

Civil Society Advocacy Paper

Diaspora

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Background

Over the course of the 2023-2024 Global Forum for Migration and Development, under the French Chairmanship, civil society engaged in all the official GFMD activities as well as conducted various global, regional and thematic consultations. This encompasses participation and engagement from large and small NGOs, CSO networks, trade unions, migrant community groups, migrant and diaspora-led organisations, faith-based organisations, research and academia A calendar of activities can be found [here](#).

This paper is a compilation and consolidation of the main priorities and recommendations around **Diaspora** that have come out from these consultations, and represents the breadth and diversity of civil society, as well as the nuances across the regions.

Key Messages: Global

The GFMD Civil Society Mechanism conducted virtual global consultations before each GFMD Preparatory Meeting in April and October, as well as a consultation before the GFMD Workshops on Climate and Narratives in June. Across these global consultations, and in the Civil Society Preparatory Meetings leading up to the Summit, participants put forward the following priorities:

- **Recognise and consider both monetary and non-monetary contributions from diaspora communities and organisations:** Both financial (remittances) and non-financial contributions (social remittances, knowledge and skills transfers, social and civic engagement, cultural exchange) from diaspora communities and organisations must be recognised and the conditions for their contribution to sustainable development created. Diaspora communities are involved in times of crisis, bring cultural richness to countries of residence, and contribute to development and humanitarian efforts in both countries of origin and residence. Their role in shaping narratives on migration and issues of identity and belonging in both countries of origin and countries of residence must be acknowledged.

- Map and document both monetary and non-monetary contribution data.
 - Recognise successful initiatives and pilots, and support the scaling up of these initiatives.
- **Enable conditions for meaningful participation and partnerships:** Civil society and diaspora organisations must be strengthened to get them to the negotiating table. Members of the diaspora act as crucial mediators between countries of origin and residence and should thus be recognised as stakeholders in social, political, and economic development in countries of origin. This includes diasporas' investments in the context of climate change.
 - Develop relationships **between diaspora organisations and different sectors of government** to ensure effective facilitation of diaspora innovation.
 - Develop and promote further diaspora contributions to climate change through skills and knowledge transfers.
 - Governments must **engage in dialogue with their diaspora at the national, continental and international level to create an enabling environment** for diaspora engagement.
- **Uphold diaspora agency:** Diaspora initiatives must encapsulate diaspora agency, i.e. starting with the foundation of being designed, led, and/or co-led by diaspora. This can be strengthened by the establishment of inter-alliances and closer collaboration between diaspora and migrant organisations. Shrinking space for civil society and diaspora must be addressed.
 - **Ensure that all diaspora initiatives incorporate diaspora agency, and are co-led by diaspora.** This can be strengthened by establishing inter-alliances and closer collaboration between diaspora organisations and migrant organisations.
 - **Institutionalise diaspora agency in countries of origin.**
- **Scale-up diaspora work:** Diaspora work must be scaled up by establishing mechanisms that will help diaspora leverage relevant financial resources, including developing further diaspora funds for investment. Establish more opportunities for collaboration among diaspora organisations across different regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, promoting inter-regional dialogue for sharing lessons and solutions across communities that frequently encounter similar challenges, whilst amplifying their collective voices in advocacy, policy dialogues, and policymaking.
 - Promote closer collaboration between diaspora and migrant-led organisations and initiatives.
 - Create Co-Investment Programmes for Social Development and Job Creation to promote shared responsibility efforts to make migration an option, not a necessity. This should include fostering an investment-friendly environment in home countries, with a priority on transparent operations, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the migrant and diaspora community.
 - Promote cooperation between countries of origin and destination to improve social and economic conditions in places of origin.
- **Collect data on diaspora contributions and engagement:** Create space to collect best practices from both states and stakeholders. Further quantitative and qualitative data is also needed on diaspora contributions and influence on culture (beyond financial contributions) across origin, transit, and destination countries. Countries should be able to assess,

recognise, reflect on and document the value of diaspora participation and contribution to their economies.

- Establish mechanisms to collect data on non-financial contributions including transfer of knowledge and skills, social and civic engagement, and cultural exchange.
- **Promote and focus on multi-generational aspects of diaspora engagement.** Promote further visibility and engagement of 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation initiatives, and implement measures to collect data on multi-generational data collection.
 - This should include concrete acknowledgement of the multiplicity of experiences and cultures, and a pattern of high adaptability, often held by the young diaspora. Their engagement in civil, social and political action in their resident communities provide crucial contributions to social issues, and contribute towards revitalising civil society. Civil society advocates for the implementation of policies that favour integration and pathways to full citizenship, achievable through reinforcing societal values of acceptance and diversity.
- **Create more opportunities for collaboration between diaspora organisations in different regions** such as Africa, Asia and Latin America, **promoting inter-regional dialogue to share lessons and solutions between communities that frequently face similar challenges**, while amplifying their collective voices in advocacy, policy dialogues and policy-making.
- **Strengthen consulate services, and support and community services for diaspora communities abroad.** This should include promoting more effective integration, and facilitate their contribution to the development of heritage and resident countries.
 - Allocate resources to open new consulates in strategic areas, to allow more efficient and personalised attention to the needs of the migrant community.
 - Collaborate with diaspora organisations to offer counselling and training programmes for migrants, including legal, cultural and career / employment advice.
 - Develop education and training programmes for migrants, to develop access to professional and personal development opportunities.
 - Establish emergency funds to provide financial assistance and support in critical situations, such as natural disasters or economic crises.
 - Foster connections with countries of origin.
- **Promote the active participation of diaspora in decision-making in both countries of origin and residence.** This should include the reclamation of full political rights, including the right to vote and run for elected positions.

Key Messages: Africa

The Abuja Forum, co-organised by African civil society and diaspora including PANDiMR, GRFDT, AFFORD UK, CSOMADE, ITUC Africa, and sponsored by FES, that took place from 30 Jan to 1 Feb 2023 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Forum aimed to build capacity and strengthen African engagement in global migration processes and frameworks, and also served as the launch of the 2023 GFMD civil society process. Learn more about the Abuja Forum, the Abuja Statement, and its outcomes [here](#).

Diaspora was a key priority during the Abuja Forum. Participants put forward the following recommendations:

- Enhance collaboration between diaspora and the governments in the countries of origin to promote diaspora networks for productive investment and development.
- Address challenges related to remittances, including methods of transfer, reducing the cost of transfers and increasing coverage and access.
- Provide an enabling environment for diaspora investment through reducing the cost of doing business, introducing security for investment (diaspora fund), incentivising remittances including through tax breaks or reduced tariffs.
- Ensure that diaspora can access (and retain) their civil and political rights in countries of origin, including through citizenship (such as voting abroad) and representation in government.
- Re-prioritise Pan-Africanism that is focused on heritage and culture as part of our global history linking the diaspora to countries of origin, and amplifying the cultural capital of diaspora in sustaining the cultural heritage of their countries and regions of origin.
- Engage diaspora organisations (communities) as technical partners with governments to promote skills transfers, upskilling and create decent job opportunities in countries of origin, using their networks.
- Enhance bi-lateral collaborations that build on diaspora contributions to residence and origin countries, and develop frameworks for access to rights such as portability of social protection.
- Promote the engagement of the diaspora that considers the importance of generational links through mapping and engagement of multigenerational diaspora as well as targeted activities
- Recognise the important contributions of second and subsequent generations of diasporas (that is the children of migrants and their descendants) in all areas of migration and development as well as humanitarian support and encourage their continued support in diaspora engagement efforts.

Key Bibliography

- [Abuja Forum Report](#)
- Civil Society Global Consultation Summary Advocacy Points (April 2023)
- Civil Society Global Consultation Summary Advocacy Points (October 2023)
- Civil Society Preparatory Meeting: Global Civil Society Priorities (January 2024)