



# Concept Note

## CARIBBEAN MIGRATION CONSULTATIONS

### CONSULTATION ON PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF CARIBBEAN DIASPORAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. Introduction

Many countries in the Caribbean are increasingly recognizing the potentials of their diasporas in terms of their human, social, economic and cultural capital and their great potential to contribute to the development and enhancement of their country of origin. Caribbean states are often characterized by small economies, limited job opportunities and vulnerability to natural disasters, constituting push factors for emigration. The Caribbean diaspora is mostly located in the United States, Canada, and Europe and it has played an important role in economic development of countries of origin, mainly through remittances.

But diaspora engagement can mean much more than just remittance transfers. The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) approach to diaspora goes beyond the financial contributions that the diasporas can bring to their countries of origin. Through the Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) approaches to diaspora engagement can include national, sub-regional and regional activities and initiatives aimed at leveraging the diasporas through the facilitation of transfer of human, social and cultural capital to specific sectors within the countries of origin, such as education, health care, tourism and agriculture, among others, for states to better harness human capital for economic development, while mitigating the negative effects of "brain drain".

Members of diaspora communities around the world, including the Caribbean, have taken part in development efforts in their home countries by sending monetary and in-kind contributions to family members, setting up businesses and supporting community development initiatives, especially directed to low income communities. As recognized by policy makers and practitioners in countries of origin, as well as in diaspora hosting countries, the skills accumulated by diaspora members in their host countries have proven invaluable for the development of specific sectors in their countries of origin including health and medicine, education, elderly care, tourism



and, most recently, the hospitality industry and information technologies. Over the years, certain diaspora members have shown commitment and dedication, through both individual and group organization, to playing an important part in the development of their country of origin.

IOM has developed a comprehensive strategic approach that focuses on the “3E’s” for action: to Enable, Engage and Empower transnational communities as agents for development. This approach ensures that the framework conditions are in place to enable diaspora communities to reach their development potential, to fully understand and engage with them, and that specific measures and programmes are in place to empower diaspora to facilitate the transfer of their human capital<sup>1</sup>.

In the Caribbean, the proactive support and engagement of the diasporas become increasingly essential for those countries which are interested and committed in attaining the achievement of the specific goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and in the recently approved Global Compact for Migration. These range from eradication of poverty to quality education, climate action, rural and urban development, as well as efforts focusing on strengthening existing skills, such as business development and financial management. It is also because of this, that it is of crucial importance to articulate these efforts that leverage diaspora support and engagement under overall national development policies.

## 2. Background

The Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC) was initiated in 2016 to provide a forum that allows members (States, countries and territories) to discuss migration topics in order to develop consistent and coordinated regional efforts for the effective management of migration; coordinate and promote information exchange

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<sup>1</sup> **Enable:** The creation of appropriate conditions is essential to enable transnational communities to become effective agents for development. The degree to which diaspora can contribute is directly related to the ability of members of these communities to develop their full potential and acquire the necessary skills and resources to serve as architects of economic and social progress. **Engaging:** Knowing and understanding transnational communities is crucial to **engaging** effectively with them and developing the appropriate outreach strategies towards diaspora. **Empowering:** With the right conditions in place, transnational communities will spontaneously transfer resources and strengthen links between their countries of origin and destination regardless and often in spite of administrative, regulatory and other constraints. However, governments can empower this process by introducing special measures and programmes in a variety of fields.



among members, with an emphasis in sharing good practices related to the management of mixed migration; and develop policies with a rights-based approach aimed at an effective migration governance in the region.

Under the framework of the Caribbean Migration Consultations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Grenada proposes, with the support of IOM, to carry out a consultation on “**Caribbean Diasporas and Development**” to bring together the relevant institutions working with diasporas and benefit from a neutral and open space for discussion, presentation of best practices, lessons learnt, past, and current and future activities to help diaspora become active agents of development for their countries of origin, as well as the identification of current challenges and needs in the region. This Consultation is financed by the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, through a larger IOM Regional Migration Program in the Western Hemisphere.

On 30 January 2019, IOM held a [Webinar on the Potential of Diaspora and Development](#) as a prelude to this Consultation.<sup>2</sup> The consultation is developed by the UN Migration Agency, IOM. IOM has been working to facilitate diasporas’ contribution to development for almost 50 years. Specifically, it provides technical support to its member states interested in strengthening their capacities to manage diaspora relations, engaging with them, fostering exchange programs, and leveraging diasporas for economic and social development.

### 3. Objectives

This consultation will aim at presenting and exploring opportunities, challenges, lessons learnt, and best practices through presentations of governments and other stakeholders. It will provide a neutral space for participants to share their experiences and present on-going and past activities. It is recommended that participants view the recent [Webinar on the Potential of Diaspora and Development in the Caribbean](#) prior to arrival at the Consultation.

Specifically, this Consultation will help consolidate the information that countries shared related to their own diaspora engagement during the Migration Governance Needs Assessments<sup>3</sup> conducted in ten Caribbean countries. The Consultation will provide further opportunity to identify activities and capacities as well as,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://caribbeanmigration.org/events/webinar-potential-diaspora-and-development>

<sup>3</sup> [https://caribbeanmigration.org/sites/default/files/repository/regional\\_report\\_on\\_migration\\_governance\\_in\\_the\\_island\\_states\\_of\\_the\\_commonwealth\\_caribbean.pdf](https://caribbeanmigration.org/sites/default/files/repository/regional_report_on_migration_governance_in_the_island_states_of_the_commonwealth_caribbean.pdf)



challenges, needs, and priorities and consider how to best address them. This Consultation will use these conclusions as well as those learned within the Consultation to produce concrete recommendations for national, sub-regional and regional follow up actions. This Consultation will provide the opportunity to establish a CMC Network on Diaspora Engagement for Development. There is an [online portal dedicated to this network](#) that is available for current and future discussions, information exchange, and sharing publications among members of the network.

At the end of the Consultation, participants will have acquired an in-depth understanding of diaspora-related activities and projects aimed at strengthening the link between diaspora and development, and how these efforts can link to overall National Development Plans, focusing on leveraging the well-educated and knowledgeable diaspora members through the transfer of human, social, cultural, and economic capital to specific sectors in their countries of origin. They will moreover become an active part of a CMC Network on Diaspora Engagement for Development to build on the work already undertaken and to further improve exchanges and integration with the Caribbean diaspora.

## 4. Participants

The CMC will invite representatives within the ministries with decision-making capacities on their country's diaspora engagement policies.

IOM will cover, to the extent possible, the travel, accommodation and meals for one (1) participant from each invited State. Alternative funding may also be available for other countries and territories of the region.