

Role of the Diaspora¹ in Knowledge Exchange Network For National Growth and Social Change

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Abstract:

Most developing countries like Ethiopia aspire to fast-track their development processes to alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These aspirations are dependent on a nation's human capital and the progress it makes in education, science technology and innovations. For Ethiopia, engaging the brain power of its professionals fully and effectively is imperative to achieve the country's quest for rapid development and sustainable social change. In this regard, Ethiopia needs to create an enabling environment and establish strategic collaborations and partnerships with all its development partners and sectors. The Ethiopian Diaspora, including its second and third generation, is among the country's critical intellectual resource whose maximum mobilization and engagement is indispensable. Unfortunately, the Diaspora has not been effectively mobilized, networked and engaged. This paper attempts to (i) highlight the enormity of the problem of brain-drain (ii) underline Diaspora's role in knowledge exchange networks (iii) and recommend increasing viability of Diaspora professional networks.

¹ For the purpose for this paper, Diasporas are broadly defined as individuals and members of networks, associations and communities, who have established their residence in host countries, but maintain links with their country of origin. This covers more settled individuals or communities, living abroad holding Ethiopian citizenship, the citizenship of the host country, dual citizens, or second/third-generation migrants

Key words: Diaspora, networks, brain drain, Knowledge exchange

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Introduction

The outflow of educated and skilled individuals from developing to developed countries has remained a complex development challenge and is increasingly becoming a critical issue in the knowledge-based globalized world. It also continues to be extensively debated with varied interpretations (AHEAD 2004). Indeed the issue is of serious concern since it is estimated that there are about 200 million migrants globally (one in every 35 persons) some of whom are highly skilled (IOM 2004).

The migration of skilled individuals from developing countries is often attributed to the complex and shifting interplay of the “push” and “pull” factors: from poor, underdeveloped, politically unstable and or/conflict prone countries to those that have stronger economies that are also politically stable and offer good security and better socioeconomic and professional opportunities. In recent years, South –South migration has also emerged as a growing phenomenon the impact of which has yet to be well understood. For example, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia have attracted senior professionals from many African institutions from the rest of the continent. Although the source countries may be losing these experts, in the long term such moves may be the seed for broader integration in regional development.

In the present day global economy, knowledge has increasingly become a critical factor in production, distribution of goods and utilization of services. It is also essential in ensuring national competitiveness in the world market. As a result, for most developing countries, maintaining the appropriate human resource base in science, technology, engineering and innovations is a major policy challenge. These countries continue to suffer from extreme shortage of skilled human resources, often attributed to brain drain, which is emerging as a crucial factor that may constrain the development of knowledge-based competitive societies.

Rich and developed countries, such as those in Europe and North America, the Middle East and Australia, have, on the other hand, strategically opened their doors to attract highly skilled and talented human resources from developing countries to meet their socio-economic demands. Some of these countries even adjusted their national migration and education policies and

designed special visa programs to selectively attract highly skilled persons from Africa and elsewhere (Maru 2005). Others actively recruit for specific skills that are in short supply created mainly by the increasing demand and an aging population in their country (Kapur & McHale 2005). Similarly, deliberate internationalization of higher education systems is another key strategy to attract foreign students who are a very good source of talent and labour for the host countries as they often continue to live there after they graduate. It is clear that the brain drain from nations in Africa and other developing countries around the world has not yet become a public policy concern of the advanced countries to stem the inflow of skilled labour.

David Shinn in his paper entitled “*African Migration and the Brain Drain*” (Shinn 2008) stated that an estimated 300,000 African scientists, engineers and professionals live and work outside the continent. Between 1987-2001, a total of about 50,000 South African professionals left for the UK, Australia, US, Canada and New Zealand. In 2000, approximately 65,000 African born physicians and 70,000 African born nurses were working in developed countries. These represent about one-fifth of all African-born physicians and one-tenth of the nurses. It is also estimated that about 30,000 African’s holding PhDs work outside the continent (Shinn 2008). In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that out of fifty-seven countries worldwide suffering from a severe shortage of health workers, thirty-six were in Africa. Since the 1990s, for most developing countries, including Ethiopia, about a quarter of their citizens with tertiary education live in OECD countries (Kapur & McHale,2005). This proportion is expected to rise with increasing globalization and demographic changes in the developed world. According to IOM, since 1990, over 20,000 skilled professionals have left Africa every year, and available data also show that African countries spend more than USD\$4 billion annually to employ over one hundred thousand expatriates to fill professional gaps created by migration. This represents about 35% of total official development aid to the continent. Furthermore, the unabated brain drain has diminished the ability of developing countries’ to recoup their investment in higher education and training. Given this background, the much needed skilled intellectual brain power of professionals in the Diaspora can be considered a loss in billions of dollars.

However, in recent years, mounting evidences have brought about global optimism and a paradigm shift in migration and development thinking. There is increasing recognition on the contribution Diasporas could make in the development of their country of origin. With the appropriate policies and strategies in place, many developing countries could increasingly tap in to their Diaspora intellectual resource to support their country's development. The development contributions of the Diaspora not only include foreign currency remittances but also service as visiting scholars, creation of virtual networks, and generally contributing to shaping the direction of the scholarly environment in their country of origin. As the history of some newly industrialized countries like India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, China and the Philippines indicate, members of the Diaspora are powerful social and economic forces, capable of successfully facilitating the improvement of the overall standard of living in their country of origin. The Diaspora can be positive driving forces for innovation in many sectors of society. Correspondingly, some African countries such as Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa have initiated strategies to mobilize and tap into their Diaspora resources for remittances, knowledge exchange and social, economic and cultural development initiatives (Shinn 2008). Accordingly, there has been a new initiative to tap African expatriates for the development of the continent with the African Union (AU) inviting Africa's Diaspora to actively take part in the region's development. For instance, the priority of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is to develop Africa's human resources and reverse *brain drain*. African leaders often meet with their Diaspora professionals to discuss ways in which they could contribute to their respective country's development. Several consultative meetings involving regional and international organizations and institutions have come up with several resolutions and recommendations seeking to define a mix of modalities effectively to engage the Diaspora in the continent's development. The AU Commission has resolved even to classify the African Diaspora as the "Sixth Region" of the continent. However, actual tangible action to engage effectively the Diaspora has not been realized yet and progress seems to be slow.

Ethiopia's Diaspora Situation

Ethiopia, with its plan to grow rapidly and the unstemmed outflow of skilled professionals, has no choice but to develop and take decisive actions to implement effective enabling policies and

strategies and engage the Diaspora's full and synergistic partnership to express fully its development potential.

The exact number of Ethiopian professionals in the Diaspora and their respective areas of discipline are currently not known. There is no census, documentation or database that is centrally available. Paucity of information on migration of professionals or their return is a serious setback exactly to quantify the enormity of the problem of brain drain or gain in Ethiopia. Destination countries probably have more complete information but are not always presented in a way that reflects the impact on the source countries. There is general agreement on the trend in migration. The exodus is unabated and it is still on the rise! In some areas, even a loss of a few individuals may be a significant percentage of the total manpower in that particular profession.

Ethiopia began and continues to lose its highly skilled professionals in large numbers since the mid 1970s. However, today, the exodus continues, further depleting the meager human capital available in the country. Based on anecdotal information, it is estimated that the country has lost over 30-35% of its skilled and educated professionals over the last four decades. For instance, David Shinn (Shinn 2008) reports that between 1968 and 2006, Ethiopia trained 3,728 doctors (excluding those who were trained externally). Of these, about 3,000 left the country, and in 2006, only less than 700 doctors were left to serve in the country. There were more Ethiopian doctors in the East Coast of the US than in Ethiopia and even more Ethiopian doctors in Chicago than in Ethiopia (Shinn, 2008). Regarding the characteristics of Ethiopians abroad, it is estimated that out of the more than 450,000 Ethiopians in the United States, over 30 percent have first degrees and above². Also in 2007, 150 professionals left Ethiopian Airlines for jobs in the Middle East. Similarly, it is estimated that around 4000 Ethiopians and Germans with Ethiopian background, about 20 percent hold a degree at the bachelor's level or above (Schlenzka 2009). According to a study by Adamnesh (2008) of the total number of Ethiopian Expatriates in the OECD, 31.2% are highly skilled. Such unabated exodus of professionals from Ethiopia has resulted in decline in the country's (a) capacity for competitiveness in the emerging knowledge-based global economy, (b) its capability in the production of science and technology, (c) in

² US Census, American Community Survey, 2006 and 2007.

quality and access to basic services and, (d) in its ability to develop science, industry and academia.

These professionals in the Ethiopian Diaspora can be classified into two main groups. The first group is made of individuals who completed their education in Ethiopia and then emigrated, mainly consisting of scientists, engineers, health professionals and entrepreneurs, etc. The second group involves those who studied abroad, found jobs, established families and became permanent residents or citizens of the host country. Additionally, there is also a third group that is emerging. These are second and third generation Ethiopians in the Diaspora, an energetic group that is a product of both cultures, often conferring them with special advantages from having derived the synergy of the two cultures. This dynamic group is open to change and also has the propensity of being innovative and productive. This writer believes that with proper mentoring and motivation, this group has a tremendous potential to contribute to science and technology development in Ethiopia. Meaningfully engaging these young professionals to partner and team up with their counterparts as well as with senior professionals and scientists for mentorship and knowledge transfer at home can help Ethiopia to leapfrog into higher technological transformation and development. (Bishaw, 2010)

Promoting Diaspora Participation in Knowledge Exchange Network

There is a growing realization by the Ethiopian Government on the importance of the Diaspora as a development partner and professionals in the Diaspora also increasingly recognize the unique role they can play in this endeavor. In this regard policies and strategies are being developed to facilitate and encourage Diaspora participation. One such example is the introduction of the yellow card for citizens of other countries with Ethiopian Origin that would entitle them the benefit of a citizen in socio-economic and investment sectors. This has made an impact in attracting and facilitating the Diaspora participation. National policy and guidelines introduced to motivate the Diaspora in remittances and investment has been instrumental in attracting increasing numbers of the Diaspora to take part in investment in various areas and consequentially, cash flow into the country through remittances has grown steadily. For instance, according to a recent study sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IOM (MOFA

&IOM, 2010), officially recorded private cash remittance flows to Ethiopia have increased from 53.9 million USD in 1997 to 779.6 million USD in 2006. According to the same source, the National Bank of Ethiopia's (NBE) estimation of non-official remittance since 2001 also indicates that it has grown from 81.4 million USD in 2001 to 951.5 million USD in 2008. This has resulted in significant improvement over the last several years in attracting more Diaspora finances into the country.

While the above data suggest the increasing interest among the Ethiopian Diaspora to contribute to the development of their country of origin, not much has been done nationally in terms of mobilizing and promoting Diaspora knowledge and technology transfer and exchange. The country's ability to tap into the rich intellectual resources that exist in its Diaspora population has been constrained due to the limitation of the national policy which is a major opportunity lost. The national policy is not very clear or specific on the strategies to encourage and attract professionals in the Diaspora to participate in knowledge exchange and transfer and it lacks clarity in actions to facilitate and promote knowledge exchange. However, this does not mean that there is no national interest to mobilize and engage professionals in the Diaspora to partner and contribute to national development. The new policy that is underway is expected to promote and support knowledge exchange. Especially, as the country has embarked on rapid knowledge-based development undertakings, there is big demand for highly skilled human resources to meet the expanding needs. The role that skilled professionals in the Diaspora could play in the country's development cannot, therefore, be over emphasized.

Some institutions of higher learning as well as sectors like health and education have information on their websites inviting professionals in the Diaspora to participate in their respective sectoral activities. However, progress in this regard has been very slow and uncoordinated. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the lead Ministry on Diaspora Affairs, The responsibilities of the Diaspora Affairs Office of the former Ministry of Capacity Building in Ethiopia that was mandated to facilitate Diaspora's contribution in knowledge and skills transfer has now been decentralized to individual sectors, institutions and NGOs. Unfortunately, most Diaspora knowledge exchange initiatives currently underway in the country are individually driven and self motivated, emanating from personal and individual commitments. Few individuals in the Diaspora and in

Diaspora networks have taken their own initiative to contribute their know-how using their own time and resources. This has resulted in uncoordinated, sporadic, haphazard and spontaneous engagements that have often proven unsustainable. Such uncoordinated arrangements have resulted in constraints and frustrations on both sides. In fact, sometimes, inputs and activities initiated by Diaspora professionals are perceived as a burden for institutions in Ethiopia as it would require planning and preparedness of these institutions to effectively and efficiently incorporate and utilize these inputs offered by the Diaspora. The absence of a national policy framework and implementation guidelines have lead to the inefficient exchange and transfer of the rich intellectual resources that are available and so highly needed for institutions and human resources capacity building in Ethiopia. To facilitate and coordinate processes, serve as a link and to develop database on needs and resources for the purpose of matching, Alliance for Brain Gain and Innovative Development (ABIDE)³ was established as an indigenous NGO with a sole purpose of facilitating processes and systems for Diaspora engagement.

There is a lack of information on existing systems, procedures and processes that would enable Diaspora professionals to establish linkages and effectively partner with professionals and institutions in the country. On the other hand, there is also a major information gap about professionals in the Diaspora by the institutions in the country that could have benefitted from their input. These institutions need to know: Who are the Diaspora professionals and how are they networked? Where do they live? What could be the extent of their participation in the development endeavors of the country? What are the possible institutional arrangements and the policies that would attract the Diaspora in knowledge exchange and transfer? What are the

³ To partner with key players in the country and abroad and to contribute to improving coordination and networking, “Alliance for Brain Gain and innovative Development”³ (ABIDE) was established (the first of its kind in the country), in January 2006 as an indigenous NGO not-for-profit development organization to increase Ethiopia’s opportunities for *brain gain* (HLM strategic Planning Document March 2007). ABIDE endeavors to advocate for enabling policies and to facilitate institutionalized mechanisms, systems, processes for mainstreaming and to increase the ease through which professionals in and outside the country could link through networking and partnerships. It is expected to enhance the transfer of knowledge, and technology to contribute to the country’s development through systematic and sustained engagement. ABIDE believes that the rich intellectual resources that exist within the Ethiopian Diaspora community could make significant contributions to Ethiopia’s institutional capacity building if and when enabling systems and policies are in place. It also aspires to building synergistic and win-win partnerships, sustainable collaboration as well as mutually beneficial relationships among professionals in the Diaspora and those in the country thereby contributing to national capacity building and also offsetting the adverse effects of brain drain and in the long run contributes to attenuating brain drain.

specific areas where Diaspora knowledge inputs are needed? What are the preferred modalities of collaboration? What about the question of sustainability? What would be the role of the current employer of the Diaspora professional? Because of the lack information, both parties are unable to establish effective relationships. As a result, knowledge exchange partnerships and collaborations between professionals and institutions in and outside the country have remained very limited. However, it is commendable that despite the many constraints and difficulties, some partnerships were established between professionals in the country and those abroad. Regardless of how small or big they may be individuals have continued their efforts to maintain their relationship in knowledge exchange.

The large number of highly qualified and committed professionals in the Ethiopian Diaspora, if effectively engaged, could make significant contribution to the country's accelerated growth in science, technology and innovations to succeed in a knowledge-based competitive world economy. The role of knowledge exchange networks to facilitate brain drain into brain gain has been demonstrated in several countries that have embarked in effectively engaging their Diaspora professional communities.

Strengthening Networks

Experiences from other countries who have immensely benefited from their Diaspora resources such as India, China, South Korea etc. confirm that knowledge exchange is facilitated when the willingness in the Diaspora was matched with enabling policy environment, coordinating mechanisms, preparedness of professionals and institutions in the country, and the availability of financial and related resources.

The Asian Development Bank Draft Manuscript (2006) on “*Converting Migration Drains into Gains: Harnessing the Resources of Overseas Professionals*” highlights the importance of knowledge networks in strengthening bonding social capital that encompasses solidarity and community identity. The study argues that with respect to knowledge transfer and exchange, it is first necessary to consider just what is to be mobilized and how these knowledge resources are created prior to considering the Diasporas' ability to mobilize and network. A clear understanding of whom exactly the Diaspora members are from whom such contributions are

sought is also equally important. While becoming member of a Diaspora professional network will not be sufficient, most critical is the members' common interest and commitment to give back to their country of origin. The centrality and commonality of goal to contribute to the development of the country of origin and its nationals is of paramount importance, and this need to be the focus of the partnership. The Bank study further argues about the important contribution of Diaspora professional networks' to migration, brain drain and brain gain and circulation, and it also states that these networks also facilitate knowledge development and transfer/exchange.

Forty-one knowledge based Diaspora networks tied to thirty different countries with specific efforts to link Diaspora professionals to the country of origin for the purpose of transferring knowledge were compiled and analyzed (Brown and Meyers 2006). These networks were categorized into four types: student/scholarly networks, local associations of skilled expatriates, expert pool assistance through the UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) program, and intellectual/scientific Diaspora networks. The objective of these networks was primarily to create the links through which professionals in the Diaspora could effectively and productively be connected to the development of their country of origin without any physical return, temporary or permanent. Though the experiences differ from one country to the other, they all share the goal of systematically using their expatriate experts, scientists and engineers for development at home. Some lessons and policy implications may already be extracted from these recent attempts. They should pave the way for an efficient use of professional Diasporas. These are indeed strong potential resources for effective and mutually beneficial co-operation between developing and highly industrialized countries. Of the forty-one, fifteen were classified as intellectual/scientific Diaspora networks with an explicit purpose of promoting the scientific, economic and social development of the country of origin. The effectiveness of these networks are dependent on the interests and strengths of the network, the coordination and enabling environment that exist in the country of origin and the availability of the required resources to implement the transfer of knowledge.

Findings from in depth assessment and analysis of the 15 intellectual/scientific Diaspora networks show that good organization is required in a network of this kind in order to ensure

communication, information-exchange and coordinated actions. This is where an interface or coordinating body appears necessary. The function of such a coordinating body would be to collect, organize and maintain the information needed for the systematic search of partnerships, but also to manage and promote the interests and actions of the multiple entities present in a network of this kind. The coordinating body would be responsible for opening up access to resources that can be used to generate action in the network. This body would consist of network members as well as interested parties from the national community. It would thus be a consortium of multiple partners. They incorporate actors beyond the skilled Diaspora to including governments, NGOs, donors, and other intermediaries, and would likely benefit where one or more of these actors assumed roles similar to that of a nodal firm. Alliance For Brain Gain and Innovative Development (ABIDE) is an example that can serve as a coordinating body and an intermediary that facilitates processes involved in effectively and efficiently facilitating the transfer of knowledge from the Diaspora.

Many associations of skilled expatriates are evolving into formal professional associations, which are becoming increasingly active in intellectual/scientific Diaspora networks. The highly skilled Diaspora may rely more on such professional networks, which are more likely to yield a match of skill levels to jobs. The most notable examples include, for example, the Silicon Valley Chinese Engineers Association, the Indus Entrepreneur and the Korean IT Forum. These associations fulfill a range of social network roles, including facilitating logistics, professional and technical advancement, identity formation and maintenance, and entrepreneurial investments particularly highlighting their role of bridging/linking the country of origin producers to the global economy.

Enhancing the Role of the Ethiopian Diaspora in Knowledge Exchange Networks

In Ethiopia, most common modality of Diaspora's participation for knowledge transfer been on individual basis. These professionals contact counterpart

professional colleague or directly with the departments and provides his/her services either through short visits, repeat visits, spending sabbatical and or research leave periods, short lectures, summer breaks, short seminars etc. Most benefiting institutions have been universities and institutional collaborations with research centers. Fullbright scholars, fellows of TWAS and others have spent their time in teaching, research and training with their partner institutions. In the health sector, regular visits for specialized services have been utilized.

In addition, establishing and belonging to a functioning network for knowledge/exchange and transfer from Diaspora to country of origin will facilitate interaction between professionals in the Diaspora and at home. This could help in mobilizing a larger group and mix disciplines of the Diaspora and partners in the country for effective collaboration and win-win partnership. It can also facilitate coordination, resource mobilization and engagement on need-based interventions for sustainable development. In this regard Diaspora networks could be effective, provided there is commitment of the Diaspora to knowledge transfer to their country of origin, availability of a facilitated system within the country of origin and commonality of purpose and goal are ensured.

There are a number of formal and informal Ethiopian professional networks in the Diaspora that are emerging to facilitate their contribution and partnership in the country's development endeavors. These networks help to establish links amongst professionals in and outside the country with varying degree of effectiveness. Following are a few examples of Diaspora networks and I may have excluded deserving groups and individuals, Some of these networks include Association of Ethiopian Health and Health Associated Professionals in Sweden (AEHHPS), Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), People to People (P2P), Ethiopian Physicist Association in North America (EPA-NA), Ethiopian Professionals in Huston (EPH), Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association (ENAHPA), Group Against Poverty and AIDS (GAP-A), Ethiopian Knowledge and Technology Transfer Society (EKTTS) , Ethiopian Tree Fund Foundation (ETFF), Books for Africa, Ethiopian Students' Association, international (ESAi), Network of Ethiopian Professionals In the Diaspora (NEPID),

Forum International for Ethiopians Living in the Diaspora (FIELD), The Twinning Center etc. However, most of these inputs have been individually motivated, sporadic and unsustainable.

The above networks have been functioning with varying degree of efficacy depending on the strength and commitment of the members of the network. Their participation has been dependent on the objectives they have set and availability of the essentials required in performing their tasks effectively. The author recognizes the limitations of this paper since in depth assessment and analysis of each of the networks has not been systematically done. The paper, therefore, presents the suggestions based on personal experiences, lessons-learned from other country experiences to stimulate thinking and action to enhance the effectiveness of the knowledge exchange networks for Ethiopia. Following are, therefore, some suggestions to strengthen networks for effective knowledge exchange. The suggestions are divided into three main groups, 1) the network, 2) country of origin and 3) management coordination.

1) The Network

The network needs to be adequate and strong with members linked to the country of origin who are committed to the development of the same while also ensuring personal and professional fulfillment. Members of the network should be credible professionals interested in giving back with high standard performance and empathy for the challenges that their country of origin and its nationals face. Clarity of objectives is necessary to enable that the network's mission and activities are focused as well as relevant to the country of origin setting. The effectiveness of the network is dependent on the motivation of its members. The development of the country of origin and its people should be the prime goal of the network. The network should also be adequately resourced, and actively linked and engaged with its own members and other networks with similar objectives and vision.

2) Country of Origin

There needs to be clear policy strategy and an enabling environment to ensure the ease by which Diaspora professionals could engage in dialogue with partners in the country. National needs and priorities need to be clearly articulated and communicated. The partnership and engagement

needs to be established in the context of trust and mutual respect. Policies, operating rules, regulations and guidelines need to facilitate the partnership. Clear monitoring mechanisms need to be identified to assess progress and significantly to contribute to mainstream development.

3) Mechanism for Management and Coordination

To ensure effectiveness of the partnership, management and coordination mechanisms have to be in place and operational. The presence of intermediary organizations has proven to be effective to collect, organize and maintain the information needed for the systematic search of partnerships, but also to manage and promote the interests and actions of the multiple entities present in a network of this kind. Existing mechanisms have to be streamlined and others need to be put in place to ensure effective and coordinated collaboration and partnership. Such organizations need to be supported optimally to play their role towards the effective utilization of professionals in the Diaspora for the sustainable growth and development of the origin of country and its people.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Diaspora knowledge exchange network is another effective way of engaging professionals in the Diaspora to support national development efforts. Through strengthened professional knowledge exchange and transfer networks, Ethiopian intellectuals, artists, academicians, scientists, social scientists practitioners, and young professionals and friends of Ethiopia in the Diaspora on the one hand and their respective counterpart professionals in the country on the other could establish partnerships to work together for the development and prosperity of the Ethiopian people and for social change. This would strengthen the synergistic collaboration and win-win partnership for sustainable cooperation, social, professional and economic fulfillment, and in the long run contribute to the countries scientific and technological development that could result in attenuating brain drain.

The motivation and decision of professionals, to stay abroad is a product of a complex mix of economic, political, social, cultural, and personal issues. It has become clear to most development thinkers that the incorporation of the brain power of the large Diaspora communities in national development is a crucial necessity for developing countries like Ethiopia. Although these communities have made significant contributions to their countries of origin, the contributions have generally been at micro, informal and individual levels. It is important that national, regional and global efforts need to be made commensurate with the

enormity of the problem to tap in to the rich potential of the Diaspora intellectual and related resources including their second and third generation resources.

The paucity of data on the number of professionals in the Diaspora continues to be a major problem to have a clear understanding of the magnitude of the problem and existing variations. Guided by relevant Ministries, and organizations including NGO's such as ABIDE could be strengthened and mandated to undertake the task within specific time frame to have an up-to-date and user- friendly database on Ethiopian Diaspora professionals. Database that exists under different organizations can feed into the AU master database on African professionals.

It is important to take stock of the many decisions and resolutions of the AU and its Heads of States and Governments in regards to engaging the Diaspora, and (a) monitor the actions taken against those decisions and resolutions and assess the trend of implementation, (b) monitor the outcome and impact these actions have generated towards meeting the desired objectives

Agreed upon monitoring indicators could be developed to measure the extent of implementation of the joint projects and undertaking. Country experiences and lessons learned could contribute to ongoing discussions to maximize the positive effects of Diaspora engagement in Ethiopia's capacity building and that of the Regions

Several Diaspora professionals and networks have participated and contributed in their country of origin's development initiative. Undertaking systematic study at country levels to understand the issues and complexities involved to fully mobilize and engage Diaspora could reveal some of the challenges and opportunities experienced both by the Diaspora and host countries, institutions and professionals. Lessons learned can inform policy dialogue and new strategy development.

In the spirit of "Social Responsibility" rich and developed countries that greatly benefit from Diaspora intellectual resources could be obliged to engage in "Global Social Responsibility" activities and contribute to the development of the source countries. This will only be a fair action to compensate the source countries from the loss of their skilled professionals in whose education they had invested so heavily.

Developed countries in EU, North America, Australia, the Middle East should be persuaded to ensure policy coherence and consider incorporating policies and strategies that would encourage and facilitate modalities that would allow professionals in the Diaspora to engage in the development efforts of their country of origin.

The Diaspora community is often individualistic. Many Diasporas are not organized making it difficult effectively to interface with them as a group. It would be useful if receiving countries in

collaboration could support Diaspora communities to organize as professional bodies and participating in professional networks.

Mechanisms need to be in place to give full recognition to the achievements made by Diaspora professionals in their areas of specialization. Diaspora's contribution to the production of science, technology and other social and economic achievements both in the host and home country must be acknowledged.

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