international development policy and practices with African governments and regional bodies' vision and strategic plan for the inclusion of African diasporas in continental development endeavours.

5.2.3 Canadian Governmental Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement

Although an official policy on diaspora engagement does not exist, there are a few Canadian government initiatives that either directly address the diaspora or offer an opportunity for diaspora organizations to engage the government through mechanisms established for other purposes.

5.2.3.1 Canadian International Development Agency

CIDA, as the leading Canadian agency for international development assistance, is central to any venture that may facilitate the participation of interested members of the diaspora in various activities in their countries of origin. As mentioned above, CIDA does not have a policy geared exclusively towards engaging diaspora communities. However, a growing number of divisions within the agency are engaging with diaspora groups in various ways and CIDA is currently examining the issue from a policy perspective, based partly on its

⁴⁴⁵ Mafinezam, 2005; University for Peace, 2006.

⁴⁴⁶ University for Peace, 2006:24.

⁴⁴⁷ CIDA, 2005:5.

Non-aid measures include debt relief; lower tariffs to facilitate access to Canadian markets for developing countries; provision of affordable medicine, such as HIV/AIDS treatments to African countries.

current practices as regards diaspora engagement.⁴⁴⁸ CIDA-led initiatives of relevance to diaspora engagement are reviewed in this section.

5.2.3.1.1 Haitian Diaspora Pilot Project

The Haiti Desk of CIDA's Americas Branch has been the most proactive department in terms of examining the potential role the agency can play in facilitating diaspora engagement. A pilot initiative involving the Haitian diaspora in Canada is currently underway, with preliminary results expected approximately a year from now. The assessment of this initiative will likely be useful in determining the modalities of further CIDA engagement with the diaspora. It should be noted that this pilot project did not come about as a result of a new policy but rather at the discretion of the concerned regional division, in part as a response to the interest displayed by the Haitian community.⁴⁴⁹

5.2.3.1.2 Financial Support for Diaspora-Related Activities

CIDA provides financial support for diaspora-related activities such as conferences and research activities. For instance, in 2005, it sponsored a series of Latin American and Caribbean diaspora conferences with the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL).⁴⁵⁰ It also provides funds for policy oriented research initiatives, such as the South African Migration Project, which studies issues regarding migration and development and provides related expertise and training in eight Southern African countries.⁴⁵¹

5.2.3.1.3 Voluntary Sector Fund

An avenue that may facilitate diaspora engagement is the Voluntary Sector Fund (VSF) launched by CIDA in June 2006. In contrast to the long-standing CIDA Voluntary Sector Program, which provides financial support for larger programs, VSF focuses on funding smaller development projects – of up to CDN\$500,000 – realized through partnerships between Canadian organizations and those in developing countries.

With an annual budget of CDN\$20 million, VSF is particularly attractive to smaller organizations, including diaspora associations, engaged in one or more of CIDA's five priority sectors.⁴⁵² Indeed, VSF is more accessible to smaller organizations than were previous funds as it relaxes certain requirements. For example, non-profit organizations that have an annual revenue of less than CDN\$100,000 may make up to 25% of their required

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with CIDA representative.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ Zaleski, 2006. For more information, see section 5.3.3 on FOCAL.

⁴⁵¹ SAMP, website.

⁴⁵² Governance, health, basic education, private sector development and environment, with gender being a crosscutting theme.

cost sharing contribution in kind. VSF also allows joint proposals, providing the opportunity for newer organizations to partner with more established ones and thus establish a track record with CIDA. Moreover, organizations that have never received funding from CIDA need only demonstrate annual revenues of at least CDN\$20,000 obtained from Canadian sources – compared to CDN\$50,000 for other organizations – in order to qualify for funding.⁴⁵³

It is also important to note that diaspora associations were specifically included in the series of consultations that took place with organizations during VSF's planning phase. Additionally, CIDA is actively promoting the fund and is working with all seven Provincial Councils for International Cooperation to provide training sessions to organizations that want to avail themselves of this fund on how to apply for VSF funding as well as integrate issues related to gender equality, environmental sustainability and results based management in their activities.⁴⁵⁴

5.2.3.1.4 Canada Corps/Office for Democratic Governance

Canada Corps was established in 2004 with the aim of promoting good governance and institution building in developing countries through the sharing of Canadian governance expertise. It combined new and existing governmental and non-governmental programs to send qualified Canadians overseas under one umbrella organization. In October 2006, Canada Corps was absorbed into the Office for Democratic Governance which has “*a specialized mandate to promote freedom and democracy, human rights, the rule of law and open and accountable public institutions in developing countries, [...] [with the aim] to enhance aid effectiveness by leveraging Canada’s comparative advantage and establishing partnerships with key Canadian experts, organizations, institutions and other government departments whose work focuses on democratic governance.*”⁴⁵⁵ While the effectiveness or even desirability of transferring “governance”, “democracy” and “human rights” is subject to debate,⁴⁵⁶ such a set-up, which has so far not made any efforts to target diaspora expertise, could be used to provide a mechanism for diaspora engagement in the capacity building endeavours of African governments. Similarly, Industry Canada’s NetCorps program, which sends Canadian youth interns to assist developing country organizations in activities related to information technology,⁴⁵⁷ could be of use when considering modalities for diaspora engagement.

⁴⁵³ Interview with CIDA representative.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ CIDA, “Office for Democratic Governance” website.

⁴⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion on the challenges of transferring governance and democracy ideals and practices from one place to another, including a critique of the Canada Corps concept, see Smillie 2004.

⁴⁵⁷ NetCorps Canada International, website.

5.2.3.1.5 Initiatives Related to Remittances

CIDA has taken some steps to support research on remittance flows, notably studies on the modalities, volume and impact of Latin American and Caribbean diasporas' remittances from Canada. Moreover, Canada has signed an agreement with the Indian government that would “*extend remittance services and expand the available products that connect the two countries in this area, focusing on reducing the transaction costs of remittances, which now vary between 10 and 17 percent.*”⁴⁵⁸

5.2.3.2 International Development Research Centre

IDRC plays a leading role in supporting research capacities in developing countries. It is mainly focused on providing funding and expert advice to developing country researchers working on issues that they identify themselves as being crucial to their communities. Through its Canadian Partnerships program,⁴⁵⁹ the Centre provides research grants to Canadian-based organizations working on international development issues.⁴⁶⁰

IDRC does not have a policy or programs that specifically target diaspora groups. However, fully cognizant of the importance of working with “*a wide constituency of groups and organizations in Canada that are interested in the contribution of knowledge for development,*”⁴⁶¹ the organization has expressed interest in following the work of, and potentially partnering with, diaspora organizations that mobilize around research for development and capacity building in Africa.⁴⁶² In February 2000, IDRC – through its African Regional Office for West and Central Africa – collaborated with IOM and UNECA in the organization of the Regional Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa. This meeting explored measures to reverse the African brain drain, including the effective utilization of diaspora resources. Thought and importance given to the subject of diaspora participation in African development is also evident in the inclusion of a special session on ways and means to facilitate diaspora Africans' contributions to such research in the regional consultation that IDRC organized in January 2004 to design its Strategic 5-year Program Framework for Sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁶³

IDRC is receptive to sponsoring – through its Canadian Partnerships program – research-related activities of Canadian organizations on a wide range of development issues. Thus, although IDRC does not expect to establish a “diaspora program” *per se*,⁴⁶⁴ this opens an

⁴⁵⁸ Mafinezam, 2005:4.

⁴⁵⁹ Established in the early 1990s to broaden IDRC's relations with the Canadian development community.

⁴⁶⁰ IDRC, website.

⁴⁶¹ Forget, 2004:2.

⁴⁶² Forget, 2004.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ IDRC does not expect to have a program focused on the diaspora as the organization does not divide its programs based on geography or on selected groups of people (e.g., diaspora, children, indigenous people,

avenue of support for diaspora groups that may be interested in studying international development issues. The Canadian Partnerships program has over the years supported a number of meetings and consultations organized by various diaspora groups interested in how they might contribute to their countries of origin, for example in post-conflict reconstruction, through developing information infrastructures, establishing science and engineering partnerships, supporting public education, etc.⁴⁶⁵ In 2002, it responded positively to the first request received from a Canadian diaspora organization – AHEAD – to undertake systematic research on the role of the African diaspora in capacity building. The research results⁴⁶⁶ were disseminated widely and followed by a roundtable⁴⁶⁷ and an African Diaspora Community Forum⁴⁶⁸ which brought together various stakeholders in order to further the discussion on African diaspora engagement.

IDRC principally supports research carried out by institutions or networks in lower income countries, in a number of well-defined program areas. As a counterpoint, the Canadian Partnerships program responds to initiatives proposed by Canadian organizations across a wide range of development-related topics. The criteria to qualify for a Canadian Partnerships grant apply equally to any legally registered Canadian organization, whether or not it is a diaspora organization. More generally, partnerships with organizations from developing countries allow Canadian organizations – including diaspora associations – potential access to all IDRC programs, thus broadening their opportunities to obtain funding, providing the proposals fit within program priorities and meet requirements in terms of relevance and usefulness, research methods, etc.⁴⁶⁹

5.2.3.3 Canadian Heritage – Multiculturalism Program

Although Canadian Heritage does not fund projects that are international in scope, this study explored the possibility for this agency – through its Multiculturalism Program – to fund the local component of a potential international project or the internal capacity building initiatives of diaspora associations. Canadian Heritage’s Multiculturalism Program does not have any programs that are specifically geared towards supporting diaspora associations in Canada. Rather, its “*funding program focuses on the issue the group has identified they want to address rather than who the group is.*”⁴⁷⁰ Thus, applications from a wide range of non-profit organizations, including diaspora associations, are accepted for

etc.) but focuses rather on thematic issues (e.g., Peace, Conflict and Development; or, Women’s Rights and Citizenship; etc.)

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Gisèle Morin-Labatut.

⁴⁶⁶ See AHEAD, 2004. The present study is also supported by IDRC.

⁴⁶⁷ Stakeholder Roundtable: Engaging the African Diaspora in Africa’s Capacity Building Efforts, 12 November 2004, Ottawa, Canada.

⁴⁶⁸ AHEAD, SARA-O and South African High Commission in Ottawa, 2005.

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with Gisèle Morin-Labatut.

⁴⁷⁰ E-mail communication with a program official at Canadian Heritage.

projects that seek to “*address at least one program objective;*⁴⁷¹ *emphasize social development; and, highlight community initiative, partnership and self-help.*”⁴⁷² While some diaspora activities – as long as they take place inside Canada – might qualify for funding under this program,⁴⁷³ the focus is decidedly on the integration of newcomers to Canadian society rather than on their participation in development activities in home countries. Moreover, the program does not fund organizational capacity development, including staff salaries, or office overhead costs.⁴⁷⁴

Notwithstanding the above, there is a case to be made for Canadian Heritage to indirectly support diaspora engagement through its efforts to integrate immigrants in Canadian life, as, for migrants to become effective partners for development, they must first be fully and functionally integrated into Canadian society.

5.3 Canadian Non-Governmental Initiatives to Enable Diaspora Engagement

In addition to reviewing government initiatives, the study also examined other initiatives that would promote the contribution to development that diaspora Africans in Canada could make to their countries of origin. In this regard, selected volunteer cooperation and other development agencies as well as professional associations were consulted. In thinking about professional sending programs, it is particularly useful to take into consideration voluntary cooperation agencies (VCAs) as they possess expertise in sending personnel and related logistical issues.

5.3.1 Canadian Development Organizations⁴⁷⁵

The examination of non-governmental entities listed above revolved around two main lines of inquiry:

- a. Interest and practices as regards diaspora engagement:
 - Is diaspora engagement a novel idea or an issue that is known and considered?
 - What, if any, are the current practices and interest as regards integrating diaspora potential in various Canadian international development endeavours?
 - If there have been efforts to engage the diaspora, what have been the lessons learned? If there have not been any, why not?

⁴⁷¹ Which includes, *inter alia*, the promotion of ethno-racial minorities’ participation in Canadian society and public decision making.

⁴⁷² Canadian Heritage – Multiculturalism, 2003:2.

⁴⁷³ For example, studies that seek to increase the knowledge and understanding of ethnic and racial diversity in Canada may be funded by the Multiculturalism Program. This could provide an opportunity for diaspora associations to conduct background research on diaspora communities in Canada.

⁴⁷⁴ Canadian Heritage – Multiculturalism, 2003.

⁴⁷⁵ Professional associations that have international placement programs have been included in this category.

- What are the issues to be considered when trying to engage diasporas in the programs of mainstream Canadian development organizations?

b. In the special case of VCAs, lessons to be learned from their years of experience in sending volunteer cooperants⁴⁷⁶ as well as possibilities for partnership with diaspora organizations interested in sending qualified volunteers to their countries of origin were discussed:

- What can be learned from VCAs' vast experience in placing volunteer cooperants abroad?
- What mechanisms established for other various purposes could be used for diaspora-related activities?
- If a diaspora organization were interested in mobilizing and sending experts to their home countries, what type of partnership or support could VCAs provide?
- What criteria would VCAs use in considering a diaspora organization as a possible partner?

5.3.1.1 Interest and Practice as Regards Diaspora Engagement

Although there are multiple initiatives involving Canadian non-governmental institutions in international development work in Africa – most of which are implemented with financial support from CIDA⁴⁷⁷ – these have yet to include cooperation with African diaspora individuals and associations. All of the Canadian development organizations interviewed for this study expressed interest in diaspora engagement. Many do recognize the value added in integrating diaspora members in their programs and certain among them have, in fact, already started thinking about the potential role that African diasporas may play in Canadian development endeavours on the continent. However, to date, this has not translated into practical action to engage the African diaspora.

Despite their size, their experience and the length of time that Canadian NGOs have been involved in African development ventures, there are gaps in institutionalized cooperation with the African diaspora, although some organizations – such as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Canada⁴⁷⁸ – have taken concrete steps towards formally engaging developing country diasporas. In Quebec, the Haitian diaspora is receiving emerging attention from organizations such as Oxfam-Québec and the *Centre d'Etude et de Coopération Internationale*.⁴⁷⁹ Moreover, it is interesting that, of the 14 non-governmental institutions approached in Canada to participate in the study, seven did not respond despite repeated

⁴⁷⁶ A cooperant is a person engaged for service in a developing country or a country in transition.

⁴⁷⁷ CIDA, “Volunteer Cooperation Program” website.

⁴⁷⁸ VSO's activities are presented in section 5.3.1.4.

⁴⁷⁹ Interview with Theo Breedon.

attempts to contact them, a non-response rate that may in itself be indicative of the level of institutional disinterest as regards diaspora engagement.

Box 21. Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada: Diaspora Engagement Activities⁴⁸⁰

AUCC – which represents 92 Canadian universities and colleges – aims to facilitate the development of public policy on higher education and to encourage cooperation among various local and international institutions. Although AUCC recognizes that diaspora members' contributions are beneficial to the efficiency and success of its international projects, it does not have a program that focuses specifically on diaspora engagement. Instead, it routinely seeks out and integrates qualified diaspora individuals in the expert teams that are sent abroad.

AUCC has two ongoing programs in which diaspora involvement is sought and monitored:

- The University Partnership for Cooperation and Development, a large scale, multi-year project funded by CIDA, in which 20 to 25% of project directors stem from diaspora communities; and
- The Students for Development program, established to engage senior level students in international volunteering projects, and which encourages and monitors the participation of diaspora students.

Additionally, a study on the importance and impact of diaspora participation in international development projects and research will soon be undertaken.

5.3.1.2 Constraints in Enabling Diaspora Engagement

Several reasons that explain the constraints to a fuller integration of diaspora groups and individuals in the structures of mainstream development organizations were frequently stated. The potential for controversy in programs singling out diaspora members for engagement presents one such obstacle. Resistance to the idea of selecting diaspora members for participation in placements abroad, solely based on the fact that they are diasporas, was expressed by a few organizations. For instance, Isabelle Legaré of the AUCC noted that the AUCC needs to be very careful with its members when it comes to projects targeting diaspora engagement because academia functions based on merit and universities and faculties may not accept what could be perceived as displays of favouritism toward diaspora faculty members or students to the detriment of others. This explains why AUCC favours a system that seeks to engage diaspora members within existing programs rather than establishing initiatives that are specific to them. In addition, a system of integration is also beneficial to non-diaspora faculty and students as it affords them the opportunity to learn from their diaspora counterparts.⁴⁸¹

Moreover, organizations face difficulty in establishing exactly who the diaspora is, how to engage specific groups as well as in gauging the actual contribution that diasporas can

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Isabelle Legaré.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

make. A third difficulty stems from the lack of capacity to support programs that target the diaspora. Indeed, several NGOs expressed the need for additional funding specifically dedicated to a diaspora program – should such a project be considered – noting that staff is already overstretched trying to support existing programs. A more flexible partnership funding agreement with CIDA – which financially supports most international development work implemented by these agencies, through its Canadian Partnership Branch – was thus considered instrumental to the introduction of diaspora programming.⁴⁸² Finally, the need for a match between diaspora groups seeking to get involved and the development focus of each organization is another consideration. For example, Fodé Beaudet of CUSO observed that formal cooperation with any diaspora group would, of necessity, have to fall within the context of issues and countries that the organization focuses on.⁴⁸³

5.3.1.3 Potential Role of Volunteer Cooperation Agencies

Even in the absence of formal diaspora programming, mainstream international development organizations – and especially VCAs – are of relevance to diaspora groups that may be contemplating sending experts to their home countries because, through consultations with them, they could gain valuable insight into proven models for placement programs. Some areas where VCAs’ best practices would be helpful to diaspora organizations are outlined in Box 22. VCAs can share also the challenges they face in implementing successful placements. For example, for longer assignments of one to two years, the strain on family life – i.e., difficulty to adapt – is a major reason for CUSO volunteers to return to Canada before the completion of their assignment.⁴⁸⁴ Awareness of issues such as these would serve to inform diaspora groups’ activities as regards sending professionals abroad.

Box 22. VCAs and Personnel Sending Diaspora Organizations: Areas for Cooperation⁴⁸⁵

- Dossier preparation: types of information to ask potential cooperant, reference checking, verification of qualifications
- Screening and selection of applicants
- Matching participants to suitable assignments
- Training of selected participants, as appropriate
- Constructing an appropriate benefit package for volunteers
- Devising length of time of overseas stay most pertinent to the aim of the placement
- Types of on-the-ground support required

⁴⁸² Interview with Tanya Salewski.

⁴⁸³ Interview with Fodé Beaudet.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ Adapted from ideas advanced by Christopher Smart in his discussion of the “diaspora challenge” in e-mail communications with a group of individuals working on the issue, including the researcher of this study.

The following section presents an overview of the diaspora-related initiatives of VSO, a leader among VCAs in this regard.

5.3.1.4 Volunteer Services Overseas

VSO, an international development agency, works with local partner organizations in order to provide developing countries with volunteers that have professional experience. In Canada – and even more so in the United Kingdom – VSO is spearheading the efforts of the mainstream international development circle to engage diaspora communities in projects in their countries of origin. Indeed, VSO’s official position on diaspora is most forward looking in that it considers the latter “*an important and underutilized development resource,*” adding that “*linking Diaspora communities to their home countries through strategic short-term volunteer placements and learning exchange opportunities can provide needed expertise and help counter the effects of “brain drain” experienced by so many poor countries.*”⁴⁸⁶

In Canada, VSO is undertaking a pilot project with Canada’s Guyanese diaspora in an initiative that enlists the skills and experiences of this community for capacity development in neglected sectors in Guyana. Along with a research project that focuses on the role of diaspora communities in Canada’s international development endeavours, this pilot scheme aims to assess the extent of diaspora participation, gaps in this engagement as well as the potential for Canadian VCAs to play a facilitating role in that regard. It is intended that both activities will inform the work of policy makers at CIDA and at other relevant Canadian organizations.⁴⁸⁷ Guyana’s selection for the pilot project stems from one of the recommendations of a VSO Guyana study that called for a fuller and more formal engagement of the Guyanese diaspora in Canada in VSO Guyana’s local capacity building work.⁴⁸⁸ Moreover, Guyana’s high rate of out-migration,⁴⁸⁹ combined with a large Guyanese presence in Canada,⁴⁹⁰ made it a suitable candidate for this pilot initiative. The project, expected to last 14 months, will include six short-term placements in Guyana of three to six weeks each as well as two study tours aiming to promote learning exchanges.⁴⁹¹

The focus of VSO Canada’s pilot project for Guyana is on providing support for the development of linkages between diaspora organizations and their home country counterparts rather than on the placement of volunteers. This includes identification of partners among diaspora organizations; assistance with the logistics of volunteer placement;

⁴⁸⁶ VSO Canada, 2006.

⁴⁸⁷ Such as IDRC, FOCAL and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation.

⁴⁸⁸ VSO Canada, 2006; Zaleski, 2006.

⁴⁸⁹ Between 1965 and 2000, 89% of Guyanese workers with a tertiary education immigrated to developed countries, making Guyana the first – worldwide – in terms of rate of emigration of skilled people.

⁴⁹⁰ In the 2001 Canadian census, some 52,000 people identified themselves as being of Guyanese origin. Guyanese in Canada maintain a high level of engagement with their home country; for example, they account for 50% of FDI made in Guyana.

⁴⁹¹ VSO Canada, 2006.

facilitation of exchanges; and provision of technical support for diaspora organizational capacity development.⁴⁹²

Box 23. VSO UK's Diaspora Volunteering Initiative⁴⁹³

In the United Kingdom, VSO has been actively exploring since 2005 various avenues through which it can encourage and integrate the participation of diaspora volunteers in its programs. Through its Diaspora Volunteering Initiative, VSO UK supports development initiatives of diaspora organizations that espouse one of VSO's goals⁴⁹⁴ and have displayed commitment to cooperate in intra-diaspora joint ventures.

Activities to date include the dispatch of 87 diaspora volunteers from Africa and Asia – comprising of 19 in Cameroon, 18 in Ghana, 40 in Sierra Leone and 10 in India – with an additional 12 slated to leave for India in January 2007 and more than 50 diaspora organizations requesting VSO support.

VSO UK's support of diaspora volunteering is based on the recognition that:⁴⁹⁵

- There are diaspora professionals interested in temporary volunteer placements in their countries of origin, as well as diaspora organizations eager to organize such placements;
- VSO UK's expertise in volunteer management can be used to facilitate the above, in addition to offering opportunities for networking among diaspora organizations and professional associations;
- Such an initiative will promote a novel approach to international volunteering as well as increasing the diversity among VSO UK's volunteer body and thus encouraging the sharing of various skills and experiences;
- Diaspora volunteering provides a unique opportunity to strengthen partnerships between diasporas and their home country counterparts; and
- Integration of diasporas in mainstream institutions allows them to have a better understanding of their role as development partners in the UK.

Lessons learned so far indicate that support of need driven diaspora engagement, through programs and partnerships that are oriented toward volunteer placement, can be successful. They moreover provide an increased opportunity for awareness of development issues among diaspora communities.

Challenges include the weak organizational capacity of diaspora groups; limitations in the engagement of volunteer-led diaspora organizations; and individual, rather than institutional, ownership of diaspora organizations. Getting funding to expand this initiative has also proved difficult for VSO UK as diaspora engagement is not mainstreamed among donors.

In addition to development organizations, there are research and policy think tanks that conduct activities seeking to broaden awareness of diaspora issues in Canada. They are briefly described below.

⁴⁹² VSO Canada, 2006.

⁴⁹³ VSO UK, 2005; e-mail communication with VSO UK program official.

⁴⁹⁴ Education; health and social wellbeing; disability; participation and governance; HIV/AIDS; and secure livelihoods.

⁴⁹⁵ For a more complete treatment of this point, see VSO UK, 2005.

5.3.2 Global Citizenship Grant Program, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation⁴⁹⁶

The Global Citizenship grant program of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, established in 2005, focuses on two sub-programs, namely “Youth Engagement” and “Diaspora Communities”.⁴⁹⁷ In line with the Foundation’s mission of promoting and funding innovative policy making in Canada across all its programs, the diaspora component of the Global Citizenship program provides financial support for policy research on diaspora communities. This initiative was born out of the awareness of the emerging interest in transnational practices in Canada and the realization that such practices were handicapped by the dearth of information and research on diaspora communities and their activities, including identification of these groups; assessment of their interest in transnational pursuits; the scope of their engagement as well as their actual and potential impact. Thus, through researches addressing issues such as these, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation seeks to bring diaspora issues to the attention of Canadian policy makers in order to facilitate transnational engagement.

The Global Citizenship program provides small- and medium-sized grants of up to CDN\$50,000 per project⁴⁹⁸ to any Canadian organization conducting research on diaspora communities in Canada – whether or not the organization undertaking the research is a diaspora association.

Initiatives funded so far include the North-South Institute’s seminal study on the need for a paradigm shift in Canadian domestic and foreign policy so as to better exploit diaspora resources;⁴⁹⁹ a brainstorming conference on “The Role of the Canadian Diaspora in Global Diplomacy and Policy Making” hosted by the Global College of the University of Winnipeg;⁵⁰⁰ and five community-based studies conducted by various diaspora groups⁵⁰¹ for input into the University for Peace’s conference on the role of diasporas in peace and development capacity building in their homelands.⁵⁰² Another grant has recently been awarded to two African-Canadian researchers, through the University of Calgary, for a

⁴⁹⁶ Independent, grant making foundation with a focus on public policy research in three main areas: the Canadian North, Fresh Water Resources Protection and Global Citizenship. For more information, see: Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, website.

⁴⁹⁷ Interview with Marjan Montazemi forms the basis for the information provided in this section, except where a different source is explicitly indicated.

⁴⁹⁸ An average grant is around CDN\$20,000 to CDN\$25,000, while research grants are usually about CDN\$40,000. The Global Citizenship program has approximately \$500,000 net available in grant money per annum. Currently, more grants are given out for youth engagement projects – as there are many established organizations that target the youth – than for diaspora-related activities. It is hoped this situation will change as diaspora engagement issues gain in popularity.

⁴⁹⁹ Robinson, 2005.

⁵⁰⁰ Axworthy *et al.*, 2005.

⁵⁰¹ Including a survey carried out by Young Diplomats among Ethiopian youth living in the Greater Toronto Area. See Young Diplomats, 2006.

⁵⁰² University for Peace, 2006.

research titled “Transnational Citizenship and the African Diaspora in Canada.” This study seeks to explore the actual and potential contribution of Africans in Canada in influencing public policy as it relates to development, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction – in both home and host countries – and uses the Rwandan and Ghanaian communities as case studies.

Two other Canadian foundations – one focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean and the other on Asia – have been actively pushing the agenda on diaspora-related issues in Canada. Although these organizations do not deal with issues specific to the African diaspora in Canada, they are instrumental in raising the profile of diasporas in general among Canadian policy makers.

5.3.3 Canadian Foundation for the Americas

FOCAL is an independent policy institute that seeks to foster “*informed analysis and debate on social, political and economic issues facing the Americas.*”⁵⁰³ FOCAL has been instrumental in bringing diaspora research to the forefront of the Canadian development policy circle. Its diaspora-related research falls under its “Latin American and Caribbean Diasporas and Private Sector Development” sub-program and examines the engagement of diasporas from the region in supporting private sector development in their home countries.⁵⁰⁴ With the support of CIDA, FOCAL sponsored in 2005 a series of Latin American and Caribbean diaspora conferences,⁵⁰⁵ followed by meetings gathering diaspora organization leaders and government officials from Foreign Affairs Canada and CIDA in October 2005,⁵⁰⁶ with the intention of furthering the recognition of the significance of Latin American and Caribbean diasporas for Canada.

5.3.4 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada is mandated to provide “*the most current and comprehensive research, analysis and information on Canada's transpacific relations.*”⁵⁰⁷ Among its functions is included the study of the role of Asian diasporas in Canada and Canadian diasporas in Asia, with an apparent focus on the latter. The Foundation organized a “Roundtable on National Diaspora Strategies” in March 2006 which advanced discussion on a possible notion of a Canadian diaspora abroad – i.e., Canadians who have settled outside of Canada, many of them immigrants who have resettled in their countries of origin – and the policy considerations implied by this emerging concept.

⁵⁰³ FOCAL, website.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ FOCAL, 2005b.

⁵⁰⁶ FOCAL, 2005a.

⁵⁰⁷ Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, website.

5.3.5 Global College – University of Winnipeg

The Global College of the University of Winnipeg, under the leadership of former Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy, has also sought to further reflection on the diaspora issue, most notably through the organization of the diaspora brainstorming conference on “Scoping the Role of Canadian Diaspora in Global Diplomacy and Policy Making”, held in September 2005.⁵⁰⁸ The aim of the conference was to brainstorm ideas on diaspora communities’ potential to enhance Canada’s international profile and activities.

5.4 Assessment of Diaspora-Related Measures in Canada

Although some encouraging first steps have been taken as regards diaspora engagement, Canadian governmental and non-governmental institutions remain largely on the sidelines, and especially so in the African context. Diaspora groups in Canada are not readily recognized as stakeholders in development initiatives in their communities of origin, as attests the following observation by Carlo Dade, Deputy Director of FOCAL:

“Comparatively, less work has been done in Canada than [sic] elsewhere in the developed world to understand and augment the positive, as well as to reduce the negative, linkages between Diasporas and their home communities. This is striking given that close to one out of five Canadians is foreign born, among the highest percentages in the developed world. Diasporas in Canada would appear to be a huge potential asset to strengthening Canadian influence in the world. They are also as [sic] asset that may be under-utilized and under-appreciated.”⁵⁰⁹

Major barriers to diaspora engagement in Canada are discussed in this section.

5.4.1 Institutional Disinterest

The contribution that diaspora communities are making or may make to their countries of origin and to Canada is not very well understood, whether by governmental or non-governmental institutions. This is largely due to the continued underestimation of the need for a paradigm shift in Canadian domestic and foreign policy in the face of rapidly changing migration patterns, while Canadian immigration research remains limited to settlement and integration considerations. As notes Rudi Robinson of the North-South Institute:

“With very few exceptions, current immigration scholarship often displays the tendency to take the primacy of the Canadian State and its boundaries as the de

⁵⁰⁸ Axworthy *et al.*, 2005.

⁵⁰⁹ FOCAL, 2005a:1.

*facto unit of analysis and treats immigrants as objects of study for academic journal articles and books rather than as actors who take initiatives to promote the development of their homelands. The common practice of such scholarship is to focus solely on immigrants as people from poor countries, who are to undergo State-driven processes of re-settlement, incorporation and integration into the Canadian economic and social mainstream.”*⁵¹⁰

This has in turn led to minimal consideration of diaspora engagement for development in Canadian policy circles,⁵¹¹ as evidenced by the inadequate grasp displayed by mainstream institutions of the knowledge and qualifications that immigrants possess for development cooperation. For example, in October 2002, Partnership Africa-Canada initiated a proposal for a cooperant program involving the African diaspora who were to be sent to their countries of origin on short- and long-term skill transfer missions. The initiative ultimately never got off the ground as the proposal was met with disinterest by potential donors.⁵¹²

5.4.2 Lack of Effective Capacity Building Mechanism for Diaspora Organizations

Lack of financial and organizational capacity hampers diaspora organizations' ability to carry out their missions as well as leading to fatigue given that most of their members serve in a voluntary capacity. This is highlighted by the fact that activities undertaken by diaspora groups tend to be short-term or *ad hoc* and thus not amenable to sustainability.⁵¹³

Diaspora associations in Canada face difficulties in securing funding for their internal operations as well as for project implementation. In that regard, the coordinator for the Canadian chapter of People to People Aid Organization⁵¹⁴ notes that the major challenge faced by many smaller and newer organizations is lack of adequate funding for programs and projects.⁵¹⁵

Indeed, difficulties in attracting significant financial support from mainstream funders; problems related to obtaining information regarding funding opportunities; trouble with grant writing; and strong competition for a limited funding pool maintain most diaspora groups on the margins of institutional funding mechanisms.

As discussed earlier, federal agencies such as IDRC and Canadian Heritage open avenues for financing to diaspora groups. However, the former is limited to research and knowledge-related projects while the latter does not provide funding for diaspora

⁵¹⁰ Robinson, 2005:19.

⁵¹¹ Robinson, 2005.

⁵¹² Interview with Bernard Taylor.

⁵¹³ Mentioned in, *inter alia*, AHEAD, 2004; Séguin *et al.*, 2006b; UNITAR, 2006; VSO UK, 2005.

⁵¹⁴ An Ethiopian diaspora organization set up with the aim of combating HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia.

⁵¹⁵ Interview with People to People Aid Organization (Canada) – Project Coordinator.

engagement in homeland development initiatives. CIDA's VSF appears to provide a better opportunity for diaspora organizations to obtain funding for project implementation. Yet, its ability to serve as an effective funding mechanism for diaspora-led development initiatives remains to be proven.

One concern is that diaspora associations lack the capacity to take full advantage of this fund. To begin with, many such associations are run by volunteers and have limited income, making it difficult for them to fulfill VSF's matching and minimum revenue requirements to qualify for funding.⁵¹⁶ Although these requirements are standard budgetary practice, and are less stringent than previous funding requirements, they still represent a barrier to smaller organizations. The requirements are purposely set by CIDA to limit the amount of applicants and weed out those organizations that do not have proven experience in development work or the capacity to manage funds,⁵¹⁷ thus effectively bypassing most diaspora associations. The challenge of balancing accessibility considerations with more practical ones such as those mentioned above is understandable; it, however, begs for the establishment of a fund that targets the diaspora, taking into account their special needs and situations.

Moreover, because the focus of the VSF is to support development in developing countries, it does not provide funding to support the internal capacity building of diaspora groups in Canada but rather that of their developing country partners. In this regard, there are arguments to be made for strengthening diaspora organizations so that they are able, in turn, to support their home country counterparts effectively. The most commonly raised argument against provision of such assistance is to question why CIDA or any other donor would disburse development funds to build the organizational capacity of diaspora organizations to implement a development project when experienced NGOs, who already have the capacity, can undertake it.⁵¹⁸ Again, this is a matter of perspective on the added value that diaspora organizations may bring to Canadian international development work in their countries of origin.

Constraints on diaspora capacity go beyond strictly financial considerations. A recent study conducted by researchers at the Canadian Program on Genomics and Global Health of the Joint Centre for Bioethics and the McLaughlin Centre for Molecular Medicine at the University of Toronto calls for mechanisms to exploit untapped scientific diaspora resources better. The study reports that participants – diaspora scientists from developing countries, representing academia and industry – pointed to the provision of access to

⁵¹⁶ Applicant organizations are required to contribute at least 25% of the total budget of the project. In addition, there is a minimum income requirement of CDN\$20,000-50,000, depending on the length of time the fund applicant has worked with CIDA.

⁵¹⁷ Interview with CIDA representative.
Some smaller organizations are looking to form partnerships and set up joint ventures with bigger NGOs. This would allow the smaller organization to establish its track record with CIDA.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with CIDA representative.

technology to enable virtual transfer of knowledge as well as grant writing advice and mentoring as the main ingredients in an effective diaspora program.⁵¹⁹ In addition to funding, diaspora associations also require training on effective project management, on report and proposal writing, as well as book-keeping and fundraising skills.⁵²⁰

5.4.3 Issues Related to Remittances

There are no official figures for the Canadian remittance market.⁵²¹ Estimates for the total remittance market – combining those transferred through formal and informal channels – range from US\$4 billion up to US\$15 billion per year, making Canada one of the largest remittance sending countries in the world. Even at the lowest estimated figure of US\$4 billion, the volume of monies transferred by immigrants in Canada to their home countries surpasses by far the country’s official development assistance expenditure of CDN\$2.2 billion for 2003.⁵²² However – unlike in several other developed countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Sweden, and Denmark⁵²³ – remittances have not attracted as much research and policy attention in Canada.⁵²⁴

5.5 Rationale for Host Government Support of Diaspora Engagement

The value of Canadian-based diasporas’ actual and potential role in development endeavours in their countries of origin merits increased consideration in Canadian international cooperation policy and practices. This section outlines some reasons for pursuing stronger linkages between diaspora associations, mainstream NGOs and the Government of Canada.

As beneficiaries of the brain drain from Africa – which the UN has identified as one of the greatest obstacles to the continent’s development⁵²⁵ – developed countries, Canada among them, have the responsibility to help remedy the ensuing gap in African capacity.⁵²⁶ One of the ways of doing so is through the facilitation of African diaspora transfers – whether of a financial, intellectual, technical, or social nature.⁵²⁷ There have been several calls for Canada to help African countries tackle the brain drain through an appropriate orientation of its development policy such that it takes full advantage of African resources in the diaspora. A discussion forum organized by World University Service of Canada on issues related to engaging immigrants in international policy development recommended that the Government of Canada “*help reverse the brain ‘drain’, especially from Africa*”, as well as

⁵¹⁹ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a:1603.

⁵²⁰ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

⁵²¹ Mafinezam, 2005; Robinson, 2005.

⁵²² Robinson, 2005.

⁵²³ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

⁵²⁴ FOCAL, 2005b; Mafinezam, 2005; Robinson, 2005.

⁵²⁵ Gidley-Kitchin, 2000.

⁵²⁶ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a and 2006b; WUSC, 2004.

⁵²⁷ Kuznetsov, 2005.

*“tap into the pool of skilled new immigrants residing in Canada since they are potentially key resources in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.”*⁵²⁸ This sentiment was more recently echoed in the Séguin *et al.* papers based on research on the role of developing country scientific diasporas in international development cooperation.⁵²⁹

In this regard, it is also important to remember that higher income countries that African and other developing country to which professionals flock are not innocent bystanders but rather active agents as, through their selective immigration policies and practices, they further fuel the brain drain.⁵³⁰ As the British Parliament noted in a 2004 report:

*“It is unfair, inefficient and incoherent for developed countries to provide aid to help developing countries to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on health and education, whilst helping themselves to the nurses, doctors and teachers who have been trained in, and at the expense of, developing countries.”*⁵³¹

Beyond the imperative to counter some of the harm caused by brain drain in developing countries, Canada can, by facilitating diaspora engagement, make use of the special advantages that resident diaspora communities present. Indeed, as note Axworthy *et al.* regarding the added value of involving diaspora groups in the international development arena:

*“Diaspora groups are able to generate information about their country of origin that surpasses anything that could be ‘discovered’ through second-hand research. Their familiarity with customs, language, tradition, and a host of unwritten rules has the potential to make a sizable difference in Canada’s efforts at international development. With the inside knowledge provided by Diaspora groups, development projects can be created to address real needs and implemented in a way that is effective and that strengthens global connections and solidarity.”*⁵³²

That diaspora communities possess skills and features that are uniquely beneficial to the efficient and successful transfer of know-how to developing countries is gaining recognition in various circles.⁵³³ Effective technical assistance has proved to be a challenging task which could be served well by expanding the mainstream sector of development cooperation to include formally diaspora communities. As noted N’Dioro N’Diaye, Deputy Director General of IOM, in her address to the First Conference of

⁵²⁸ WUSC, 2004:3.

⁵²⁹ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a and 2006b.

⁵³⁰ El-Khawas, 2004; Sawahel, 2006; Tanner, 2005.

⁵³¹ Tanner, 2005:4-5.

⁵³² Axworthy *et al.*, 2005:5.

⁵³³ Robinson, 2005; University for Peace, 2006.

Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora: “*African experts are by definition better informed and more motivated than the foreign technical assistants involved in most of the development support projects in key sectors of the economy.*”⁵³⁴ Indeed, even with little institutional support, many have mobilized their resources for development initiatives in their home countries. The potential benefits of diaspora engagement are immense provided adequate mechanisms are established, *inter alia*, within the host government’s international aid structure.

5.6 Suggestions for Canadian Action to Enable Diaspora Engagement

While diaspora engagement has been garnering some interest in Canada – both from governmental and non-governmental entities – action has been limited and diaspora engagement has yet to be fully included in Canada’s international relations and development agenda. The Canadian government – especially through CIDA – has a leadership role to play in this regard. Suggestions for consideration by the Government of Canada – and where applicable other players in the Canadian international development sector – are outlined below. Where appropriate, suggestions specific to the African diaspora are presented.

5.6.1 Promote Diaspora Related Research

Understanding diaspora communities’ needs as well as their different strengths and weaknesses is essential to developing and implementing policies and programs relevant to their effective engagement.⁵³⁵ This would be effected through wide ranging research on issues related to diaspora communities’ participation in both home and host country development initiatives. It is moreover important that diaspora researchers and experts be included in such studies.⁵³⁶ Recent diaspora-related research – such as those supported by CIDA, IDRC, FOCAL, and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation – have begun to fill the existing gap on this topic, a most welcome development that needs to be further encouraged.

Furthermore, measures to promote increased familiarity between various African diaspora communities, the Canadian government and mainstream NGOs should seek to go beyond knowledge gained through formal research and include activities such as those suggested by the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society of the University of Oxford to DfID, the British equivalent of CIDA.

“DfID could explore the concept of a ‘Conversation’ with diaspora groups to access the views on development of a cross section of the diaspora in the UK,

⁵³⁴ Quoted in AU, 2004a.

⁵³⁵ Mafinezam, 2005; North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 2006; Séguin *et al.*, 2006b.

⁵³⁶ North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 2006.

as well as to find out how diaspora members see their role in poverty reduction and development projects. Such a ‘conversation’ could build on existing diaspora fora, or where necessary build new ones in collaboration with diaspora groupings. As well as the established elders, younger and second generation diaspora members should be actively engaged. As suggested above, there are transnational networks, involving diaspora links across destination/host countries, which could be mobilised towards these ends. The establishment of a dedicated unit within DfID could be a vehicle to this end, as well as to the achievement of other measures suggested in this report.”⁵³⁷

5.6.2 Support Internal and External Capacity Building of Diaspora Organizations

With limited access to funding and other necessary resources, diaspora organizations remain weak in their capacity to fully realize their potential for development cooperation. Many have expressed the need for financial and organizational support to shore up their ability to achieve their development oriented missions.⁵³⁸

In that regard, it is important that the Government of Canada – notably CIDA – recognize diaspora organizations that work in development in their countries of origin as official development organizations, make efforts to integrate them in the formal international assistance structure and establish appropriate funding channels. For instance, in recognition of the difficulties faced by diaspora groups seeking to participate in existing funding schemes, the French government – through an umbrella group of diaspora associations – provides financial support for a program that seeks to remedy restrictions imposed by standard governmental budgetary practices.

Box 24. France’s *Programme d’appui aux projets des OSIM (PRA-OSIM)*⁵³⁹

France’s *Fédération des organisations et réseaux issus des migrations (FORIM)* is a nation-wide association of 600 diaspora associations from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean; its operations are financially supported by the *Ministère de la Coopération* – the French equivalent of CIDA.

FORIM was established with the specific purpose of enabling migrant development organizations to fully integrate in their adopted country and to fulfill their roles in development cooperation with their homelands. To that end, FORIM supports the financial, organizational and technical capacity building of its members.

In recognition of the difficulties that diaspora organizations face in meeting traditional funding requirements, PRA-OSIM was instituted to provide them with opportunities for co-financing. Indeed, because of their small size and average annual budget of €15,000, only about 20% of diaspora associations in France can, in effect, access mainstream public funds due to limitations imposed by matching and

⁵³⁷ COMPAS, 2004:29.

⁵³⁸ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a.

⁵³⁹ ENDA-TM, 2005.

minimum revenue requirements. Through PRA-OSIM – which provides co-financing of up to 50% of total budget or a maximum of €15,000 – organizations that would otherwise not qualify for it are now able to obtain funding for their development-related activities.

In addition to budgetary support, diaspora organizations need also be provided with technical and organizational assistance.⁵⁴⁰ These could include training in research skills; proposal writing; project implementation, monitoring and evaluation; financial and staff management skills; as well as exposure to issues that may be a priority in the government's international development engagement, such as gender mainstreaming for example.

5.6.3 Mainstream Diaspora Participation in International Aid Projects

CIDA – as well as other agencies relevant to foreign affairs and traditional international development NGOs – needs to integrate development oriented diaspora associations in the traditional international development framework in a manner that synergizes the efforts of all the players.⁵⁴¹ This would benefit Canada through enhanced effectiveness of its development cooperation through the inclusion of, for example, highly qualified diaspora Africans in the programming and implementation of its projects in Africa.⁵⁴² This would fit in with Canada's commitment to African development and its support of African development led by Africans themselves, since it would ensure that the unique resources that African countries possess abroad – their respective diasporas – are provided with the mechanisms they need for the full and sustainable realization of their contribution to development efforts on the continent. Box 26 explores the possibility for Canada and Ethiopia to cooperate on a project that would allow for the secondment of Ethiopian professionals in Canada to Ethiopian institutions.

As Canada's leading development agency, CIDA has a leadership role to play in effecting the above. Interviews conducted for this study revealed interest on the part of mainstream development and volunteer sending agencies in working in partnership with diaspora groups. However, to a large extent, this interest has not translated into concrete action to engage the diaspora which virtually remain a non-entity in mainstream development circles. CIDA's role, in this instance, would be to put diaspora engagement on the agenda, not only through activities it directly carries out but also through those it finances for implementation by various development NGOs.

⁵⁴⁰ Commission des Relations Extérieures et de la Défense, 2004; Séguin *et al.*, 2006a; University for Peace, 2006.

⁵⁴¹ Adapted to CIDA from recommendation to host countries given in Newland and Patrick, 2004. These thoughts are also echoed in Kwenin, 2004, regarding the role that Canada could play in support of African diaspora engagement and MIDA's work.

⁵⁴² Idea expressed at, *inter alia*, the World Bank-organized videoconference which brought together several diaspora organizations, including AHEAD, in Spring 2005 to discuss means through which various stakeholders could support diaspora efforts for capacity development in their homelands.

Box 25. Canadian Network of NGOs in Ethiopia

The Canadian Network of NGOs in Ethiopia (CANGO) was formed in February 2006 by 14 Canadian NGOs operating in Ethiopia⁵⁴³ with the aim of increasing communication between Canadian NGOs operating in Ethiopia and other Canadian stakeholders in Ethiopia's development, including CIDA and Ethiopian-Canadian diaspora associations.

As regards the diaspora, CANGO aspires to establish strong links with the Ethiopian community in Canada and promote dialogue that would allow for various diaspora groups to unite and rally around issues concerning their homeland as well as engaging with Ethiopia-based Canadian NGOs.⁵⁴⁴ CANGO's recognition of the diaspora as a development player is most gratifying, and, it is hoped, will lead to their formal inclusion in the member NGOs and CIDA's development activities in Ethiopia.

Box 26. Secondment of Ethiopian-Canadian Professionals to Ethiopian Institutions

It is the Government of Canada's official position that it will not target Ethiopian-Canadian (or any other group) civil servants for assignments in Ethiopia because, firstly, all Canadians must follow the same competitive process for placements abroad and, secondly, the merit of selecting Ethiopian-Canadians to work in Canadian assistance schemes in Ethiopia – save for posts where local language capabilities are required – is not recognized.⁵⁴⁵

However, the secondment through CIDA, under unique circumstances, of an Ethiopian-Canadian ICT expert⁵⁴⁶ to an Ethiopian federal institution presents an interesting case:

- *Nature of Assignment:* A secondment from Statistics Canada to provide ICT expertise to the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa. Tasks undertaken include the development of a website to enable a more effective dissemination of census and survey data; general assessment of the organization with a focus on identifying areas for improvements; ICT staff capacity development through training with a view to remedying the shortage of skilled professionals; and development of a database management system for statistical data so as to enable simpler and more efficient provision of data to users. This assignment was part of CIDA's support to the Ethiopian Public Service Capacity Building Programme.

- *Term of Assignment:* two-year assignment at regular Canadian pay, including benefits and a daily subsistence allowance.

- *Basis of Selection for Assignment:* This secondment came about through a combination of the participant's own initiative – “I had been asking CIDA if they had any project in Ethiopia where I could apply my skills, for about a year, through sustained “knocking on the door”, including numerous telephone calls and e-mails” – and the opening of a suitable opportunity at the CSA, as the participant notes: “Once CSA put in a request for assistance to CIDA, I was short-listed for the post,

⁵⁴³ African Research and Medical Foundation; Canadian Food Grains Bank; Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief; CARE; Christian Children's Fund Canada, CHF Partners; Hope International; Lutheran Federation; Oxfam Canada; Save the Children; Plan Ethiopia; Partnership Africa-Canada; Right to Play; and World Vision.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Nicolas Moyer.

⁵⁴⁵ Interview with CIDA representative.

⁵⁴⁶ E-mail communication with Meseret Mamo.

*and then selected. I was told later that my Amharic-speaking ability was taken into consideration in my selection over other candidates.*⁵⁴⁷

The value added by a diaspora member in such a project seems to be recognized only in terms of local language abilities while undermining the unique position that diaspora professionals are in to enhance the capacity building support offered to Ethiopia by Canada. However, the above case does illustrate what form an official CIDA diaspora engagement program could take, provided the necessary political will and support exist.

Canada is one of the most important development partners of Ethiopia, with the latter selected as one of the nine countries selected by CIDA for special focus.⁵⁴⁸ Canada's total ODA to Ethiopia totalled CDN\$87.6 million in 2003-2004. In terms of bilateral aid, CIDA's focus in Ethiopia is on food security/agriculture and governance/capacity building, including public sector capacity building.⁵⁴⁹ CIDA's Country Development Programming Framework (CDPF) in Ethiopia for 2004-2009 states that "*more recently, proactive demarches have been introduced to pilot greater alignment to the country's SDPRP and this CDPF.*"⁵⁵⁰ SDPRP, the Government of Ethiopia's recently completed poverty reduction strategy program,⁵⁵¹ is predicated on, *inter alia*, capacity building in public and private sectors as well as recognizing the Ethiopian diaspora's actual and potential contribution to national development efforts. Ethiopia has identified diaspora participation as important in its various capacity building endeavours, leading the government to multiply efforts to involve diaspora, through various privileges and incentives granted them. As per CDPF, "*Canada agrees with the priorities listed [in the SPDRP],*" and welcomes "*[t]he importance given to capacity development,*"⁵⁵² adding that "*all recent CIDA programming in Ethiopia has had a strong capacity development focus, particularly in terms of human resource development*"⁵⁵³

Thus, if we consider CIDA's aim of supporting public sector capacity building in Ethiopia, added to the Ethiopian government's own focus on capacity building across all institutions as one of the motors of development, along with its recognition of diaspora Ethiopians as development partners, an argument could be made for CIDA to support the engagement of diaspora Ethiopians in Canada in the Canadian government's capacity building assistance to Ethiopia.

5.6.4 Remove Barriers to the Mobility of Diaspora Professionals

Qualified Canadians of African origin who may be interested in short- and long-term skill transfer assignments in their home countries face obstacles related to mobility, including considerations related to residence permits and requirements for citizenship; pensions and other benefits; and fear of compromising their careers in Canada.

⁵⁴⁷ E-mail communication with Meseret Mamo.

⁵⁴⁸ CIDA, 2004.

⁵⁴⁹ CIDA, "Ethiopia" website.

⁵⁵⁰ CIDA, 2004:18.

⁵⁵¹ SDPRP ran from 2002 to 2005. PASDEP, the current poverty reduction program, began in 2006.

⁵⁵² CIDA, 2004:6.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid*:22.

5.6.4.1 Immigration and Citizenship Considerations

International organizations, such as IOM, that seek to facilitate assignments of varying time-lengths of diaspora members in their homelands have noted that considerations linked to immigration and citizenship issues in their adopted countries – such as loss of residency status – have hampered the participation of qualified and interested Africa professionals in such initiatives.⁵⁵⁴

Sounding the alarm on the dire effect of the African brain drain on the continent's increasingly weakened public health system, Physicians for Human Rights recommended that the United States and other high income countries:

*“enact special provisions in [their] immigration law[s] to permit health professionals from countries suffering from brain drain to return to the health sector in their native countries without losing their residency status or otherwise having the time spent away from the [...] [host countries] prejudice them in the naturalization process.”*⁵⁵⁵

The group specifically suggests that *“a special immigrant visa [...] be created to permit Africans and others nationals of developing countries [...], to return to their country of origin [...] in order to contribute to that country's public health needs.”*⁵⁵⁶

Physicians for Human Rights focuses on the health sector; however, there are myriads of African public institutions, not least of which in higher education, that are severely handicapped by brain drain and would be served by an injection of resources from the diaspora. While the above recommendation targeted the Government of the United States, it may be directed at Canada as well. The issue of allowing permanent residents to take time abroad while they are qualifying for citizenship is undoubtedly a sensitive one. However, an immigration policy that would – in line with an international development policy supportive of diaspora engagement – encourage diaspora professionals' potential for home country development could ensure the increased participation of non-citizen Africans residing in Canada in capacity building endeavours in African institutions.

5.6.4.2 Retention of Jobs and Benefits in Canada

Measures to allay the fears of diaspora members about losing their posts in Canada, as well as pensions, medical insurance and other benefits, would also help to encourage their participation in assignments in their home countries.⁵⁵⁷ Indeed, as IOM's experience with

⁵⁵⁴ El-Khawas, 2004; PHR, 2004.

⁵⁵⁵ PHR, 2004:77.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ AU Executive Council, 2006b; El-Khawas, 2004.

the MIDA program has shown, “*diaspora members are highly interested in participating, provided [...] that cooperation mechanisms between countries of origin and of destination allow them to keep their jobs or benefits in the host country.*”⁵⁵⁸

In this regard, the Canadian government could start with the facilitation of assignments undertaken by diaspora civil servants in their home countries, as well as – in collaboration with the appropriate Canadian institutions and professional bodies – that of academics, health practitioners and other professionals, with full benefits and the guarantee of their jobs in Canada. Such support would be limited to professionals that are applying their knowledge and skills in development-related activities in their homelands.

Initiatives such as Human Resources and Social Development Canada’s “International Academic Mobility Initiative”⁵⁵⁹ – which operates in partnership with close to 100 Canadian universities and colleges and provides Canadian students fully-credited study abroad experiences – can serve as an example of a collaborative mechanism that could be instituted between the government, Canadian higher education institutions and the diaspora to promote and support not only diaspora faculty service in their home countries but also that of diaspora students.

5.6.4.3 Considerations Related to Career Progress

In the case of longer-term assignments, and especially prevalent in highly technical fields or in academia, the fear of affecting one’s career in Canada represents a barrier to the engagement of diaspora professionals.⁵⁶⁰ This is particularly true for those who are not yet solidly established in their careers,⁵⁶¹ and as was specifically noted by participants in the Séguin *et al.* research study on the role of diasporas in scientific development cooperation who, “*when asked about how a hypothetical diaspora program could be most effective, [...] indicated a need for [...] policies that would help post-doctoral fellows spend time in their CO [countries of origin] without harming their careers,*”⁵⁶² among other considerations.

The Canadian academic world is showing increasing recognition of the value of international experience and affords flexibility for tenured professors to conduct research or other work abroad, mainly through sabbaticals – which can be taken for up to a year or two – without risking tenure or hampering their careers in any way.⁵⁶³ However, current practices are not sufficient to promote increased participation of diaspora academics who have not yet achieved tenure. Firstly, they are not afforded the same opportunities to work abroad as their tenured counterparts and, secondly, they fear that the value of any work they

⁵⁵⁸ Ionescu, 2006:42.

⁵⁵⁹ HRSDC, “International Academic Mobility (IAM) Initiative – Activities and Benefits” website.

⁵⁶⁰ Interviews with Isabelle Legaré and Parker Mitchell. See also Profile 2 in Appendix 2.

⁵⁶¹ Interviews with Fassil Nebebe and Isabelle Legaré.

⁵⁶² Séguin *et al.*, 2006a:1603.

⁵⁶³ Interviews with Fassil Nebebe and Isabelle Legaré.

might independently decide to undertake abroad, without the institution's approval, may not receive due recognition for performance assessment or promotion purposes, thus damaging their tenure track.⁵⁶⁴

Relevant institutions and agencies as well as private employers are encouraged to recognize international development experiences as relevant experience for their staff.

While considerations linked to mobility, such as the ones described above, are important, the lack of readily accessible programs that would efficiently match skills available in the diaspora with those needed in the home country also discourages diaspora participation. This is succinctly expressed by Dr. Joseph Manyoni,⁵⁶⁵ a long-time faculty member at Carleton University in Ottawa, regarding impediments to the participation of professors in assignments in their countries of origin:

“Some [considerations] are more relevant than others. [...] The issue right now is the lack of a Diaspora engagement programs or mechanisms that facilitate easy and effective participation by Diaspora professionals to take up teaching or research positions in one's home country. Had such programs been in place, it would be relatively easy to deal with issues such as insurance, pension or performance assessment.”

5.6.5 Create Organized Structures to Facilitate Transfer of Knowledge and Skills

There is a role to be played by Canadian governmental and non-governmental institutions alike in promoting and formally establishing channels for the transfer of expertise from educated and skilled members of the diaspora to institutions in their countries of origin.

Séguin *et al.*'s survey of 60 diaspora scientists from developing countries – now working as life science researchers and entrepreneurs in Canada – indicates that, while they are interested in applying their skills for the purpose of home country development, the absence of formal backing and support discourages significant and sustainable efforts. One participant declared that *“if the Canadian government created an organization, provided us with a nucleus, made the initial effort, I think there would be so many people who would join.”*⁵⁶⁶ Based on the results of the study, the researchers are advocating for two such mechanisms that Canada should establish to facilitate systematic linkages between diaspora scientists and home country institutions: the Diaspora Business Initiatives to *“provide institutional support and funding to enable partnerships (investments, trade) in the life*

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Isabelle Legaré.

⁵⁶⁵ E-mail communication with Joseph Manyoni, who has participated in several short-term assignments to work with Natal University in his home country of South Africa.

⁵⁶⁶ Study participant, quoted in Singer, 2006.

*sciences between business and entrepreneurial communities of industrialized countries and those in COs [countries of origin],” and a National Science Corps that would “provide funding to diaspora scientists who are qualified and willing to travel to these institutions in their COs.”*⁵⁶⁷

The need for formal financial support is also reiterated in the findings of a survey conducted by the Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora⁵⁶⁸ which reveals that, although diaspora professionals are willing to share their expertise on a voluntary basis, they are not as eager to do so if the assignment in their country of origin will lead them to incur additional expenses, such as airfare, costs of visas, accommodation, etc.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, even “volunteer” assignments can prove quite expensive to implement and formal financing is required for significant involvement levels to be recorded.⁵⁷⁰ Formal support by the Canadian government would also raise the profile of such assignments with the government and institutions of recipient countries.⁵⁷¹

While Séguin *et al.*'s recommendations on the creation of mechanisms to support diaspora transfers focus on the scientific diaspora, such mechanisms can be applied to enable any type of skills transfer and need to be seriously considered. This could begin with pilot projects in several African countries – or sector specific projects, such as health – which can be implemented through a partnership between diaspora communities, the Canadian government and an international body, such as IOM. The box below presents the example of one such collaborative effort – to alleviate the brain drain in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – between IOM, the Governments of Belgium and DRC Congo, and Congolese-Belgian health practitioners.

Box 27. Collaborative Effort to Alleviate the Brain Drain in the Congolese Health Sector⁵⁷²

The Government of Belgium and IOM recently announced a project to reverse the brain drain in the Congolese sector into brain gain through exchange programs involving Congolese-Belgian health professionals. The initiative, to be funded by the Belgian Directorate General for Development Cooperation and coordinated by IOM includes:

- The development of a database of Congolese medical experts practicing in Belgian hospitals or universities;
- The establishment of a mechanism whereby Congolese nurses and doctors could

⁵⁶⁷ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a:1603.

⁵⁶⁸ A formal network of professionals residing in the United States that are organizing around the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia.

⁵⁶⁹ NEPID, 2006.

⁵⁷⁰ This is true for volunteer placement activities in general. For instance, Canada reportedly spends around “\$450 million on the recruitment and support of Canadians working on all development efforts overseas. Costs may range from as little as \$20,000 per assignment to more than ten times that amount – per individual, per annum.” (Smillie, 2004:12).

⁵⁷¹ Séguin *et al.*, 2006a.

⁵⁷² Creffier, 2006.

take a fully paid leave of absence for several years to work in DRC;

- Strengthened linkages between major Congolese hospitals and Belgian universities and medical facilities so as to enable Congolese health workers to supplement medical training locally carried out in the DRC; and
- Promotion of internet and video links between Congo and Belgium so that Congolese physicians can benefit from the advice of their Belgian colleagues, without need for physical relocation.

Canadian universities and other academic institutions also have a central role to play through the establishment of formal diaspora exchange programs and linkages with counterpart institutions in developing countries.⁵⁷³ Furthermore, mainstream international cooperation organizations – and especially those focusing on volunteer placements abroad – are uniquely positioned to facilitate diaspora volunteering initiatives, such as VSO UK has implemented. As previously discussed, VSO Canada is also testing the waters with a diaspora pilot project in Guyana. Efforts to form partnerships between diaspora-led and mainstream-led organizations, with a view to addressing the development challenges of developing countries, need to be encouraged and broadened. In this regard, the integration of diaspora volunteer initiatives in the structure established to facilitate the personnel sending activities of Canadian NGOs⁵⁷⁴ presents one avenue for the provision of institutional support for said initiatives.

Box 28. Using Existing Networks to Establish a Diaspora Volunteering Program

The use of existing volunteer placement structures to support diaspora personnel sending initiatives avoids duplication of efforts. Indeed, organizations such as VSO possess the type of infrastructure and experience necessary for effective diaspora engagement in time-limited assignments in their homelands.⁵⁷⁵ For instance, an arrangement similar to that of Industry Canada's NetCorps – established as a funding and coordinating mechanism for information technology-related placements of Canadian youth across the developing world and implemented by a coalition of nine NGOs⁵⁷⁶ – could be envisaged for a diaspora cooperant program. The success of such a venture necessitates the full support, financial and other, of CIDA and other relevant federal and provincial government agencies; commitment from development NGOs to effectively engage diaspora organizations so that the latter can avail themselves of much needed know-how on international placements; and diaspora groups' community specific expertise and networks.

⁵⁷³ FOCAL 2005a.

⁵⁷⁴ Canada has more personnel sending programs than any other developed country, with some 12,000 Canadians on assignment in the developing world at any given time. (Smilie, 2004.)

⁵⁷⁵ Christopher Smart, in his discussion of the "diaspora challenge" in e-mail communications with a group of individuals working on the issue, including the researcher of this study.

⁵⁷⁶ Alternatives, Canada World Youth, Canadian Crossroads International, Canadian Society for International Health, CUSO, Human Rights Internet, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Oxfam-Québec and VSO Canada.

5.6.6 Remove Barriers to the Full Participation of Diaspora Communities in Canadian Professional Life

The extent to which diasporas are effectively integrated in their adopted countries has a bearing on how well they are able to contribute to development initiatives in their countries of origin. Diaspora members cannot be full partners for development unless they are afforded the ability to become full-fledged participants in the political, economic and social life of their countries of residence,⁵⁷⁷ as *“better integrated migrants in education, employment, housing, social networks and communities can contribute more to their home countries than migrants with an uncertain status, who are unemployed, underestimated and isolated in their host communities.”*⁵⁷⁸

In the Canadian context, effective measures to promote the integration of diaspora community members from developing countries in the employment market are urgently needed. Indeed, although Canada’s immigration policy is oriented towards attracting educated immigrants to Canada, many such highly skilled and qualified persons – particularly those from visible minority communities – face monumental obstacles in obtaining employment commensurate with their qualifications once they arrive in Canada. The continued exclusion of immigrants from the Canadian labour and business market is manifested through *“racial and gender discrimination, employer non-recognition of non-Canadian content of immigrants’ human capital credentials, restrictions on access to trades and professions, and other immigrant-specific barriers to labour market entry or internal labour market mobility.”*⁵⁷⁹

Non-recognition of the qualifications, training and experience that immigrants have acquired outside Canada – although these are the very same assets that afforded them entry to Canada in the first place! – has proved particularly rigid for those seeking to apply their professional skills in Canada, leaving them relegated to positions that are far below their abilities and unable to practice their professions. About 25% of university-trained recent immigrants to Canada are employed in jobs that require a high school diploma or less. Even more worrisome is the fact that, three years after arrival in Canada, one out of every two immigrants to Canada is occupied in work that does not make use of his or her skills. This also has implications for income levels since, for comparable educational attainment, immigrants earn about one-third less than their Canadian-born counterparts. The under-utilization of immigrants’ intellectual and professional capabilities, termed “brain waste”, costs Canada about CDN\$2 billion annually in unexploited potential of immigrant resources.⁵⁸⁰ Furthermore, it is a double loss to the sending country as, not only is the

⁵⁷⁷ Commission des Relations Extérieures et de la Défense, 2004; COMPAS, 2004; Ionescu, 2006; Newland and Patrick, 2004; Robinson, 2005; University for Peace, 2006.

⁵⁷⁸ Ionescu, 2006:61.

⁵⁷⁹ Robinson, 2005:179.

⁵⁸⁰ Migration News, 2005.

immigrant's capacity to contribute to home country development weakened,⁵⁸¹ but these skills were lost in the first place in the form of brain drain.

There have been several public and private sector initiatives to accelerate the process of credentials review as well as provide training to remedy the skills gap in order to speed up the integration of immigrants into their professions. However, these measures have not provided an adequate solution to the problem as most Canadian employers continue to require Canadian work experience and the accreditation process remains bogged down by the multiplicity of regulatory bodies.⁵⁸² In its May 2006 federal budget, the Government of Canada announced plans to create the Canadian Agency for Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials in a bid to streamline and speed up the accreditation process.⁵⁸³ This is a welcome development provided it is actually planned and implemented in a timely manner.

5.6.7 Facilitate Remittance Transfers

In his discussion of the difference between the impact of ODA and that of remittances on developing countries' welfare, Robinson makes an important case for facilitating remittances within the context of international aid practices, observing that:

*“Approximately 80 percent of the annual amount of migrants’ remittances are resources that directly enter the hands of the poor in poor countries of the South (the remaining 20 percent is in high money transfer fees retained in rich countries). In contrast, in some cases, over 70 percent of the total annual amount of “foreign” aid dollars never leaves rich countries’ capitals and major cities, while a portion of the 30 percent that leaves is used to finance the aid-giver’s aid bureaucracy in poor countries.”*⁵⁸⁴

As previously noted, despite the size of the Canadian remittance market – among the top six in the world even at a conservative estimate of US\$4 billion– remittances have not attracted as much attention in Canada as they have in other developed countries. However, the fact that, if properly harnessed, remittances can be a useful tool for development with a potentially large impact on lower income countries, presents a growing urgency for research, policy and action on the issue.⁵⁸⁵

The lack of hard data on the remittance market in Canada, as well as of information on the types of remittance flows, the problems that diaspora groups face when transferring funds to their home countries, etc., points to the need for extensive research to be conducted on

⁵⁸¹ Wickramasekara, 2002.

⁵⁸² Migration News, 2005.

⁵⁸³ Department of Finance Canada, 2006.

⁵⁸⁴ Robinson, 2005:95.

⁵⁸⁵ Kwenin, 2004; Robinson, 2005.

remittances. This is necessary in order for appropriate policies and remittance facilitating mechanisms to be established.⁵⁸⁶

AU recommends that developed countries reduce the costs of remittance transfers, with a view to encouraging a higher volume of official remittances that could then be leveraged for developmental purposes.⁵⁸⁷ Remittance transfer fees charged by money transfer agents remain exorbitant thus undermining the flow of remittances.⁵⁸⁸ This is an area where the Canadian government can take immediate action and intervene to lower remittance transfer fees in order to ensure that a higher percentage of immigrants' money reaches the intended recipients.⁵⁸⁹

Initiatives to facilitate the use of remittances for productive purposes need also be undertaken.⁵⁹⁰ These could include bilateral agreements between African countries and Canada that would grant tax breaks to diaspora members that invest in their countries of origin – through the purchase of savings bonds for instance – thus avoiding being taxed twice.⁵⁹¹ Of course, this is assuming that saving and investment instruments, such as bonds, exist in the countries of origin that are targeted. European countries, such as France and the Netherlands, have gone as far as providing tax relief on migrant remittances.⁵⁹² This is a policy area that also needs to be seriously considered in Canada:

“Given the transnational character of remittances, and bearing in mind that these transfers constitute welfare payments sent from abroad, Canada should consider giving tax breaks to reduce the cost of remittances that are earmarked for health and education expenses in immigrants' home countries.”⁵⁹³

In its examination of the remittance question, Canada can take advantage of the experiences accumulated by such bodies as the Multilateral Investment Fund of IADB⁵⁹⁴ as well as facilitating legislative measures taken by countries such as the United States⁵⁹⁵ and many other innovative initiatives from government agencies such as USAID and DfID.

⁵⁸⁶ FOCAL, 2005b; Higazi, 2005; University for Peace, 2006.

⁵⁸⁷ AU Executive Council, 2006b.

⁵⁸⁸ FOCAL, 2005a; Higazi, 2005; Newland and Patrick, 2004; University for Peace, 2006.

For instance, sending money from Canada to Ethiopia via Western Union costs an additional 7% to 32% of amount transferred, depending on the size of the transfer, while MoneyGram International charges up to 20%. (MoneyGram International, website; Western Union Canada, website.)

⁵⁸⁹ FOCAL, 2005a; University for Peace, 2006.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹¹ Similar to the measures proposed by Basil Punit, President of the Guyana-Canada Business and Professional Association, between Latin American and Caribbean countries and the government of Canada, in FOCAL, 2005a.

⁵⁹² Chikezie, 2006.

⁵⁹³ FOCAL, 2005a:8.

⁵⁹⁴ FOCAL, 2005b; Newland and Patrick, 2004.

The Multilateral Investment Fund has been at the forefront of innovative programming to connect remittances with small and medium enterprise development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

⁵⁹⁵ See Robinson, 2005:114-115 for related details.

5.7 Observations

5.7.1 Note on Migrant Taxes

Migrant taxes are suggested in certain quarters as a way for host country governments to channel the financial resources of diaspora communities towards the development of their home countries so as to compensate the latter for the investment lost on educating the migrant, lost revenue from taxes as well as loss of productivity. In effect, what is proposed is that a portion of the taxes that diaspora members pay in their countries of residence be forwarded to their home countries.⁵⁹⁶ Various challenges in applying a measure such as this – including migrants’ reluctance to send money under initiatives over which they have no control, as well as more practical considerations related to the identification of who should contribute – are discussed by Teferra⁵⁹⁷ and the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.⁵⁹⁸

5.7.2 Who is the Diaspora?

One of the practical challenges of engaging the diaspora is in identifying who the diaspora is. To start with, not all immigrants necessarily consider themselves as diaspora members – and may not want to be targeted as such – a possible factor in the lack of a diaspora engagement policy in Canada. This consideration is echoed by David Harris, former chief of strategic planning at the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, who notes that fear of racial stereotyping has contributed to the general institutional disinterest on diaspora engagement, adding that “*the problem is when one talks about diasporas, there is a swirl of taboo subjects.*”⁵⁹⁹

In addition, there is the fact that diaspora groups are not homogenous and are often characterized by political, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and regional divisions to contend with as host countries seek to engage specific communities. Any agency interested in engaging diasporas would have to think about which group – or individual, for that matter – speaks for a specific diaspora community.⁶⁰⁰ The Ethiopian diaspora provides an excellent example of a community fragmented along many lines, not least of which is political. Thus, if the Canadian government were to engage officially with the Ethiopian community, does it support diaspora members and groups that seek to become, or already are, involved in development activities in Ethiopia, or those that ask that no assistance whatsoever – even humanitarian – be channelled to their home country as they oppose the incumbent

⁵⁹⁶ For a discussion on how such taxes – collected for the express purpose of supporting African higher education and research development activities – could help revitalize African universities, see Teferra, 2006.

⁵⁹⁷ Teferra, 2006.

⁵⁹⁸ DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, 2006.

⁵⁹⁹ Berthiaume, 2006.

⁶⁰⁰ COMPAS, 2004.

government? While diaspora groups need to present a united front so as to have more weight with policy makers and program implementers, it is also incumbent on any agency – such as CIDA – that seeks to engage a specific diaspora community to assess carefully the composition and activities of any group so as to identify those that are most closely aligned with its own international development aims.⁶⁰¹

Although there is a move toward a higher consideration of diasporas and diaspora issues in the Canadian international development context, it is still in its infancy, especially when compared to measures taken by some other developed countries to facilitate diaspora engagement. To date, the African diaspora – even more so than other diaspora communities – remains excluded from Canada’s international development efforts. As Canada progresses toward encouraging diaspora communities to play a more active role in its various foreign assistance policies and programs, diaspora Africans in Canada need also recognize that any initiative related to the formal inclusion of their needs, potential, and actual contribution to capacity building ventures in their home countries will require sustained efforts on their part.

We next turn to the role of the diaspora in bringing about the necessary support for their effective engagement, in both host and home countries.

⁶⁰¹ COMPAS, 2004; University for Peace, 2006.

6. Increasing Profile and Ensuring Relevance: Role of Diaspora Groups

As we have discussed in this paper, the effective engagement of developing country diaspora groups in the national growth of their countries of origin necessitates a supportive policy environment in, as well as concrete facilitating measures to be taken by, home and host country governments as well as regional and international organizations that work on migration and development issues. In addition, diaspora members themselves have a central role to play, in terms of increasing their visibility, in order to ensure that they are recognized as full-fledged development partners. This section outlines some steps that African diaspora groups need to take in order to raise their profile among mainstream international development actors. It also includes observations on approaches to engagement that may allow for a more effective intervention on the African continent. Parts of the discussion concern the African diaspora in general, while others are specific to the Ethiopian case.

6.1 Advocating Policy Measures and Programs that Enable Diaspora Engagement

The responsibility of advocating appropriate policies and programs that will formally and fully take into account diaspora communities' needs, as well as their actual and potential contribution to home country development, largely lies with diaspora groups themselves. Beyond the various activities they are currently involved in, African diaspora organizations in Canada must start reflecting on how they are going to organize themselves in order to successfully campaign for the establishment of mechanisms that would facilitate their effective engagement in African development endeavours. These lobbying efforts have to be undertaken at both home and host country levels, as well as with relevant international organizations such as IOM and the World Bank. Successful advocacy campaigns will require unity among the African diaspora, as much within groups from specific countries as with organizations and individuals from across the continent.

6.2 Promoting Unity for Maximum Impact

A higher profile of the African diaspora community in Canada can only be achieved through the concerted efforts of various groups to work together on issues that affect them all, including pushing for a better recognition of their role as agents for development. Case after case of interest expressed in, or initiatives established for, support of diaspora groups by both governmental and non-governmental mainstream development players – in Canada as elsewhere in the developed world – bear witness to the fact that an organized and united front is a prerequisite for any diaspora community to be seriously taken into consideration by researchers, policy makers and program managers alike.

For example, certain diaspora communities – the Ukrainian diaspora through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, for instance – have successfully managed to advocate their views in the

formulation of Canadian development programming as regards their country of origin, as a result of their high level of organization and the proactive measures taken to express their interest in having their voices heard.⁶⁰² The credit for the genesis of CIDA's Haitian Diaspora Pilot Project lies partly with an active push for such a program by the Haitian community, which found a favourable response from CIDA's Americas Branch. Although this has not been explicitly stated and the formal impetus for the initiative came from VSO Guyana, it seems safe to assume that, in addition to the reasons already given, the existence of umbrella organizations⁶⁰³ which regroup Guyanese diaspora organizations – thus facilitating their interaction with aid organizations – has played a role in the selection of Guyana for VSO Canada's pilot program on diaspora volunteering.

A similar level of unity and organization is sorely lacking among African diaspora groups in Canada, whether inter- or intra-country. This is partly explained by financial and other capacity constraints, including lack of communications means and organizational capacity to form and foster the necessary linkages.⁶⁰⁴ However, a far more distressing reason for the absence of a common front is the perpetuation of divisions along political, ethnic, religious and other lines that continue to plague many communities, with the Ethiopian community in the diaspora serving as a prime example of such practices.⁶⁰⁵ Such fragmentation of purpose and action – in addition to the existing institutional reluctance to consider diasporas as full-fledged development players – leads to the further marginalization of entire diaspora communities from the mainstream international development structure which is not set up to accommodate such divisive practices.

Establishments of groups such as Young Diplomats,⁶⁰⁶ which focuses on inter- and intra-community inclusive practices, and the efforts of organizations such as AHEAD, which seeks to contribute towards Ethiopian capacity development not only through its own programs but also through efforts to mobilize other groups and facilitate their contributions, give reason to hope for the eventual emergence of a network of development oriented Ethiopian diaspora organizations in Canada and globally. Such a coalition would raise the profile of the Ethiopian diaspora, not only with host governments and relevant international organizations, but also with the Ethiopian government as it would allow for a streamlined diaspora engagement. Indeed, various Ethiopian government officials interviewed for this study have expressed the importance of diaspora Ethiopians organizing themselves under an overarching framework association in order to achieve a more effective and efficient engagement, leading to higher impact and sustainability of efforts.⁶⁰⁷ In this regard, the

⁶⁰² Interview with CIDA representative.

⁶⁰³ Alliance of Guyanese-Canadian Organizations; Guyana-Canada Business and Professional Association; Guyanese Heritage Association; and Guyana Canada Chamber of Commerce.

⁶⁰⁴ AHEAD, 2004.

⁶⁰⁵ AHEAD, 2004; Lyons, 2006.

This has been especially apparent in the lead-up to, and aftermath of, the May 2005 national elections in Ethiopia.

⁶⁰⁶ See Box 29.

⁶⁰⁷ Interviews with Kedir Ali, Tefera Waluwa and Teferi Melesse.

Ethiopian diaspora worldwide would do well to consider the experiences of national diaspora umbrella organizations such as the Nigerians In Diaspora Organization, which regroups Nigerian professional groups and individuals in Europe and in the Americas and which, due to its high level of organization, has been able to achieve wide recognition as a significant player in the Nigerian development arena.⁶⁰⁸

Box 29. Young Diplomats' Diaspora Partnerships Program⁶⁰⁹

Young Diplomats is a youth-led, apolitical and non-denominational Ethiopian diaspora organization. It was established in 2006 with the primary aim of addressing key issues facing the Ethiopian diaspora youth in the Greater Toronto Area. To that end, it has designated four areas of focus for its programs, which are Health, Education, Resource Facilitation, and Diaspora Partnerships. As a newly formed group, Young Diplomats has thus far mainly focused on building its organizational structure and its internal capacity, with the exception of a survey conducted on Ethiopian youth living in the Greater Toronto Area for the University for Peace conference on the role of the diaspora in capacity building for peace and development, and a soon-to-be-launched mentorship project within its Health program.

Although Young Diplomats has yet to launch its Diaspora Partnerships program, the aim of the program includes the formation of relationships with other Ethiopian youth associations in the diaspora, starting with those in Toronto and then moving to others in Canada and eventually in other countries, so as to create a tight network of like-minded associations. This will not only allow them to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices, but will also enable them to have a stronger impact on Ethiopia.

Although the activities of the organization currently focus on providing support to diaspora youth, Young Diplomats envisages establishing initiatives in support of youth in Ethiopia. In this regard, Alpha Abebe – the group's Mentorship Program manager – observes that diaspora organizations that have successfully contributed in various aid and development projects are generally those rooted in strong communities, hence the emphasis on creating linkages among groups in the Ethiopian community.

Keenly aware that fragmented diaspora communities remain without voice or influence, Young Diplomats seeks also to collaborate with groups from other communities which share culture, issues and challenges similar to that of Ethiopian youth, including Eritrean and Somali youth groups. Young Diplomats' long-term vision is for an umbrella organization of Horn of Africa youth groups.

This organization's thoughtful and deliberate approach to participation in Ethiopian development efforts – which primes the formation of a strong organization that is organically connected to others with a similar purpose – merits consideration and emulation by other Ethiopian groups.

Beyond associations at the country level, a well organized and dynamic umbrella organization that would bring together African diaspora groups in Canada and serve an

⁶⁰⁸ Nigerians in Diaspora Organization – Americas, website; Nigerians in Diaspora Organization – Europe, website.

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Alpha Abebe.

advocacy role with relevant Canadian governmental and non-governmental institutions is also needed. In this regard, the newly emerging African Diaspora Association of Canada – which came out of an African Diaspora Community Forum held in April 2005⁶¹⁰ – is a promising development. The Association’s stated objectives include an advocacy and representational role to promote and develop productive linkages between diaspora Africans and mainstream Canadian aid agencies with the aim of, *inter alia*, supporting the recognition of the former as development agents in their respective communities.⁶¹¹ While it is too early to tell how effective this organization will be in achieving its objectives, it is hoped that African diaspora groups in Canada will take advantage of the opportunity and platform it provides for united action. In terms of practical measures to be undertaken as the African Diaspora Association of Canada works on establishing itself, a database of African diaspora associations in Canada, including basic information on their activities, compositions, areas of focus, etc., is urgently recommended. This would, as a first step, serve to create awareness among African diaspora organizations of the existence of other like-minded groups.

6.3 Promoting Youth Engagement

The findings of the study conducted by Young Diplomats for the University for Peace are instructive in terms of opportunities for youth engagement in Ethiopian peace building and development endeavours. These include: the youths’ attachment to Ethiopia, irrespective of whether or not they were born there; their sense of responsibility to help their compatriots; and their general disinterest in Ethiopian politics, which they rightly identify as a “*disruptive influence on relations among Ethiopians in the Diaspora*,”⁶¹² a fact that is only too well evidenced in the divisions that are tearing apart older generations.

These findings suggest the immense opportunity that the younger generation presents for effective and productive linkages between the diaspora and Ethiopia. As the Young Diplomats recommend, “*this high level of interest is a well-defined opportunity for groups and organizations to use this demographic within the community in initiatives aimed abroad*,” and that, furthermore, “*youth apathy in Ethiopian politics [...] can also be seen as an opportunity to engage youth in other issues and forms of social organization that are less conflict-ridden*,”⁶¹³ and, presumably, more oriented toward their shared interest in the development of their country of origin. It should thus not be solely left to youth-focused organizations such as Young Diplomats to engage the Ethiopian youth; rather, all diaspora organizations should seek to integrate systematically younger members of the community in their activities.

⁶¹⁰ AHEAD, SARA-O and South African High Commission in Ottawa, 2005.

⁶¹¹ E-mail communication with Matshele Molepo.

⁶¹² Young Diplomats, 2006:33.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

In this regard, the Canadian branch of People to People Aid Organization has been particularly effective in mobilizing the Ethiopian youth in Toronto – notably through its Habesha Youth Festival, which regularly draws 400 to 500 youth annually – as it seeks to sensitize them, through various activities, to HIV/AIDS-related issues in Ethiopia.⁶¹⁴ More direct mechanisms to promote the engagement of diaspora youth in Ethiopia include targeted internships that allow them to apply their skills in their country of origin,⁶¹⁵ such as those organized by EthioCorps, an Ethiopian-American diaspora initiative which places students, recent graduates and young professionals in volunteer assignments in Ethiopia.

6.4 Bridging Gaps Created by Political Polarization

A number of factors have led to a far from optimal transfer of Ethiopian skills, knowledge, and other resources in the diaspora to Ethiopia. These include political divisions among diaspora groups; the divide between the Ethiopian government and a segment of the diaspora that is bent on removing the former through various means – ranging from campaigns to stop the flow of aid to Ethiopia to support of violent rebellion,⁶¹⁶ and a frequently unstable local political environment after the May 2005 national elections and the ensuing violence and imprisonment of opposition leaders.

Diasporas have the ability to promote peace and development in their countries of origin. Unfortunately, they can also – through their activities – lengthen or aggravate conflicts in their homelands.⁶¹⁷ Indeed, with views that are not always in tune with the situation on the ground, and removed as they are from the reality of the people they claim to speak for,⁶¹⁸ diaspora forces can prove quite destructive as political views that oppose the government in power are translated into actions that call for a complete divorce from development and poverty reduction efforts in the country of origin, as has happened in the case of Ethiopia. In this regard, it would be most useful for all Ethiopian diaspora groups – irrespective of their political affiliations or current level of engagement in Ethiopia – to consider carefully what they advocate in their homeland as the populations who will bear the ill effects that their actions might cause do not, unlike them, benefit from the immunity provided by the option of residence abroad or foreign citizenship.

Democratization, good governance and the rule of law are neither perfectly nor uniformly practiced in Ethiopia. There are bound to be missteps and abuses, as there will be whenever major systemic changes – political or otherwise – are taking place, such as we are currently witnessing in Ethiopia as the country seeks to move from a history of various types of autocratic regimes to a more democratic one. It is a work in progress, and one in which diaspora groups can constructively engage in, through such means as sharing political

⁶¹⁴ Interview with People to People Aid Organization (Canada) – Project Coordinator.

⁶¹⁵ University for Peace, 2006; Young Diplomats, 2006.

⁶¹⁶ Lyons, 2006.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ Newland and Patrick, 2004; University for Peace, 2006.

expertise and experiences as well as knowledge of democratic practices they may have gained in the societies they reside in.⁶¹⁹

Regarding tensions among the diaspora, opportunities to bridge existing divisions may be provided through forums that enable dialogue where diverse views can be openly discussed, with the hope that such exchanges of ideas would generate understanding and tolerance. Examples of a few initiatives aiming to promote such dialogue include the United States-based Ethiopian Extended Dialogue, which seeks to engage the diaspora regarding its potential role in development and peace building in Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian Voice of Reason, which organized forums for discussion that sought to defuse the polarization evident among diaspora groups at the height of the political crisis in Ethiopia.⁶²⁰

As Lyons notes, “*the potential for the diaspora to transform its roles in polarizing conflict, expand its potential roles in peacemaking, and to build links with those organizations working for constructive conflict resolution are significant and largely untapped.*”⁶²¹ It is to be hoped that diaspora groups will increasingly be willing to explore this potential for peacemaking and constructive engagement in Ethiopia.

6.5 Ensuring Demand Driven Activities Based on Genuine Partnerships

The actual impact of diaspora initiatives – similarly to supply driven mainstream aid initiatives – may be undermined by the fact that they are not always sensitive to local needs and demands. For instance, a diaspora group’s drive to help its community of origin, without properly identifying what the recipient parties may require, leads to the provision of skills or resources that do not effectively address the needs of the community.⁶²² Shipment of irrelevant and outdated books, a simple but notorious example of this phenomenon, and other such inefficiencies are discussed in AHEAD’s previous study.⁶²³ Furthermore, as participants to the University for Peace conference on diaspora roles in capacity building noted, “*It is important not to assume that a western or post-graduate education implies a higher degree of education or better capacity to address particular problems in home countries.*”⁶²⁴ Indeed, such assumptions inevitably lead to tensions between diaspora groups and individuals as charges of – real or perceived – arrogance, condescension and laziness are bandied about.⁶²⁵

⁶¹⁹ Kamu, undated; North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, 2006.

⁶²⁰ Lyons, 2006.

⁶²¹ Lyons, 2006:32.

⁶²² AHEAD, 2004.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁴ University for Peace, 2006:14.

⁶²⁵ Agunias, 2006. See also Profile 3 in Appendix 2.

Diaspora projects in home countries must, through the establishment of real partnerships with local counterparts, be responsive and relevant to the needs on the ground. Diaspora-pushed initiatives that fail to assess correctly local needs will only result in squandering much needed resources and causing frustration on all sides. Genuine partnerships – based on respect and trust – are crucial. In this regard, diaspora organizations need to recognize that local organizations have developed their own expertise and that effective collaboration needs to be predicated on mutual exchanges as equal partners and not on a top-down approach.⁶²⁶

6.6 Tempering Unrealistic Expectations

Unrealistic expectations of conditions in the home country may lead diaspora members to become disappointed by their experiences of engaging home country institutions and individuals, and may even cause some to become disinclined to participate in future initiatives. The sheer burden of bureaucracies; weak infrastructures; different work ethics and sense of professional value; perceptions of time at odds with one's own; a culture of "*it's good enough*" that tends to breed mediocrity rather than aiming for excellence; and lack of resources to conduct one's task properly are all possible sources of frustration for diaspora Ethiopians trying to operate within local systems.⁶²⁷ However, it is important to remember that it is precisely to help improve this situation that the diaspora is being called upon. Indeed, if the diaspora is only willing to engage once everything is to its taste, and does not participate in the challenges and problems faced in-country as Ethiopia seeks to build its capacity, then what would be the value added of engaging the diaspora? What would make this group different from any other foreigner? As Tefera Waluwa, Minister of Capacity Building of Ethiopia fittingly noted, the goal of diaspora engagement is to ensure a win-win situation for all involved; however, the diaspora must also be willing to make some sacrifices as, hand-in-hand with its local counterparts, it actively participates in Ethiopia's national growth.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ Findings common to AHEAD's previous study as well as the informal surveys carried out in Ethiopia by members of Young Diplomats, regarding how best diaspora groups could contribute to local development efforts.

⁶²⁷ The other side of the coin, of course, is the view that people in the home country may hold of the diaspora as being time and efficiency obsessed and unresponsive to local social and personal considerations.

⁶²⁸ Interview with Tefera Waluwa.

7. Concluding Remarks

“The Diaspora offers an exceptional synergy: the problem-solving perspective that comes with distance and the intense commitment that comes with a sense of deep closeness and belonging. Oh yes, it also includes a lot of men and women with world-class competence in their respective fields. I could spend hours listing Ethiopians in Europe and the USA who have distinguished themselves in medicine, law, business, academia, athletics, and the arts. In addition to making a mark in their respective fields, many have made a lot of money and would be willing to invest a portion of it right here. The Diaspora holds so much potential for the future of this country. But this potential will only become a reality if we move forward in a spirit of partnership.”

Noah Samara⁶²⁹, Diaspora Ethiopian
CEO of WorldSpace Satellite Radio

AHEAD’s previous study showed there was a growing momentum among Ethiopian diaspora communities in Canada to be actively involved in the development efforts of their country of birth. It also revealed that, on the Ethiopian side, diaspora engagement was welcome and considered necessary. However, despite the fact that many diaspora groups had already started mobilizing, weaknesses in this engagement – largely due to a lack of facilitating mechanisms in both Ethiopia and Canada – were also uncovered.⁶³⁰

The present research, which reviewed existing initiatives in both countries related to diaspora engagement, shows an appreciable improvement in the Ethiopian government’s efforts to encourage its diaspora to participate in national growth endeavours. Indeed, the Ethiopian government, fully cognizant of the diaspora’s potential as a significant development partner, has – commencing in 2002 with the establishment of the Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate and the granting of Person of Ethiopian Origin ID cards to those holding foreign citizenship – multiplied measures that aim to harness this resource effectively. The government’s diaspora-related initiatives are further enhanced by policies and programs – notably the National Capacity Building Program – that are indicative of its commitment to wide ranging reform and development in Ethiopia. However, while the government is genuinely interested in working with any diaspora individual or group seeking to contribute constructively to development initiatives in Ethiopia, there remain weaknesses in its diaspora engagement strategies. This paper suggests different areas in which the Government of Ethiopia may want to develop policy

⁶²⁹ FIELD, 2005:3.

Excerpt from his keynote address to the first meeting of the Forum International for Ethiopians Living in the Diaspora, held in Addis Ababa in January 2005.

⁶³⁰ AHEAD, 2004.

and advances some action points for consideration. Ethiopia is one of the African countries that have suffered most from the effects of the brain drain. Thus, there is also an urgent need for action to reduce this outflow of the very people the country requires to build its capacity, action that goes beyond strategies to engage the diaspora.

On the Canadian side, the research sought to identify governmental and non-governmental mechanisms that would enable diaspora Africans to contribute to the development of their countries of origin. The review revealed that diaspora engagement in general, and that of African communities in particular, has not received adequate attention in Canada. In fact, to date, the African diaspora in Canada remains largely excluded from Canada's development assistance efforts in African countries. However, recent diaspora-related activities – including increased interest from academic and policy circles as well as small pilot initiatives – attest to a growing awareness of the role that transnational communities in Canada can play in promoting Canada's profile and interests abroad, while considering the contribution to development that immigrants from lower income countries could make. As progress along this line continues, it is important that diaspora communities are functionally integrated into Canadian society and encouraged to play a more active role in Canada's various foreign assistance policies and programs. CIDA needs to play a leadership role in this regard. For their part, diaspora Africans in Canada need to recognize that the effective and formal inclusion of their needs, as well as their potential and actual contribution to capacity building ventures in their homelands, in the mainstream development framework will require concerted efforts on their part. Unity within the African diaspora community and a high level of organization are crucial in order to achieve a higher impact in the international development arena.

An overview of regional African bodies and international organizations that have diaspora-related programs was also provided. The inclusion of diaspora Africans in the activities of various Pan-African institutions is gaining momentum, as evidenced by various initiatives that were outlined in the paper. In this regard, AU's numerous efforts to mainstream the African diaspora in its policies and programs are laudable and present a unique opportunity to bring together Africans worldwide in a shared vision and enterprise for the continent's development. However, it is necessary that the interest and political will displayed in engaging the diaspora – in multiple conferences and ensuing recommendations – be translated into action through the establishment of concrete mechanisms. It is hoped that the formal integration of the African diaspora in AU affairs, through the recent establishment of a Diaspora Division, will result in practical programs that will make effective use of resources in the diaspora. Other major players, such as NEPAD and UNECA, have also sought to include the African diaspora in various initiatives. However, a more systematic approach – including programs dedicated to diaspora-related issues and facilitation of their engagement – would ensure a more significant and sustainable involvement. International organizations, such as IOM, have instituted programs to channel diaspora resources to Africa and other developing areas. However, due in large part to financial constraints, these

programs are not as extensive as they should be in order to ensure significant engagement. This points to the need for bilateral and multilateral donors to go beyond promises made at conferences and provide the means which would enable the translation of their stated goodwill into concrete actions.

Diaspora organizations have a central role to play in ensuring that the appropriate policies and programs that would enable their effective and sustainable participation in home-country development are considered, whether in their home or host societies. Lack of organizational capacity, lack of resources, dependence on volunteers, lack of means of communication, marginalization from the mainstream international development sector, and divisions among groups all contribute to the small scale, *ad hoc* and fragmented type of engagement that dominates the field. The importance of uniting so as to have a larger voice cannot be overstated.

As noted in the quote that opened this section, the diaspora presents an enormous potential for capacity development in the home country. However, for this potential to be successfully translated into action that is sustainable and appreciably impacts on Ethiopian and African development, the full cooperation of all stakeholders is essential. These include African countries; African regional and continental bodies; host countries; international organizations; and, of course, the diaspora and their local counterparts. Indeed, fully unleashing the diaspora's potential for development requires effective collaboration among various stakeholders. This is needed to coordinate efforts and thus avoid wasting much needed resources on duplication; share best practices and lessons learned; build the capacity of both diaspora groups and home country institutions; and generally ensure a smooth flow of diaspora financial and human resources to where it is most urgently needed. An excellent example of the type of continental or regional initiatives that African governments and organizations – in partnership with the relevant international bodies and host countries – could consider collaborating on is the regional Latin American working group recently formed to formulate policies to stop the migration of health researchers from the region and promote programs to enable the return of those who have already emigrated. The group, set to commence its work early 2007, will coordinate strategies between governments, training centres, public and private sector employers, professional associations and various international organizations, including IOM, ILO, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean, the Pan American Health Organization, and the General Secretariat for Iberian-American Countries.⁶³¹

Having said that, the ultimate responsibility for creating the conditions necessary to attracting diaspora engagement lies with home country governments who are vested with the responsibility of ensuring national development. In this quest for national growth, no African country can ignore the potential presented by the diaspora and must take the

⁶³¹ Hirschfeld, 2006.

necessary measures – to the limits of capacity – to facilitate their full participation in this effort.

However, as the role of the diaspora as a development partner continues to gain increased currency, it is important that we do not fall prey to “*The Diaspora Myth*,” i.e. the vision of diaspora engagement as a cure-all to African challenges, including the brain drain.⁶³² Diaspora engagement does not substitute for the genuine reforms inside each African country, and supportive international policies and practices, that are necessary in order to achieve widespread and sustainable development across the continent.⁶³³ Thus, while the African diaspora has an important role to play in African development, it is not the panacea for the many difficulties that the continent faces. Nevertheless, effectively engaged, the African diaspora represents an important source of the knowledge, skills and capital the continent requires to fuel its development efforts.

⁶³² E-mail communication with Joseph Manyoni.

⁶³³ Newland and Patrick, 2004.

References

- ActionAid International. (September 2005). *Contradicting Commitments: How the Achievement of Education for All is Being Undermined by the International Monetary Fund*. ActionAid International – Global Campaign for Education.
- Adeba, B. (18 October 2006). *New Ghana Envoy Faced Threats to Her Life*. Embassy – Canada's Foreign Policy Newsweekly.
http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2006/october/18/dc/
- Adisa, J. (20 June 2006) *Opening Address to the 3rd African Union-Civil Society (AU-CSO) Forum, Banjul, The Gambia, 20-21 June 2006*. African Union Commission.
- Africa's Brain Gain Inc. (December 2005). *Leveraging Diaspora Participation in Africa's Socio-Economic Development – Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Africa's Brain Gain Conference in Nairobi*. Africa Brain Gain Inc.
- African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). *Website*.
<http://www.acbf-pact.org/>
- African Development Bank (AfDB). *Website*.
<http://www.afdb.org/>
- African Development Bank (AfDB). (26 December 2006). *AFDB Department Participates in Capacity Building*. AfDB.
http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=293,174339&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&press_item=10448233&press_lang=us
- African Development Bank (AfDB); African Development Fund (ADF). (June 2006). *Ethiopia: 2006-2009 Country Strategy Paper*. ADB, ADF – Country Operations Department North, East and South.
- African Development Forum (ADF). *Website*.
<http://www.uneca.org/ADF/>
- African Unification Front. (13 February 2003). *AU Summit Amends Charter to Include African Diaspora*. FDA Press Release.
<http://www.africanfront.com/page222.php>
- African Union (AU). (July 2006a). *The 2nd Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD II) will be held in Salvador-Bahia from 12 to 14 July 2006*. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU). (April 2006b). *Report of the Experts' Meeting on Migration and Development*. No. MIGR/EXP//Rpt (I). Addis Ababa: AU.

- African Union (AU). (April 2005). *Report of the Meeting of Experts from Member States on the Definition of the African Diaspora*. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU). (October 2004a). *Report of the First Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora*. No. Rapt/Rpt//CAID (I). Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU). (June 2004b). *General Report: African Union Technical Workshop on the Relationship with the Diaspora*. No. TW/Diaspora (I). Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Commission. (May 2004a). *Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission – Volume 1: Vision and Mission of the African Union*. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Commission. (May 2004b). *Strategic Plan of the Commission of the African Union – Volume 2: 2004-2007 Strategic Framework of the Commission of the African Union*. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Commission. (May 2004c). *Strategic Plan of the Commission of the African Union – Volume 3: 2004-2007 Plan of Action – Programmes to Speed Up Integration of the Continent*. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Executive Council. (July 2006a). *Decision on the Establishment of the African Centre for Study and Research on Migration*. DOC. EX.CL/290 (IX) ADD.2. Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Executive Council. (June 2006b). *African Common Position on Migration and Development*. No. EX.CL/277 (IX). Addis Ababa: AU.
- African Union (AU) Executive Council. (June 2006c). *The Migration Policy Framework for Africa*. No. EX.CL/276 (IX). Addis Ababa: AU.
- AfricaRecruit. *Website*.
<http://www.africarecruit.com/>
- Agunias, D. R. (2006). *From a Zero-Sum to a Win-Win Scenario? Literature Review on Circular Migration*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Ajoa, W. (7 December 2006). *FG Launches University Teachers' Improvement Project*. Vanguard Online.
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/features/education/edu107122006.html>
- Amoako, K.Y. (4 February 2005). *Concluding Remarks: Africa Regional Preparatory Conference, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Accra, Ghana*. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/amoako/2005/020405speech_amoako.htm
- Aredo, D. (February 2005). *Migrant Remittances, Shocks and Poverty in Urban Ethiopia: An Analysis of Micro Level Panel Data*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.

- Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. *Website*.
<http://www.asiapacific.ca/>
- Asmellash, B. (April 2006). *Overview of Remittance in Ethiopia*. Ethiopian Economic Association.
- Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD). (October 2004). *Semantics Aside: The Role of the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building – Case Study: Ethiopia*. Ottawa: AHEAD.
- Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD); South African Rainbow Association in Ottawa (SARA-O); South African High Commission in Ottawa. (April 2005). *African Diaspora Community Forum: Report of the Proceedings*. Ottawa: AHEAD, SARA-O, South African High Commission in Ottawa.
- Axworthy, L. et al. (September 2005). *Scoping the Role of Canadian Diaspora in Global Diplomacy and Policy Making*. Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg
- Berthiaume, L. (25 October 2006). *Canada's Changing Face*. Embassy – Canada's Foreign Policy Newsweekly.
http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2006/october/25/diaspora/
- Business in Africa (11 November 2006a). *Ethiopia's Economic Progress Good - WB*. English Business in Africa Online.
http://www.businessinafrica.net/pls/procs/SEARCH.ARCHIVE?p_content_id=401324&p_site_id=74
- Business in Africa (17 August 2006b). *Ethiopian Diaspora Investing in Growth*. English Business in Africa Online.
http://www.businessinafrica.net/pls/procs/SEARCH.ARCHIVE?p_content_id=935991&p_site_id=74
- Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL). *Website*.
<http://www.focal.ca/>
- Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL). (October 2005a). *Foreign Affairs Canada – Canadian International Development Agency: Latin American and Caribbean Diaspora Group Meeting*. Ottawa: FOCAL.
- Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL). (May 2005b). *Executive Summary: Canada – Caribbean Diasporas and Development Conference Series Report*. Ottawa: FOCAL.
- Canadian Heritage – Multiculturalism. (July 2003) *Multiculturalism: Respect, Diversity, Equity – Program Guidelines*. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage

- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). *Website: Ethiopia*. Gatineau: CIDA.
<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/ethiopia>
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). *Website: Office for Democratic Governance*. Gatineau: CIDA.
<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/NIC-54102116-JUN>
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). *Website: Volunteer Cooperation Program*. Gatineau: CIDA.
<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-122012222-MZ3>
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). (2005). *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – Development*. Gatineau: CIDA.
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). (May 2004). *Country Development Programming Framework in Ethiopia (2004-2009)*. Gatineau: CIDA.
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (December 2006) *The World Factbook: Ethiopia*.
<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/et.html>
- Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). (April 2004). *The Contribution of UK-Based Diasporas to Development and Poverty Reduction*. Oxford: University of Oxford.
- Chikezie, C. (29 September 2006). *Africa Insight: Bringing Back the Promise of a Better Life*. Nairobi: The Nation.
- Commission for Africa. (March 2005). *Report of the Commission for Africa*. London: Department for International Development.
- Commission des Relations Extérieures et de la Défense. (June 2004). *Migrants et Développement: Forces d'Avenir*. No. 3/351/1. Brussels: Belgian Senate.
- Costantinos, BT. (28 March 2006). *Public Sector Capacity Building Programme – Meritocracy Review of the Ethiopian Civil Service: Final Report*. Addis Ababa: Centre for Human Environment.
- Creffier, M. (23 October 2006). *Congo: Turning Brain Drain into Brain Gain*. International Press Services.
<http://www.africa-interactive.net/index.php?PageID=1960>
- De Montclos, M. P. (March 2005). *Diasporas, Remittances and Africa South of the Sahara: A Strategic Assessment*. ISS Monograph Series, No. 112. Paris: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement.

- Department for International Development (DfID). *Website: Sending Money Home?*
<http://www.sendmoneyhome.org/>
- Department of Finance Canada. (2006). *Budget Plan 2006: Focusing on Priorities*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.
- Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE). (Undated) *A Short Guide to Access DBE's Loans*. Addis Ababa: DBE.
- Development Research Centre (DRC) on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty. (5 March 2006). *Skilled Migration: New Policy Options*. Briefing – DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, No. 5.
- Doney, M.; Wroe, M. (2005). *A Good Year for the Roses*. Developments: The International Development Magazine. Issue 30. London: Department for International Development.
- El-Khawas, M. A. (Fall 2004). *Brain Drain: Putting Africa between a Rock and a Hard Place*. Mediterranean Quarterly, 37-56.
- Embassy of Ethiopia in Ottawa. *Website*.
<http://www.ethiopia.ottawa.on.ca/>
- Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (ENDA-TM). (October 2005). *Mobilisation des Diasporas Qualifiées au Profit du Développement de leur Pays d'Origine: Etude Diagnostique*. Paris: ENDA-TM.
- Ethiopian Airlines. *Website*.
<http://www.ethiopianairlines.com/>
- Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA). (2006) *Ethiopia: A Country Well Placed to Prosper*. Addis Ababa: EIA.
- Ethiopian News Agency (ENA). (24 January 2007). *Ethiopian Shipping Lines Inaugurates Shebele Cargo Ship at Djibouti Port*. Addis Ababa: ENA.
- Ethiopian News Agency (ENA). (8 September 2006). *Nationals in US Keen to Participate in Nation Building Activities*. The Ethiopian Herald.
<http://www.ethpress.gov.et/Herald/articleDetail.asp?articleid=50385>
- Ethiopia Today Focus. (September 2004). *Ethiopians in the Diaspora in Nation Building Endeavors*. Ethiopia Today, 8 (3), 3-7.
- Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development (July 2006). *Action Plan*. Rabat: 10-11 July 2006.
<http://www.maec.gov.ma/migration/Doc/PA%20final%20EN.pdf>

- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (28 October 2003a). *Investment (Amendment) Proclamation No. 375/2003*. Addis Ababa: Federal Negarit Gazeta, 10 (8).
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (7 February 2003b). *Investment Incentives and Investment Areas Reserved for Domestic Investors – Council of Ministers Regulations No. 84/2003*. Addis Ababa: Federal Negarit Gazeta, 9 (34).
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (2 July 2002a). *Investment Proclamation No. 280/2002*. Addis Ababa: Federal Negarit Gazeta, 8 (27).
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). (5 February 2002b). *Providing Foreign Nationals of Ethiopian Origin with Certain Rights to be Exercised in their Country of Origin – Proclamation No. 270/2002*. Addis Ababa: Federal Negarit Gazeta, 8 (17).
- Fontaine, T. (December 2005). *How Can Multilateral Financial Institutions Support Diaspora Development Partnership: A New Perspective*. Presented at the United Nations Caribbean Diaspora Experts' Meeting in New York.
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. *Website: Canada's International Policy Statement – Overview – Changing How We Work*.
<http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/ips/ips-overview6-en.asp>
- Forget, G. (12 November 2004). *Opening Statement at the Association for Higher Education and Development's (AHEAD) Stakeholder Roundtable: Engaging the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building Efforts*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Forum International for Ethiopians Living in the Diaspora (FIELD). (January 2005). *The Potential Within: Is the Ethiopian Diaspora a Response to the Nation's Brain Drain? – Final Report – Part 1: "Transforming Brain Drain into Brain Gain"*. Addis Ababa: FIELD.
- Frommer's Staff, The. (21 November 2006). *Frommer's Top Travel Destinations for 2007*.
<http://www.frommers.com/articles/4056.html>
- Ghana News Agency. (12 December 2006). *MOH signs MOU with Netherlands on Migration of Health Professionals*. Hi Ghana.
http://www.highana.com/hgsite/health/read_news.php?nid=14790
- Ghana Skills Bank. *Website*.
<http://www.ghanaskillsbank.com>
- Gidley-Kitchin, V. (22 February 2000). *UN Tackles African Brain Drain*. BBC News.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/652801.stm>

- Grey, S. (11 May 2006). *Creating a Conducive Environment for Diaspora Contributions: The Experience of Ghana – Prepared by the National Population Council–Ghana for UNFPA/UNITAR/IOM workshop on the Contribution of Diasporas*. New York.
- Higazi, A. (January 2005). *Integrating Migration & Development Policies: Challenges for ACP-EU Cooperation*. Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management. Discussion Paper, No. 62.
- Hirschfeld, D. (12 October 2006). *Crean Grupo Regional para Detener Fuga de Cerebros*. Science and Development Network.
<http://www.scidev.net/gateways/index.cfm?fuseaction=readitem&rgwid=1&item=News&itemid=3151&language=2&CFID=6644529&CFTOKEN=73630475>
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). *Website: International Academic Mobility (IAM) Initiative – Activities and Benefits*.
<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/hip/lld/lssd/iam/activities/activities-benefits.shtml>
- International Labour Organization (ILO). *Website: Skilled Labour Migration (the ‘Brain Drain’) from Developing Countries: Analysis of Impact and Policy Issues*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/projects/skillmig/index.htm>
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (December 2003). *Rapport General du Symposium Tripartite Sous-Regional du BIT sur la Migration de Main-d’œuvre et le Développement en Afrique de L’Ouest*. Dakar: ILO.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF). (April 2005). *World Economic Outlook: Globalization and External Imbalances*. Washington, DC: IMF.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Website: Mobilizing Ethiopians Living Abroad for the Development of Ethiopia*.
<http://ethiopiandiaspora.org/>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2005). *Results of the Survey “Engaging Diasporas as Agents of Development”*. Geneva: IOM.
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (11 March 2003). *The Diaspora as National Capacity Development Strategy – Press Release*. Addis Ababa: IOM.
- Ionescu, D. (2006). *Engaging Diasporas as Development Partners for Home and Destination Countries: Challenges for Policymakers*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

- Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN). (22 December 2005). *Ethiopia-Eritrea: Commission Rules on Border War Claims*. Geneva: United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=50817>
- Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN). (18 June 2003). *Ethiopia: Women's Coalition on HIV/AIDS Launched*. Geneva: United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
<http://www.aegis.com/news/irin/2003/IR030627.html>
- International Development Research Centre (IDRC). *Website*.
<http://www.idrc.ca/>
- Italian Development Cooperation in Ethiopia. (Undated). *Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)*.
http://www.itacaddis.org/italy/index.cfm?fuseaction=basic_pages.basic_page&page_name=7
- Kamu. (Undated). *The New Ethiopia Demands a New Paradigm from the Ethiopian Diaspora*. Ethiopian News Agency.
<http://www.ena.gov.et/Articles/The%20New%20Ethiopia%20Demands%20A%20New%20Paradigm%20From%20The%20Ethiopian%20Diaspora.asp>
- Kaul, M. (Undated). *Reversing Africa's Brain Drain: The AfricaRecruit Initiative and the Challenge to Governments, the Diaspora and the Private Sector*. London: Common Business Council, AfricaRecruit.
- Kenya High Commission – UK. (9 December 2006). *Kenya Diaspora Investment Forum 2006: Mobilising Kenyans for Kenya*. The Kenya High Commission Official Site.
<http://www.kenyahighcommission.net/archive1.html>
- Kramer, R. (31 January 2005). *Skilled Africans Filling Key Posts Abroad, Draining Home Countries of Vital Experience*. AllAfrica.com.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200502070091.html>
- Kuznetsov, Y. (November 2005). *From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation: Emerging Policy Agenda*. Presented for the Office of Policy and Strategy at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Washington, DC. The World Bank.
- Kwenin, C. (12 November 2004). *Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa*. Presented at the Stakeholder Roundtable organised by the Association for Higher Education and Development in Ottawa on Engaging the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building Efforts. International Organization for Migration.
- Limbach, I. (13 July 2005). *Keeping it Local in Africa and Asia*. Financial Times.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/10588a4c-f2c0-11d9-8094-00000e2511c8.html>

- Lyons, T. (September 2006). *Conflict Generated Diasporas and Peacebuilding: A Conceptual Overview and Ethiopian Case Study – Draft*. Arlington: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.
- Mafinezam, A. (July/August 2005). *The World in Canada*. *Literary Review of Canada*, 13 (6), 3-5.
- Mekuria, I. (10 December 2006a). *A New Plan in Hand, DBE Sees a Profitable Future*. Addis Fortune.
<http://www.addisfortune.com/A%20New%20Plan%20in%20Hand,%20DBE%20Sees%20a%20Profitable%20Future.htm>
- Mekuria, I. (13 August 2006b). *Duty Free Amendment Offers Reprieve Until October*. Addis Fortune.
<http://www.addisfortune.com/Vol%207%20No%20328%20Archive/Duty%20Free%20Amendment%20Offers%20Reprieve%20Until%20October.htm>
- Mekuria, I. (30 July 2006c). *Ministry Ends Duty Free Imports for Returnees*. Addis Fortune.
<http://www.addisfortune.com/Vol%207%20No%20326%20Archive/Ministry%20Ends%20Duty%20Free%20Imports%20For%20Returnees.htm>
- Mekuria, I. (30 July 2006d). *NBE Directive to Police Co's Responsible for Int'l Money Transfers*. Addis Fortune.
<http://www.addisfortune.com/Vol%207%20No%20326%20Archive/NBE%20Directive%20to%20Police%20Co's%20Responsible%20for%20Int'l%20Money%20Transfers.htm>
- Migration News. (July 2005). *Canada: Brain Waste*. *Migration News*, 12(3).
http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/comments.php?id=3115_0_2_0
- Migration Policy Institute (MPI). *Website: Country and Comparative Data*.
http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/comparative.cfm?CFID=12558679&CF_TOKEN=44918044
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of Ethiopia (MOFED). (July 2002). *Ethiopia: Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program*. Addis Ababa: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia – MOFED.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia (MOFA). *Website: Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs (EEA)*. Addis Ababa: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia – MOFA.
http://www.mfa.gov.et/Ethiopians_Origin_Abroad/Ethiopia_Origin.php
- Ministry of Information of Ethiopia (MOI). (January 2006). *Agro-Industrial Potential in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia – MOI – Press and Audiovisual Department.

Ministry of Information of Ethiopia (MOI). (February 2004). *Facts about Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia – MOI – Press and Audiovisual Department.

MoneyGram International. *Website*.

<http://www.moneygram.com/eHowMuch/howMuch.do?countryCode=CA&languageCode=en>

Mosca, D. T. (7 December 2005). *Migration for Development in Africa: Lessons, Challenges and Opportunities*. Presented at the 2nd Annual Africa's Brain Gain Conference in Nairobi. International Organization for Migration.

Mutume, G. (July 2006). *Harnessing the Internet for Development: African Countries Seek to Widen Access, Produce Content*. African Renewal, 20 (2), 14-15.

Musoni, E. (3 December 2006). *Kagame Meets UK Diaspora*. The New Times.

http://www.newtimes.co.rw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9659&Itemid=1

National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE). (28 August 2006a). *Directive No. FXD/31/2006: Amendment to Directive No. FXD/25/2004 – Establishment and Operation of Foreign Currency Account for Non-Resident Ethiopians and Non-Resident Ethiopian Origin*.

<http://www.nbe.gov.et/gallery/Directives/Establishment%20and%20operation%20directives.html>

National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE). (28 August 2006b). *Directive No. FXD/30/2006: Provisions for International Remittance Services*.

<http://www.nbe.gov.et/gallery/Directives/international%20remittance%20directives.html>

National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE). (2004). *Directive No. FXD/25/2004: Amendment to Directive No. FXD/24/2004 – Issued for the Establishment and Operation of Foreign Currency Account for Non-Resident Ethiopians and Non-Resident Ethiopian Origin*.

Nega, B. *et al.* (March 2004). *Using Resources from Migration for Development in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Economic Association / Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute. Report prepared for the International Organization for Migration.

NetCorps Canada International. *Website*.

<http://www.netcorps-cyberjeunes.org/public/en/accueil.aspx>

Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID). (July 2006). *Calling All Diaspora: Understanding the Interest and Capacity of Ethiopian Diaspora Professionals to Address HIV/AIDS among Ethiopians – Preliminary Report*. Washington, DC: Visions for Development Inc.

- Newland, K.; Patrick, E. (July 2004). *Beyond Remittances: The Role of Diaspora in Poverty Reduction in their Countries of Origin*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). (October 2001). *The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)*.
- Nigerian National Universities Commission. *Website: Nigerian Experts and Academics in the Diaspora Scheme*.
<http://nucneads.org>
- Nigerian National Voluntary Service. *Website*.
<http://www.fmst-nnvs.com/>
- Nigerians in Diaspora Organization – Americas. *Website*.
<http://www.nidoamericas.org>
- Nigerians in Diaspora Organization – Europe. *Website*.
<http://www.nidoeurope.org>
- North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. (August 2006). *Social Remittances of the African Diasporas in Europe – Case Studies: Netherlands and Portugal*. Migration and Co-Development. Portugal: North-South Centre.
- Nunn, A. (April 2005). *The 'Brain Drain': Academic and Skilled Migration to the UK and its Impacts on Africa – Report to the AUT and NATFHE*. Leeds: Policy Research Institute, Leeds Metropolitan Institute.
- Pankhurst, S. E. (1955). *Ethiopia: A Cultural History*. Lalibela House.
- Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). (June 2004). *An Action Plan to Prevent Brain Drain: Building Equitable Health Systems in Africa*. Boston: PHR.
- People to People Aid Organization (P2P). (January 2006). *People to People: Past, Present and Future*. Addis Ababa: People to People Aid Organization – Ethiopia.
- Reporter, The. (14 January 2006). *Ethiopia Searches for a Port*. Addis Ababa: The Reporter.
<http://www.ethiopianreporter.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2394>
- Returnees Caucus. (7 January 2006). *Returnees Caucus Appeal to the Ethiopian Diaspora and the International Community*.
<http://www.aigaforum.com/ReturneesCaucusAppeal.pdf>
- Robinson, R. (July 2005). *Beyond the State Bounded Immigrant Incorporation Regime – Transnational Migrant Communities: Their Potential Contribution to Canada's Leadership Role and Influence in a Globalized World*. Ottawa: North-South Institute.

- Sander, C.; Mainbo, S. M. (February 2005). *Migrant Labor Remittances in Africa: Reducing Obstacles to Developmental Contributions*. Findings. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Sawahel, W. (5 April 2006). *Head of African Union Attacks 'Brain Trade'*. Science and Development Network.
<http://www.scidev.net/content/news/eng/head-of-african-union-attacks-brain-trade.cfm>
- Séguin, B.; Singer, P. A.; Daar, A. S. (16 June 2006a). *Scientific Diasporas*. Science, 312, 1602–1603.
- Séguin, B. *et al.* (2006b). *Scientific Diasporas as an Option for Brain Drain: Recirculating Knowledge for Development*. International Journal of Biotechnology, 8 (1/2), 78-90.
- Shinn, D. H. (23 November 2002). *Reversing the Brain Drain in Ethiopia*. Chora Inc. – Ethiopian Center for Educational Information.
<http://chora.virtualave.net/brain-drain8.htm>
- Singer, P. (20 June 2006). *Helping their Homelands, and Helping Us*. National Post.
<http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/issuesideas/story.html?id=4694ce50-6eba-4fd9-a3e5-86fe889dae62>
- Smillie, I. (October 2004). *Hubris, Humility and Human Resources: Notes on the Proposed Canada Corps*. Ottawa: The Canadian Council for International Co-Operation.
- South African Migration Project (SAMP). *Website*.
<http://www.queensu.ca/samp/>
- Sunday Mail, The. (29 September 2006). *Brain Drain: Zimbabwe Worst Affected*. African Echo News.
<http://www.africanecho.co.uk/africanechonews8-sept29.html>
- Tanner, A. (January 2005). *Brain Drain and Beyond: Returns and Remittances of Highly Skilled Migrants*. Global Migration Perspectives No. 24. Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration.
- Teferra, D. (Summer 2006). *Beyond Brain Drain: Possibilities and Challenges of Remitting Migrant Taxes*. International Higher Education – The Boston College Center for Higher Education, No.44, 8-10.
- Teferra, D. (Spring 2004). *Mobilizing Africa's Intellectual Diaspora*. International Higher Education – The Boston College Center for Higher Education, No.35, 20-22.

- Tettey, W. J. (February 2002). *Africa's Brain Drain: Exploring Possibilities for its Positive Utilization through Networked Communities*. Mots Pluriels, No. 20.
<http://motspluriels.arts.uwa.edu.au/MP2002wjt.html>
- United Nations (UN). (October 2006a). *Summary of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development – Note by the President of the General Assembly*. A/61/515. New York: United Nations.
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/Text/SummaryFinalRT3.pdf>
- United Nations (UN). (14 September 2006b). *Summary of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Round Table 3: Multidimensional Aspects of International Migration and Development, Including Remittances – Summary by the Chair H.E. Mr. Kastriot Sulko*. New York: United Nations.
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/Text/SummaryFinalRT3.pdf>
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). (March 2004). *An Investment Guide to Ethiopia: Opportunities and Conditions* UNCTAD/ITE/IIA/2004/2. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (26 March 2003). *Support to Public Sector Capacity Building and Reform Programme in Ethiopia*. Programme Number: ETH/02/019/A/01/99. UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme – Ethiopia (UNDP-Ethiopia). *Website: United Nations Volunteers*. Addis Ababa: UNDP.
http://www.et.undp.org/unv/un_volunteers.htm
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (12 December 2006a). *Africa Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF 3). Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening Policymaking in Africa – Connecting Research Institutions and Policy Makers*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (2006b). *International Migration and Development: Implications for Africa*. No. ECA/SDD/06/01. Addis Ababa: UNECA.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (2003). *Africa Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF3). Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening Policymaking in Africa – Connecting Research Institutions and Policy Makers – Concept Note*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (24 February 2000). *Report of the Regional Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa*. No. E/ECA/IDRC/IOM/2000/L. Addis Ababa: UNECA.

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). *Website: Diaspora Knowledge Networks*. Paris: UNESCO.
<http://www.unesco.org/shs/migration/diaspora>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (20 November 2006). *UNESCO and HP to Launch Project to Counter Brain Drain in Africa*. Press Release No. 2006-143. Paris: UNESCOPRESS.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2004). *La Fuite des Compétences en Afrique Francophone: Etats des Lieux, Problèmes et Approches de Solutions*. Paris: UNESCO.
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). (May 2006). *Workshop Report – UNITAR/UNFPA/IOM Key Migration Issues Workshop Series: Contributions of Diaspora*. New York: UNITAR.
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2006). *State of the World Population 2006 – A Passage to Hope: Women and International Migration*. New York: UNFPA.
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). (December 2005). *AIDS Epidemic Update*. UNAIDS/05.19E. Geneva: UNAIDS.
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). (June 2004). *2004 Report on Global AIDS Epidemic*. UNAIDS/04.16E. Geneva: UNAIDS.
- United States Department of State. (December 2006). *Consular Information Sheet*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Consular Affairs.
- University for Peace. (October 2006). *Expert Forum – Capacity Building for Peace and Development: Roles of Diaspora. Final Report*. Toronto: University for Peace.
- Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Canada. (2006). *VSO Canada Pilot Project: Canada – Guyana Diaspora Volunteering Initiative*. Ottawa: VSO Canada.
- Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) United Kingdom (UK). (2005). *Report on Diaspora Volunteering Initiative*. London: VSO UK.
- Walta Information Center (WIC). (September 2006a). *H.E. the Governor's Responses to Questions Forwarded by Walta Information Center*. Addis Ababa: WIC.
<http://www.waltainfo.com/Interview/2006/Sep/18663.htm>
- Walta Information Center (WIC). (7 September 2006b). *ETC to Make 10,000 Rural Kebeles Beneficiaries of Telephone Services*. Addis Ababa: WIC.
<http://www.waltainfo.com/EnNews/2006/Sep/07Sep06/17723.htm>

- Walta Information Center (WIC). (January 2006c). *"We Will Achieve the MDGs as Planned"*. Addis Ababa: WIC.
<http://www.waltainfo.com/Interview/2006/Jan/8856.htm>
- Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation. *Website*.
<http://www.gordonfn.org/>
- Western Union Canada. *Website: Western Union Money Transfer Service*.
<https://www.westernunion.ca/info/osMoneyTransfer.asp>
- Wickramasekara, Piyasiri. (November 2002). *Policy Responses to Skilled Migration: Retention, Return and Circulation*. Perspectives on Labour Migration, No. 5E. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- World Bank. *Website: Diasporas of Highly Skilled and Migration of Talent*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/WBI/WBIPROGRAMS/KFDLP/0,,contentMDK:20692386~menuPK:2882115~pagePK:64156158~piPK:64152884~theSitePK:461198,00.html>
- World Bank. (2004). *2002 in International Development Select Committee*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (May 2003). *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Grant in the Amount of SDR 93 Million (US\$126.8 Million Equivalent) to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the Road Sector Development Phase I Project in Support of the Second Phase of the Road Sector Development Program*. Report No. 25942 ET. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Investment News. (1999). *Ethiopian Shipping Lines: Interview with Mr. Ambachew Abraha: General Manager*. World Investment News.
<http://www.winne.com/ethiopia/to08.html>
- World University Service of Canada (WUSC). (December 2004). *New Canadian Voices: A Contribution to Canada's International Policy Review – Executive Summary of a discussion forum organized by World University Service of Canada*. Ottawa: WUSC.
- Xinhua. (31 July 2006a). *World Bank to Lead Lenders in Trans-African Cable Telephone Project*. English People Daily Online.
http://english.people.com.cn/200607/21/eng20060721_285363.html
- Xinhua. (30 May 2006b). *Overseas Ethiopians Increase Investment at Home*. English People Daily Online.
http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200605/30/eng20060530_269582.html

- Xinhua. (24 May 2006c). *Foreign Investors Flood Ethiopia*. English People Daily Online.
http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200605/24/eng20060524_268169.html
- Yacob, Y. (January 2005). *Reversing Ethiopia's Brain Drain: A National Imperative – Part I*. EthiopiaFirst News Page.
<http://www.ethiopiafirst.com/news2005/Jan/Reversing-Brain-Drain-I.html>
- Young Diplomats. (October 2006). *Youth Perspectives: Challenges to Peace Building and Development in the Ethiopian Community*. Toronto: Young Diplomats.
- Zaleski, E. (July 2006). *Strengthening National and Local Volunteering in Guyana – Possible Roles for VSO: Feasibility Study*. Georgetown: Voluntary Service Overseas Guyana.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Persons and Organizations Consulted

In Ethiopia

Government of Ethiopia⁶³⁴

- **Girma Wolde-Giorgis**, President, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- **Seyoum Mesfin**, Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia
- **Tefera Waluwa**, Minister, Ministry of Capacity Building of Ethiopia
- **Getachew Hamussa Hailemariam**, Ambassador, Embassy of Ethiopia in Canada

- **Abye Tasse**, Associate Vice President, Office of International Affairs; Dean, Graduate School of Social Work, Addis Ababa University
- **Anteneh Mekonnen Maru**, Senior Marketing Officer, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (*participated in his personal capacity*)
- **Birtukan Ayano**, First Secretary (Constituency Building), Embassy of Ethiopia in Canada
- **Ermias Dagne**, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Addis Ababa University; Chairman of the Board, Getachew Bolodia Foundation
- **Fesseha Tesfu Beyene**, Director General, Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia
- **Gashaw Haile**, Special Assistant to the President, Addis Ababa University
- **Haile-Michael Aberra**, President, Ethiopian Civil Service College
- **Hailu Abebe**, Head, Information and Public Relations Office, Ministry of Trade and Industry
- **Kedir Ali**, Head, Diaspora Coordinating Office, Ministry of Capacity Building of Ethiopia
- **Negatu Mereke**, Head, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
- **Seife Desta**, Director, Banking and Foreign Exchange Directorate, National Bank of Ethiopia
- **Teferi Melesse**, Counsellor, Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs General Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia
- **Tilahun Gemechu**, Investment Promotion Team Leader, Ethiopian Investment Agency

⁶³⁴ Alphabetized by first name as is standard practice with Ethiopian names, with the exception of the first four, presented in accordance with rank.

Government of Ethiopia (Continued)

- **Yewondwossen Teshome**, President, Development Bank of Ethiopia
- **Zufan Lakew**, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Addis Ababa University

Non-Governmental Sector⁶³⁵

- **Assefa Bequele**, Executive Director, African Child Policy Forum
- **BT Costantinos**, President, Center for Human Environment; Vice-President, Africa Humanitarian Action
- **Getahun Tafesse**, Ethiopian Multidisciplinary Professionals Association
- **Girma Tuwafu**, Education for Sustainable Development
- **Haile Kiros**, Knowledge Ethiopia
- **Kebede Asrat**, Executive Director, Christian Relief and Development Association
- **Nigussu Legesse**, Commissioner, Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission
- **Yusuf Reja**, Managing Director, InfoMind Solutions

Diaspora Members⁶³⁶

- **Abey Tedla**, Member of the Diaspora (Temporary Returnee)
- **Abraham Sewonet Abatneh**, Member of the Diaspora (Canada)
- **Guebray Berhane**, Member of the Diaspora (Permanent Returnee)
- **Hohete Arefaine**, Member of the Diaspora (United States)
- **Joseph Kibur**, Member of the Diaspora (Permanent Returnee)
- **Meseret Mamo**, Member of the Diaspora (Temporary Returnee)
- **Mulugetta Bezzabeh**, Member of the Diaspora (Permanent Returnee)
- **Tsehayou Seyoum**, Member of the Diaspora (Temporary Returnee)
- **Tsion Mariam Dawit**, Member of the Diaspora (Permanent Returnee)

⁶³⁵ Alphabetized by first name as is standard practice with Ethiopian names.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

International Organizations

- **Cecilia Cantos**, Head of Migration for Development Department, International Organization for Migration
- **Christina Holmgren**, Senior Labour Standards Specialist, International Labour Organization
- **Charles A. Kwenin**, Chief of Mission to Ethiopia, International Organization for Migration

In Canada

Government of Canada

- **Canadian International Development Agency** representatives in Canada and in Ethiopia
- **Donna James**, Senior Program Officer, Community Action Outreach and Promotion, Multiculturalism and Human Rights Branch, Canadian Heritage
- **Gisèle Morin-Labatut**, Senior Program Officer, Canadian Partnerships, Program and Partnership Branch, International Development Research Centre

Non-Governmental Sector

- **Fodé Beaudet**, Cooperant Programming Representative for Africa, CUSO
- **Theo Breedon**, National Volunteering Development Officer - West Africa and Guyana, Voluntary Service Overseas Canada
- **Marie Carter**, Director, Professional and International Affairs, Canadian Council of Professional Engineers
- **Isabelle Legaré**, Manager, International Initiatives and Exchanges, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
- **Parker Mitchell**, Co-CEO, Engineers without Border-Canada
- **Marjan Montazemi**, Programme Manager, Global Citizenship Programme, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation
- **Nicolas Moyer**, Coordinator, Canadian Network of NGOs in Ethiopia
- **Tanya Salewski**, Program Manager, Strengthening National Nurses Associations Program, Canadian Nurses Association

Non-Governmental Sector (Continued)

- **Christopher Smart**, former Director, Special Initiatives Division, International Development Research Centre; former Chair of Board of Directors, Voluntary Service Overseas Canada (*participated in his personal capacity*)
- **Bernard Taylor**, Executive Director, Partnership Africa Canada

Diaspora Members and Organizations

- **Alpha Abebe**, Mentorship Program Manager, Young Diplomats
- **Joseph Manyoni**, Retired - Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University
- **Matshela Molepo**, President, African Diaspora Association of Canada
- **Fassil Nebebe**, Acting Chair and Professor, Department of Decision Sciences and Management of Information Systems, John Molson School of Business, Concordia University
 - Project Coordinator, People to People Aid Organization – Canada

Appendix 2

Illustrative Profiles of Ethiopian-Canadian Professionals

Profile 1

<p>Brief CV</p>	<p>Education: Ph.D. in Mathematics and Statistics</p> <p>Professional experience: Full Professor and Chair, Department of Decision Sciences and Management Information Systems. Teaching, research and consulting on research designs, data management, modelling, analysis and implementation.</p> <p>Skills that can be contributed: Primarily scholarly, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ training of high level manpower: transferring knowledge and expertise in statistical sciences, renewal of intellectual resources ○ developing and implementing policies, standards and regulations on issues of research and development through teaching, administration and research dissemination
<p>Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?</p>	<p>If yes, what is your motivation? Yes, I have, under the banner of [a professional society], which I co-founded in 1999 and served as its first president. One of the factors limiting the realization of good academic standard of universities has been traced to an absence of acceptable level of importance given to research. I am interested in programs engaged in enhancing the standards of student and the skills and profiles of faculty in statistical sciences.</p> <p>In what capacity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graduate student guidance (on campus and/or distance) ○ Collaborative research with faculty (on campus and/or distance) ○ Raise the standards of the means of dissemination and use of research work ○ Provide materials for teaching and research ○ Participate in editorial functions of [Ethiopian scientific] journals
<p>Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?</p>	<p>Yes, to a limited degree, [as mentioned above].</p>
<p>If yes, what were the results?</p>	<p>[Some initiatives] did not materialize due to lack of interest from the receiving side. [As regards efforts to raise the standard of local Ethiopian scientific publications,] I have published and have managed to convince colleagues and former professors to do likewise. In Canada and USA, such</p>

	<p>publications are not considered useful for academic pursuit since they are not rated and lack international recognition. The ultimate tests of quality of any research contribution are its importance and use by end-users, and the extent to which it influences the direction of activity in the target community. This is particularly a major problem for younger scholars who struggle for securing tenure and/or promotion in universities.</p>
<p>Given the opportunity, would you be willing to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?</p>	<p>Under certain circumstances, I am interested in participating in programs that are engaged in imparting skills as outlined [...] above.</p>
<p>Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?</p>	<p>I can only participate during sabbatical leaves from my university (which can be obtained for a period 6 months every 3 years, or for a period of a year in 6 years) or annually during spring-summer from May to August. Sometimes a longer period (up to 2 years) could be arranged based on valid justifications. Obviously, transportation and housing are concerns. Depending on the extent of stay some sort of arrangements for stipend may have to be worked out. I prefer to have to assignments under sponsors like CIDA or Fulbright, etc. regarding these issues.</p>
<p>In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in Ethiopia?</p>	<p>There must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ complete understanding of unique needs and various levels of domain expertise that drive the optimal level of services needed to meet the objectives ○ well laid out plans or strategies for participants to immediately engage in imparting their skills with a minimum loss of time.

Profile 2

Brief CV	Education: Ph.D. in Hydroinformatics (2002); Master of Science in Hydraulic Engineering (1997); Bachelor of Science in Hydraulic Engineering (1992).
	Professional experience: 2005-present: Researcher in climate change impact studies; 2002-2004: Post doctoral research fellow; 1997-2002: PhD Researcher and teaching assistant; 1992-1994: University Lecturer. Licensed Professional Engineer in the Province of Ontario (P.Eng.).
	Skills that can be contributed: Research and consultancy in water resources and environmental studies; teaching and supervision of graduate students.
Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?	If yes, what is your motivation? Yes, and my motivation is love of my country and sense of responsibility
	In what capacity? Such as a research collaborator, visiting lecturer, research supervisor, etc.
Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?	Yes, for example: I have tried to facilitate acceptance and scholarship for Ethiopian graduate students who wanted to study in Canada; I have also initiated research collaboration between research centres in Canada and Ethiopia.
If yes, what were the results?	One Ethiopian student has started his PhD studies [at a Canadian university]. The research collaboration initiative has started just recently and no concrete achievement has been made yet.
Given the opportunity, would you be willing to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?	Yes, especially short-term assignments such as giving short courses, presenting a seminar, supervising graduate students and research projects, etc.
Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?	I could take short-term assignments in Ethiopia for a couple of months or longer term collaboration from a Canadian base. What I do from a Canadian base will most probably be on a voluntary basis. If I have to travel to Ethiopia, I may have to look for a way to cover my basic expenses based on the type of project I am involved in.
In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in	Barriers from the Canadian side for meaningful contribution could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lack of accurate info as to needs ○ fear of affecting one's career in Canada (in case of long-term assignment) ○ difficulty in securing funding for collaborative projects

Ethiopia?	Barriers from the Ethiopian side for meaningful contribution could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lack of interest on receiving side ○ lack of basic infrastructures ○ lack of political stability in the country
------------------	--

Profile 3

Brief CV	Education: Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics
	Professional experience: Since 1999: Programmer and/or analyst for [a Canadian federal agency]
	Skills that can be contributed: there is a huge demand in Information and Communication Technology. However since Ethiopia is still underdeveloped, any type of skills could help. There is a severe shortage of skilled professionals in practically every sector.
Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?	If yes, what is your motivation? Yes. [Currently on an assignment in Ethiopia]
	In what capacity? I am going back to school to do my Masters' in International Development so that I can combine it with my ICT background and come back to Ethiopia to do more work.
Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?	---
If yes, what were the results?	---
Given the opportunity, would you be willing to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?	I could, but it really depends. Like I said the political situation is not very stable and makes it difficult to concentrate on just work and ignore every thing else that goes around us. So if I am not protected by my Canadian citizenship and aid worker status here, it could be a bit difficult to get involved to help the poor. I wouldn't come back just on my own and try to do some work unless I am protected by some organization. At least for the time being and with the current situation but if things improve I would.
Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?	Like I said above it is difficult situation at the moment and there is no stability or guarantee you would be safe. Now people are divided along tribal as well as religious lines so I wouldn't be able to do just my work and avoid everything else. If I am coming, it is to make things better and with this situation it is not that easy.

In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in Ethiopia?	I think politically the country has to do a lot to make things better and create conducive environment to make people come back and stay here. There are still lots of obstacles for just a person to come and start working and making a difference. Even as a citizen things are inconvenient. The bureaucracy is still here, the work ethics of the locals and so many other obstacles that we have to work on. I think both sides need to work on improving things. And also people coming back need to accept that things are going to be hard and that sometimes even impossible.
---	---

Profile 4

Brief CV	Education: Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Business (1996).
	Professional experience: Self-employed in various Internet-related endeavours, including software development, Internet-based businesses and consulting.
	Skills that can be contributed: Knowledge of the global IT and telecom industry. Specifically, Internet Service Provider, Web Hosting and Domain Name Registration.
Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?	If yes, what is your motivation? I would like to help my country and people.
	In what capacity? I would like to do consulting, training or teaching.
Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?	No. There hasn't been readily available opportunity for me to contribute in this regard.
If yes, what were the results?	---
Given the opportunity, would you be willing to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?	Yes (management consulting, training or teaching, especially for Ethiopian Telecom and similar companies).
Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?	I am quite flexible.

<p>In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in Ethiopia?</p>	<p>I think the biggest barrier is lack of information. People don't really know what opportunities are available in their respective area. I think a website that would aggregate such information would be useful. Given that most Ethiopian-Canadians have relatives back in Ethiopia, they wouldn't mind spending several months working on an assignment. Not only would this be a great experience and career enhancing, it would also give them an opportunity to visit family and friends. I know of many Ethiopian-Canadians that travel to Europe to gain experience right after graduation. I am sure given similar opportunities in Ethiopia; they would have chosen the latter.</p>
--	---

Profile 5

<p>Brief CV</p>	<p>Education: Currently completing a Master in Arts in Sociology; Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Social Administration.</p>
	<p>Professional experience: Since 1999, worked with a number of international multilateral and bilateral aid organizations, including the United Nations, in various humanitarian endeavours focusing on conflict resolution and peace-building as well as food security. Has also volunteer experience in migration and refugee settlement issues.</p>
	<p>Skills that can be contributed: ---</p>
<p>Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?</p>	<p>If yes, what is your motivation? As an Ethiopian who has lived and worked in situations of poverty and conflicts, I do have a strong interest in contributing to the development of the country. My extensive international experience motivates me to do so.</p>
	<p>In what capacity? I could bring in my international experience in community-development, poverty reduction and conflict resolutions. Also, in case of natural and manmade disasters, I could bring in my experience working complex humanitarian emergencies.</p>
<p>Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?</p>	<p>Not yet. This is mainly because of some barriers. If I want to work in Ethiopia with major policy makers such as the UN or the EU, I can only be hired as a local staff not as an international civil servant as I currently am. This is because of the laws (of the UN and host countries) that prohibit nationals from becoming international recruits in their own countries.</p>
<p>If yes, what were the results?</p>	<p>---</p>
<p>Given the opportunity, would you be willing to</p>	<p>I would but under certain conditions [related to ability to be hired as an international staff member.] Being recruited as an international has a lot of advantages including financial and also operational.</p>

undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?	
Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?	I would take a mid-term assignment, so as to maintain my Canadian base. I would expect salary equivalent or close to the salary I earn at the UN, although this might be too high of an expectation.
In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in Ethiopia?	There should be an incentive for the diaspora to leave what he/she has in Canada and go back to Ethiopia. There should also be clear and coherent information on the possibilities, opportunities and challenges of work environment back in Ethiopia. Many people, including myself are startled by the sheer bureaucratic complications – from customs to various offices.

Profile 6

Brief CV	Education: Master of Arts in Anthropology, Development and Social Transformation (2006); Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology (2004); Bachelor of Commerce in International Business (2001).
	Professional experience: I have worked on a few research projects as well as with a few companies in positions ranging from receptionist, to data analysis to report writing. But as I am still young, these have been temporary positions that I took on as a student.
	Skills that can be contributed: My educational as well as work experiences have allowed me to have good research and report writing skills as well as excellent organizational skills. In addition, I am fluent in 3 languages while I can manage discussions in 2 additional languages.
Have you thought about using your knowledge, skills and network to contribute to development initiatives in Ethiopia?	If yes, what is your motivation? Even though I left Ethiopia as a small child, my parents have always ensured that I maintain a connection by taking the family back to Ethiopia as frequently as they could. I can say that I always knew I would return and live in my country. A couple of years ago, I decided to go to Ethiopia for an 8 months period. During that time, I wanted to discover the country and assess how I could eventually contribute to its development. I had just finished a degree and was taking a year off before beginning a Master’s degree, and so I thought I could spend the time developing my local skills while volunteering my time as well.

	<p>In what capacity? As I wanted to know what the research interests of the Anthropology department at Addis Ababa University were, I sought to volunteer in their department as an assistant teacher, an assistant researcher or by conducting presentations and workshops for fellow students. In addition, I also wanted to volunteer in local NGOs working with women, by assisting in their day to day operational and organizational work.</p>
<p>Have you undertaken any initiatives in that regard?</p>	<p>The first attempt I made was to contact Addis Ababa University's Anthropology department to see if there was any way I could contribute to the department. And while I met with several professors and the head of the department who all showed interest, nothing materialized out of it. In addition, I attended many lectures and presentation organized by the University in order to make further contact with the professors. As regards NGOs, I went to several local NGOs as well as a couple of international NGOs, talked to many people about what I could do and if they had any use for it. Many seemed interested but always kept referring me to someone else to talk to.</p>
<p>If yes, what were the results?</p>	<p>I tried this approach for the first 3 months I was in Addis Ababa. But it was not a fruitful approach. I was quite surprised as I was willing to volunteer my time and yet nobody seemed interested in a volunteer. A few friends told me people would take me more seriously if I demanded pay. I also realized that in Addis, you needed to have a contact base so you can hear about employment opportunities. So instead of contacting directly the agencies and offices I wanted to work with, I started to tell a network of people that I was looking for employment and to let me know if they heard of anything suitable. Within a month, I was interviewed several times and was hired in a major international aid agency in a relatively well paid position. I very much enjoyed that job, ended up extending my stay and worked for 5 months.</p>
<p>Given the opportunity, would you be willing to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia? What type?</p>	<p>I would definitely like to undertake an assignment in Ethiopia again. I would like to teach Anthropology subjects. But I think this time around I would contact the private colleges and try and work out possibilities for employment with them. I would also like to work in NGOs, but preferably helping local NGOs build their operational and organizational capacities.</p>
<p>Under what terms would you consider taking on such an assignment?</p>	<p>I would consider taking such an assignment, provided an adequate salary and transport costs are covered. I would definitely like to maintain a certain base in Canada as it has become my home and it is also where I have acquired most of my skills. I am willing and able to stay for any length of time. Many people in the diaspora cite political instability as a reason not to go, but I was there during the worst of times and it was not as bad as the media has made it out to be. In addition things have improved since then and will hopefully stay the course. We in the diaspora need also realize that we</p>

	cannot wait until conditions are perfect in order to contribute our fair share; we should go back and make the changes that we want to see.
In your opinion, what would make it easier for Ethiopian Canadian professionals to participate in assignments in Ethiopia?	Many young Ethio-Canadians that I know would be interested in volunteering back in Ethiopia or working there for short periods of time. But most are faced with technical difficulties. The Canadian government should help in perhaps providing financial and technical assistance to those from various diaspora groups who want to get involved in their countries of birth. But I think the push should come from Ethiopia and other developing countries. For example they could initiate, in cooperation with various international organizations as well as local NGOs, a scheme under which, young Ethiopians from the diaspora can volunteer in Ethiopia, with the aim of enticing them to come back as professionals and help build the country's capacity. I think this is essential, because for people like me, who did not live in Ethiopia as adults, we are not going to leave our secure environments behind and move back to work in Ethiopia, without having any previous experience there; setting up such a volunteer scheme would be a great way to introduce us to our country of origin.

Appendix 3

Overview of Selected Ethiopian Diaspora Organizations

Name of Organization	Location	Main Model of Engagement
Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) http://www.aheadonline.org	Canada	Supports medical faculties in 3 Ethiopian universities through provision of student bursaries; current medical books and journals; and, basic student training equipment and diagnostic tools. AHEAD also seeks to facilitate a significant and sustainable Ethiopian diaspora engagement, notably through its research-related activities.
Bethany Negash Memorial Foundation http://www.bethanymemorial.org	United States	Provision of financial assistance to orphaned and needy children so as to enable them to continue their education; provision of books to Ethiopia; use and coordination of videoconferencing sessions to transfer medical and ICT training; coordination of a student internship program. Also plans to offer vocational training programs and library services throughout Ethiopia.
Ethiopian Association of Students and Youth in UK (EasyUK) http://www.easyuk.info/	United Kingdom	Primarily an association set-up to connect Ethiopian youth and students in the UK and provide a platform for communication, networking and mutual support in their adopted homes, EasyUK also seeks to contribute to capacity development in Ethiopia, notably through its Book Drive project which aims to collect and distribute books to universities in Ethiopia.
Ethiocrps http://www.ethiocrps.org	United States	Supports institutional capacity-building in Ethiopia through the placement of students, recent graduates, and young professionals in voluntary assignments in various public institutions.
Ethiopian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society (EKTTS)	Now based in Ethiopia	Provision of books to various schools in Ethiopia; placement of qualified diaspora members on short-term assignments; video-conference training to health practitioners on HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention. With ENAHPA (see below) and US-based universities, EKTTS is currently working on the establishment of a medical university in Ethiopia to serve the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

Name of Organization	Location	Main Model of Engagement
Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association (ENAPHA) http://www.enahpa.org	United States Canada	Supports the Ethiopian healthcare system, through medical missions to transfer knowledge, skills and state-of-the-art technology; provision of a wide range of medical and surgical services, medical equipment, supplies, pharmaceutical products, books and journals; and virtual participation through the use of distance learning tools to transfer medical knowledge to local counterparts in Ethiopia.
Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID)	United States	A formal network of professionals residing in the United States that possess skills and experience that can be used in assignments to address the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. Collaboration between American International Health Alliance HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, Visions for Development Inc., NEPID and other diaspora organizations has resulted in a diaspora volunteering program, where qualified professionals fill critical needs in Ethiopia, primarily at HIV/AIDS treatment sites and service organizations.
People to People Aid Organization (P2P) http://www.peoplepeople.org	United States Canada, Ethiopia Finland, Sweden Sudan	Works primarily in combating HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia, through various activities aimed at prevention, care/support, and local institutional capacity building. These include: training programs for health workers; assistance to HIV/AIDS orphans; equipment donation; establishment of a virtual HIV/AIDS clinic providing free consultations with a doctor; neurology outreach programs; publication of the Horn of Africa Journal of AIDS.
Statistical Society of Ethiopians in North America (SSENA)	United States	Set-up by a group of established statistics experts from various universities across North America, SSENA seeks to enlarge and strengthen the discipline of statistics in Ethiopia. Activities thus far have included donation of 15 laptops to Addis Ababa University through an association with Pfizer; financing provided for access to major online statistics journals to Departments of Statistics of Ethiopian universities; short-term voluntary teaching missions in Ethiopia; efforts to improve the quality of local scientific journals by contributing high profile papers, etc.

Appendix 4

Overview of Selected African Diaspora Organizations

Name of Organization	Location	Main Model of Engagement
Africa's Brain Gain Inc. (ABG)	United States Kenya South Africa	Created to facilitate the return of diaspora talent to Africa through building databases of diaspora expertise; matching the diaspora with jobs and consultancies on the African continent; conducting research on migration issues; and facilitating discussion forums on Africa's brain drain, notably through ABG's annual conferences. (http://www.africasbraingain.org/)
African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)	United Kingdom	Supports the African diaspora in the UK to contribute to wealth and job creation in Africa through facilitation of links and networks, information dissemination, and research. (http://www.afford-uk.org)
AfroNeth	The Netherlands	Seeks to mobilize Africans in the Netherlands to actively participate in the Dutch society as well as in development efforts in Africa and promotes an increased visibility of diaspora Africans in Dutch policies and programs regarding African development. (http://www.afroneth.nl)
Association Marocaine des Professionnels et des Scientifiques de Québec (AMPSQ)	Canada	Seeks to network Moroccan professionals and scientists residing in Quebec, to the benefit of its members, Canada and Morocco (http://www.ampsq.com/)
Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas (ANPA)	United States	Supports the Nigerian healthcare sector through medical missions in rural parts of Nigeria as well as through virtual participation. (http://www.anpa.org/)
Association de Solidarité Canada-Maroc (ASCM)	Canada	Strengthens the relationship between Canada and Morocco by providing material and technical aid to Moroccans living with physical disability or destitute Moroccans (http://www.ascm.ca/)
Cameroon Forum	United Kingdom	Creates a forum to facilitate the engagement of Cameroonians in the United Kingdom for the development of both home and host countries. (http://www.cameroon-forum.co.uk/)

Name of Organization	Location	Main Model of Engagement
<i>Force Leadership African</i>	Canada	Seeks to positively influence Canadian governmental and non-governmental policy in Africa and promotes research on issues concerning Africans in the diaspora and on the continent (http://www.forceleadershipafrican.org/)
Ghana Cybergroup	United States	Seeks to leverage opportunities provided by ICTs to strengthen Ghana's economy (http://www.ghanacybergroup.com/)
Kenyan Community Abroad (KCA)	United States France Germany	Seeks, among other, to facilitate diaspora contribution to Kenyan development through a database of Kenyan experts abroad, as well as through advocacy campaigns on issues such as dual citizenship. (http://www.kenyansabroad.org/)
Niger Diaspora	Belgium	Provides a platform for information dissemination and discussion forums geared towards the development of Niger. (http://www.nigerdiaspora.net/)
Nigeria-Canada Development Association	Canada	Promotes friendship, understanding and bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Canada, by fostering good socio-cultural relations between Nigerian-Canadians and other Canadians, by promoting trade between Canada and Nigeria and by networking with other similar organizations (http://www.ncda.bc.ca/)
Nigerian Business Forum	United States	Promotes economic development in Nigeria through activities that seek to raise the country's investment profile (http://www.nbfonline.org/index.html)
Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO)	United States Europe	Advances the interests of Nigeria and Nigerians abroad through the development of programs, policies and advocacy to enable Nigerians abroad to harness their talents, expertise and resources for Nigeria's development and nation building (http://www.nidoamericas.org/ ; http://www.nidoeurope.org/nidoe/shtml/index.html)
South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA)	South Africa	Network of South African professionals that links expatriates with local counterparts to collaborate on research or development projects and to encourage technology transfer by sending computers and software to South Africa. (http://sansa.nrf.ac.za/)
South African Rainbow Association – Ottawa (SARA-O)	Canada	Brings together diaspora to support and promote South Africa's new vision. Has successfully fundraised for projects undertaken by the Oakford clinic as well as for other community-based projects (http://www.geocities.com/sara_webmail/SARA)

The Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)



www.aheadonline.org

Predating the arrival of Christianity (352 AD) to Ethiopia, the Axum Stelae (obelisks) stand witness to African civilization and a probable attraction to foreigners from near and far. Although the details of their purpose are not known for certain, they are purported to be a burial place with considerable religious significance.

Well before the coming of the first European settlers, Canada's aboriginal peoples had discovered the food properties of maple sap, which they gathered every spring. According to many historians, the maple leaf began to serve as a Canadian symbol as early as 1700.

The juxtaposition, on the cover design, of the Axum Stelae with the Canadian Maple Leaf symbolizes the ties that bind Ethiopian-Canadians to their homeland - Ethiopia - as well as to their adopted home - Canada.

Front cover design by H.Belai

ISBN 978-0-9783113-0-8