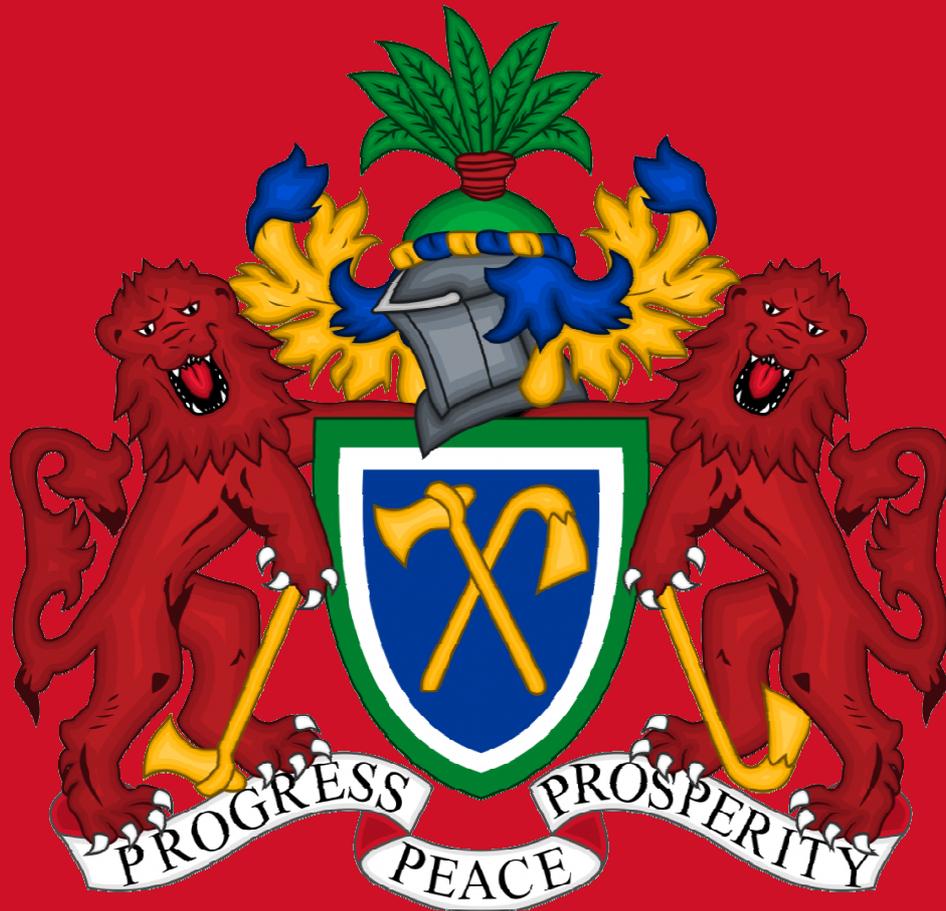


REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA



Gambian Diaspora Strategy

*As incorporated in the
Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21)*



Gambian Diaspora Strategy

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i. Background Information: Evolution of Diaspora Policy in The Gambia

Under the leadership of the first President, Sir Dawda Jawara, from independence in 1965 up to the coup d'état in 1994, there was no formal, structured or comprehensive Gambian diaspora policy. This is not surprising as the diaspora population was relatively small, and globalised understanding of diaspora-development dynamics was not widespread. However, the Jawara government did undertake 'informal diaspora diplomacy' by occasionally engaging Gambian experts in the diaspora to assist in negotiations, procurement and other government activities.

It was during the regime of Yahya Jammeh as President that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was rebranded 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad'. In January 2012, the government convened what it called 'The First Consultative Meeting between the Government of the Republic of The Gambia and Gambians in the Diaspora'. This turned out to be a one-off event that was not followed by any change in the general antagonism between the government and the diaspora, which included a large number of political refugees who fled the oppressive regime.

The Gambian diaspora played a significant role in opposing dictatorship in The Gambia and promoting the restoration of democracy. Consequently, it was expected that the new democratically elected coalition government that took office in January 2017 would undertake positive and comprehensive engagement with the Gambian diaspora. In August 2017, the Government of The Gambia approved a diaspora-led Technical Cooperation Programme on 'Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia (MSDG)'. The MSDG project became the mechanism that facilitated the development of a policy framework and the drafting of the first ever national diaspora strategy.

As part of the post-dictatorship reform programme, the new coalition government under President Adama Barrow decided to develop a comprehensive National Development Plan (NDP). The Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) presented here was developed within the MSDG and NDP consultative and policy frameworks, and is fully incorporated in the Gambian National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21).

Based on good practices across the world on the theme of diaspora-development, the focus for the MSDG Technical Cooperation Programme was: "*Optimising the benefits of migration for Gambian development*" and the main activities were to: "*Enhance the contribution of Gambian diaspora to Gambian development...Facilitate effective coordination of diaspora development action...Facilitate productive and sustainable reintegration of returning Gambians...Reduce the transaction costs of remittances to The Gambia...Improve the knowledge and skills of Gambian professionals and government officials in the field of migration and sustainable development*"¹.

As part of the new President's first trip to the United Nations to attend the 72nd Session of the General Assembly, Gambians in the USA organised a Gambian Diaspora Town Hall meeting held on 23 September 2017. It was at that meeting that President Adama Barrow presented a policy statement explaining the government's approach and plans on diaspora-development². At the First Stake in the Nation Forum (SNF1) on 13 January 2018, the President formally launched the Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) as incorporated in the NDP, declared the diaspora as the Eighth Region of The Gambia, and announced the creation of Gambia Diaspora Directorate³.

¹ MSDG Briefing Paper No. 2, Sep 2017:

<http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/MSDG-BP-2-MSDG-Project-Summary-Sep-2017.pdf>

²President's statement on 'Gambian Diaspora Engagement and Policy', 23 Sep 2017

<http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Presidential-Diaspora-Policy-Statement-23-Sep-2017.pdf>

³ SNF1 Presidential Statement on 'Attaining Progress in the New Gambia', 13 Jan 2018

<http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/SNF1-Presidential-Statement-13-Jan-2018.pdf>

In October 2017, the draft of the Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) was submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA), being the institution responsible for the coordination and production of the National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21). The research and consultative process which informed the content of the GDS entailed various activities including the following:

- Review and analysis of facts and figures from secondary sources as referenced in the GDS;
- Review and analysis of diaspora-development policy recommendations from regional and global migration and development policy processes including: Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD); UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and International Development; Addis Ababa Action Agenda and UN Agenda 2030; New York Declaration; Global Compact on Migration consultations; Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFoM); Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA); Global Forum on Remittances, Investments and Development (GFRID);
- Case study review and analysis of national diaspora-development policies and practices, including Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mexico, Moldova;
- Review of data from diaspora survey undertaken by a Gambian group in the USA (Sep 2017);
- MSDG survey and semi-structured interviews with about 30 key diaspora practitioners (Sep 2017);
- Semi-structured interviews with about 80 Gambia-based senior personnel including Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and Chief Executives who attended the MSDG Executive Training in The Gambia (Oct 2017);
- Semi-structured interviews and consultations with about 150 stakeholders including: ministers, senior civil servants, leaders of NGOs and CSOs, and heads of international organisations and agencies based in The Gambia; development agency directors at the European Commission and within the governments of Italy, Germany, Spain (Catalonia in particular), Switzerland, and United Kingdom; UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) personnel who took part in the May 2017 cabinet retreat that led to the National Development Plan process; head of UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA); Chairman, Chief Executive and Director of the Independent Electoral Commission (May to Oct 2017);
- Analytical observations of the MSDG technical team comprising Gambian experts on migration, diaspora and development, as well as Gambian society, politics, economics and development (May to Oct 2017).

After the submission of the GDS draft to MOFEA and prior to the formal adoption of the NDP in January 2018, further consultations were undertaken between October 2017 and January 2018, to confirm that the submission did not require major amendments, and to inform the prioritisation of GDS implementation activities. The further research and consultations included:

- Consultative webinars on 5 diaspora-development topics relating to the draft GDS, with participants including Gambian diaspora individuals and organisations, Ministers, directors and senior officials from Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and senior officials from State-Owned Enterprises and civil society organisations (Nov 2017);
- Online Diaspora Strategy survey completed by over 200 respondents⁴ (Nov/Dec 2017);
- Paper Diaspora Strategy survey completed by over 70 respondents in The Gambia (Nov/Dec 2017);
- Face-to-face focus group with irregular migrants and community leaders in Italy (Nov 2017);
- Face-to-face consultations with 200 irregular migrant returnees from Libya and Niger (Jan 2018);
- Face-to-face focus group in Gambia with young women, women groups and mothers of low-skilled and irregular migrants (Jan/Feb 2018).

The Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) is fully incorporated in the Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21)⁵. In the introduction to the NDP, the Minister of Finance stated: *"My particular thanks go to the members of all the thirteen (13) Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) who worked diligently over many months to prepare the plan, as well as the Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia project (MSDG/GKP) for its contribution"*. (page 'X').

In chapter 3 of the NDP on 'Critical Enablers' (page 106), the third critical enabler is set as *"Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development"*. Pages 112-119 of the NDP set out the commitments of the Gambian Diaspora Strategy.

In chapter 7 of the NDP (pages 236-239), the GDS situational analysis of *"Diaspora in Development"* is presented.

Annex 4A of the NDP identified ten (10) *'Flagships/Priority Projects of the NDP Strategic Priorities'*, relating to the Critical Enablers. The third flagship/priority is: *"Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia (MSDG) Project"*, and the fourth flagship/priority is: *"Strengthening the management and governance of migration and the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in The Gambia"*.

⁴ Online Gambian Diaspora Survey, Nov 2017: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Gambian-Diaspora>

⁵ Gambian National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21):

<http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Gambia-National-Development-Plan-NDP-2018-21.pdf>

ii. Summary of the Commitments of the Gambian Diaspora Strategy

The commitments of the Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21) are set out as outputs and activities under specific outcomes. The Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) as incorporated in the NDP has fourteen (14) commitments as stated below:

Outcome 1: Structured and Facilitative Approach to Diaspora Engagement

1. Diaspora Strategy
2. Gambia Diaspora Directorate
3. Capacity Development on Diaspora-Development

Outcome 2: Leveraging Diaspora Remittances and Investment

4. Reducing the Transaction Cost of Remittances
5. Diaspora Direct Investment and Diaspora Bonds
6. Diaspora Development Fund

Outcome 3: Protection of Vulnerable Migrants and Facilitation of Regular Pathways

7. Preventing Irregular and Dysfunctional Migration
8. Global Migration Dialogues and Bi-lateral Engagement
9. Ethical Recruitment and Circular Migration

Outcome 4: Enhanced Participation in National Policy and Development Practice

10. Physical and Online Forums for Engagement
11. Diaspora Voting at Presidential and National Assembly Elections
12. Diaspora as the Eighth Region of The Gambia
13. Network of Diaspora-Development Organisations
14. Access to Diaspora Expertise

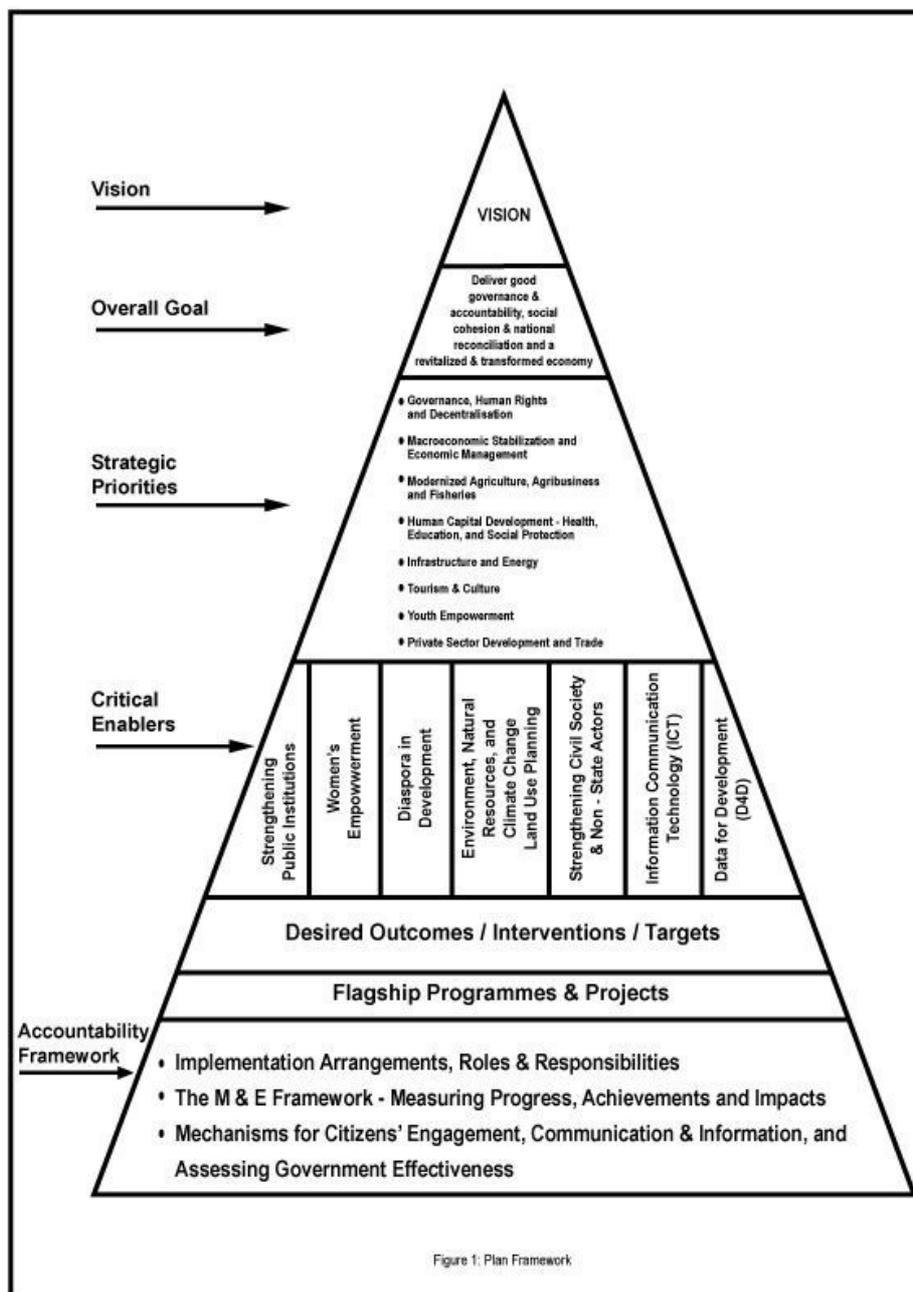
iii. Acronyms

DDI	Diaspora Direct Investment
GCM	Global Compact on Safe Orderly and Regular Migration
GDD	Gambia Diaspora Directorate
GDM	Gambia Diaspora Month
GFRID	Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
JVAP	Joint Valletta Action Plan
MIDWA	Migration Dialogue for West Africa
MSDG	Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAFoM	Pan African Forum on Migration
SNF	Stake in the Nation Forum

1. Introduction: Critical Enablers of the National Development Plan (NDP)

This Gambian Diaspora Strategy is fully incorporated in the Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21). Chapter 3 of the NDP identified seven critical enablers of national development, namely:

1. A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry
2. Empowering the Gambian Woman to realize her full potential
3. Enhancing the role of the diaspora in Gambian development
4. Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use
5. Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society
6. A civil society that is engaged and is a valued partner in national development
7. Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making



2. Diaspora in Development

Diasporas are by definition multi-generational in composition, comprising migrants, children and descendants of migrants. As with other countries, the affinity of the Gambian diaspora to the nation-state of The Gambia is based on nationality, nationhood or both. Many of the tens of thousands of adults who migrated from The Gambia retain Gambian nationality and citizenship. Many of the second, third and multigenerational descendants of Gambians may not hold Gambian citizenship, but they have emotional and nationhood connections with their country of heritage. In the discourse of diaspora-development, countries strategise and implement schemes and initiatives which expand and enhance the input of their diaspora in national development.

Given that individual migrants, their children and descendants cannot and should not be coerced into making development contributions to The Gambia, diaspora-development is to a great extent about stimulating, facilitating and nurturing productive engagement and action. Through the strong motivations of family, community, nationality and nationhood affinities, the Gambian diaspora has already chosen to make significant contributions to Gambian development. Gambia's diaspora-development strategy and plan will focus on supplementing, complementing and enhancing existing contributions, whilst stimulating innovative and new forms of productive contributions from a greater number of diverse migrants and multigenerational Gambians.

In 2005, the African Union gave a definition of the African diaspora as: *"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"*.⁶ To help translate the definition into national policy and practice, Faal (2006)⁷ proposed a new categorization of the African diaspora and postulated that the stronger the 'Diaspora Memory', the greater the likelihood of participation in the development of country of origin or heritage. For the Gambia and other African countries, the engagement strategies needed for people with a national, natal and parental memory of the country will be different from the policies needed for the 'older' diaspora with ancestral and historic 'Diaspora Memory'.

Further to the definition of the African diaspora in 2005, the African Union also declared the African diaspora as the Sixth Region of Africa. Since then, several countries have declared their own diaspora as a non-resident region of the country. The Gambia currently has seven administrative areas/regions. After due consultations, the government will seek to designate its diaspora as the Eighth Region of The Gambia, providing an administrative and symbolic framework for full, comprehensive and purposeful diaspora-development engagement and action.

United Nations data puts the number of Gambian migrants in 2015 at 90,000, but it recognizes the fact that this is an underestimate.⁸ Using latest statistical data from various countries, the Gambia-born statistician (Kebbeh 2017)⁹ estimates that there are about 140,000 Gambian migrants. The top ten countries of residence for Gambian migrants are: Italy, United States, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mali and Guinea Conakry.

⁶ <https://au.int/en/diaspora-division>

⁷ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001469/146986e.pdf>

http://www.gkpartners.co.uk/Gibril_Faal_-_Optimising_Actual_Virtual_and_Circular_Diaspora_Return_-_Part_1_-_2016.pdf

⁸ UNDESA (2015) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev. 2015), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York

⁹ Kebbeh, C. Omar (2017) A Statistical Portrait of Gambians Living Abroad, Washington DC.

Close to 140,000 Gambians Live Abroad in 2017

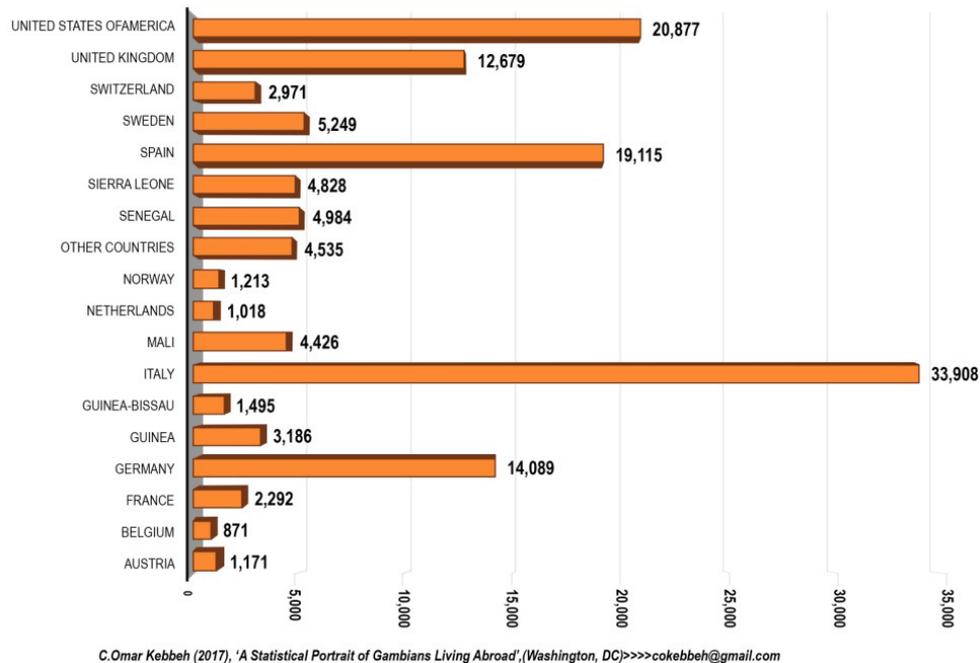


Figure 2: 'A Statistical Portrait of Gambians Living Abroad – C. Omar Kebbeh

It is likely that the Gambian diaspora, comprising just migrants and their children who are entitled to Gambian citizenship is over 200,000. This estimate is based, amongst other things, on the following analytical observations:

- The current numbers of Gambians abroad is broadly based on national censuses and data from formal institutions. A significant number of Gambian migrants, especially non-refugee irregular migrants, are not featured in censuses or other official data.
- In countries like Italy and Germany with the highest numbers of Gambian refugees and asylum seekers, the data on those categories of migrants are comprehensive and reliable, and they are very high. Similarly, in a country like Spain, where residents need to register with government authorities (irrespective of immigration status) in order to access services such as healthcare and education, the number of Gambians recorded is high. This suggests that there is a significant underestimate of Gambian migrants in countries where there is no advantage for irregular migrants to register with authorities.
- Migrant data collection in Africa is not as comprehensive or reliable as in Spain for example. The African country with the highest Gambian migrant population is Senegal, registering about 5,000 Gambians, fewer than the number in Sweden. The number of Gambians living in Senegal and other African countries is likely to be much higher than reported.
- Most migrant data misses an important part of the diaspora, namely second and third generations. Even if a conservative assumption is made, that 50% of settled Gambian diaspora on average have two children, then tens of thousands of second generation Gambians are missed from diaspora population data.

The government is already committed to creating a Gambia Diaspora Directorate (GDD) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambian Abroad. Amongst other activities and services, GDD will seek to improve data on the population and profile of migrants and the wider Gambian diaspora. Based on the estimate of 140,000 Gambians living abroad, Gambian migrants constitute 7% of the population. Every year, 0.5% of the Gambian population migrates from the country, the highest percentage in Africa.¹⁰ In 2016, the total of diaspora remittances to The Gambia was \$200m, being 21.5% of GDP¹¹. It is estimated that if remittances sent through informal means were included in the annual sum, it would represent over one-third of GDP. In 2014, as a percentage to GDP, The Gambia was the 10th remittance receiving country in the world, and the 3rd in Africa¹². As a proportion of the population, both migrant stock and migration flows for The Gambia are amongst the highest in the world. Not surprisingly, the contribution and impact of the diaspora in Gambian socio-economic and political development is substantial.

The Gambian diaspora profile has two extreme characteristics. Gambian migrants include a very high number of skilled professionals. Using 2011 data, OECD found that out of 144 countries assessed globally, proportionately, The Gambia had the 15th highest rate of emigration of highly-educated individuals.¹³ On the other hand, proportionately, The Gambia has the highest rate of irregular (back-way) migrants using the perilous Saharan-Mediterranean route to Europe. In 2016, 8% of the irregular migrants in Spain were young Gambians, and 6.6% of arrivals by sea in Italy were Gambians¹⁴, the latter increasing by 41% from the 2015. According to UNHCR, 27% of the Gambians who arrived in Italy in 2016 were Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), mostly aged 15-17, an increase of 150% increase from 2015¹⁵. This intense and dysfunctional pattern was due almost entirely to the brutal political situation caused by the former dictatorship, and the severe economic problems it created. The new democratic government will seek to protect vulnerable Gambian migrants, expand and enhance diaspora contributions to development, and reduce the pattern and trend of irregular and dysfunctional migration.

¹⁰ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/gambia/23696/node/23696_cs

¹¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=GM>

¹² <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23743/9781464803192.pdf>

¹³ Data from 2010/11, Connecting with Emigrants, A Global Profile of Diasporas, OECD, 2015

¹⁴ UNHCR Update Italy, Sea Arrivals, December 2016

¹⁵ Italy UASC Dashboard, UNHCR, December 2016

Key Issues to Address: Diaspora in Development

<i>Diaspora in Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Absence of central unit within government to coordinate and augment the development input of the diaspora, and to address their needs, wants and expectations• Absence of coherent strategy, policy framework and action plan on diaspora-development• A need to end the suspicion and antagonism that the government had against the diaspora during the dictatorship, and establish effective and productive mechanisms for positive engagement• Absence of schemes, initiatives and programmes to stimulate, complement, incentivize and enhance the productive socio-economic and political contributions of the diaspora• The deficit of motivation, capacity and capability of civil servants and other stakeholders in The Gambia to engage with the diaspora, and support and augment their contributions to national development• High cost of remittance transaction costs and absence of innovative and structured diaspora finance mechanisms for responsible commercial, social and public entrepreneurship• High level of irregular and dysfunctional migration, especially amongst young people, and low levels of brain gain derived from the highly skilled Gambian diaspora• A need to end the political disenfranchisement of Gambian citizens abroad, and the low levels of diaspora involvement in national, local, community and sectoral policy dialogues and processes
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3. Enhancing the role of the Diaspora in Gambian Development

People living abroad who are of Gambian nationality, origin or heritage constitute the Gambian diaspora. The Gambian diaspora is diverse and inclusive, encompassing short and long term migrants, second and third generations, and other descendants who identify with Gambians. Being a member of the Gambian diaspora is determined not only through maintenance or acquisition of nationality and citizenship, but also through emotional and nationhood affinities. The strong sense of belonging to The Gambia is what motivates and propels the diaspora to contribute to the development of the country. The fact that the diaspora is resident outside of the country is an opportunity to be harnessed. The United Nations recognises the positive nexus between migration, diaspora and development, as reflected in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNDESA estimated in 2015 that the number of Gambian migrants living in different parts of the world was about 90,000.¹⁶ This was recognised as an underestimate. The current estimate is that there are about 140,000 Gambian migrants (Kebbeh 2017)¹⁷. This latest figure uses data from the national statistical institutions in countries with high numbers of Gambians. If we estimate the population of The Gambia to be 2 million, then Gambian migrants constitute 7% of the population. Globally, migrants constitute only 3% of the world population. Thus the incidence of migration amongst Gambians is more than double the global average. Furthermore, the estimated stock of Gambian migrants does not necessarily include all the irregular migrants. It also largely excludes the second and third generation Gambians, who are born and bred abroad, but maintain an emotional and developmental link with The Gambia. According to UNICEF, nearly 0.5 percent of Gambians migrate to another country every year – the highest rate in Africa.¹⁸ From the perspectives of population and national development, the Gambian diaspora is a significant and very important constituency of the country.

In September 2017, the President delivered a Diaspora Policy statement, which highlighted key commitments already incorporated in the Technical Cooperation Project on Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia (MSDG)¹⁹. The NDP goal for the diaspora is to: ***expand, enhance and optimise the role of the diaspora in national development, as valued partners.***

Key Expected Results for Diaspora in Development

- Create the first ever Diaspora Strategy validated by 50 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA)
- Create a Gambia Diaspora Directorate with Focal Points in 50 MDAs, embassies and missions
- Provide capacity development on diaspora-development to 2,500 government and NSA personnel
- Reduce the transaction cost of remittances sent to The Gambia to an average of 3%
- Facilitate 20 Diaspora Direct Investments (DDIs) and issue 2 Diaspora Bonds
- Co-finance 100 civil society and social impact projects from the Diaspora Development Fund (DDF)
- Reduce the number of irregular (back-way) migrants by 60%
- Negotiate and sign 4 Migration and Development bilateral agreements
- Facilitate circular migration contracts for 350 skilled migrant workers
- Launch a mobile app, and organize 4 national forums and 10 online consultative events
- Complete full registration of diaspora voters, and oversee diaspora voting in Presidential elections
- Facilitate 14 representatives of the diaspora to have Observer Status in the 7 Local Government Areas
- Create platform for 50 diaspora-development organisations, covering 10 sectors, in 3 continents
- Access and utilise the services of 100 highly skilled diaspora professionals

¹⁶ UNDESA (2015) Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev. 2015), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York

¹⁷ Kebbeh, C. Omar (2017) A Statistical Portrait of Gambians Living Abroad, Washington DC.

¹⁸ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/gambia/23696/node/23696_cs

¹⁹ <http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/MSDG-BP-1-Highlights-of-Presidential-Diaspora-Policy-Speech-Sep-2017.pdf>

4. Outcome I: Structured and Facilitative Approach to Diaspora Engagement

4.1 Diaspora Strategy

To operate a structured, effective and efficient framework to optimise diaspora contributions to Gambian development, a comprehensive diaspora strategy is needed. An exercise of research, analyses, consultations, drafting, validation and adoption of a Gambian Diaspora Strategy and Implementation Plan is underway. This exercise involves consultations with the key stakeholders in the diaspora and in Gambia, so that there is diverse engagement in the process and ownership of the emergent policy. Some of the key commitments outlined in the President's Diaspora Policy statement and set out in the NDP will be incorporated in the Diaspora Strategy. The Gambian Diaspora Strategy will be for a 10-year period (2018-27), supplemented by a 3-year practical Implementation Plan that focuses on priority themes and actions. This is an important step towards the mainstreaming of diaspora-development in The Gambia

4.2 Gambia Diaspora Directorate

A Gambia Diaspora Directorate (GDD) will be created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambians Abroad (MOFA). It will be a service delivery unit, which facilitates structured and optimal interface between government and the diaspora, whilst coordinating diaspora-related issues with the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government. GDD will take the lead in implementing many aspects of the Diaspora Strategy, through direct service delivery, as well as liaison and coordination of actions and activities with different governmental, non-governmental and international bodies. GDD will also work closely with the Ministry of Interior to facilitate effective intergovernmental and inter-agency collaboration regarding the Gambian Migration Policy.

4.3 Capacity Development on Diaspora-Development

Senior civil servants and key personnel from non state institutions will be given bespoke and appropriate capacity development on how they can best work with, and support the diverse Gambian diaspora. The programme will include professional and technical training, coaching and mentoring and other schemes, for government officials, diplomats and other Gambian professionals. These will improve the understanding, skills and capability of the officials who will be responsible for implementing policies on mainstreaming diaspora-development.

5. Outcome II: Leveraging Diaspora Remittances and Investment

5.1 Reducing the Transaction Cost of Remittances

According to the World Bank, in 2016 the total of diaspora remittances to The Gambia was \$200m, being 21.5% of GDP²⁰. This figure does not include remittances sent through informal channels. In 2014, as a percentage to GDP, The Gambia was the 10th remittance receiving country in the world, and the 3rd in Africa²¹. The Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG), working together with Ministry of Finance, the MSDG Technical Cooperation Project and other partners, will develop and implement a scheme to reduce the transaction cost of remittances sent to The Gambia to the lowest level possible. The scheme is will be in line with the target 10.7c of SDGs, that: *“By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent”*. It will also be implemented in line with the Joint Valletta Action Plan, adopted in November 2015, that: *“In addition [to the 3% SDG target], identify corridors for remittance transfers where the partners commit to substantially reduce the costs by 2020, from Europe to Africa and within Africa”*. For some remittance corridors, the cost of sending money to The Gambia is over 20%. Even for a well developed market such as the UK-Gambia remittance corridor, the World Bank reported that in July 2017, the total cost was 9.72%, being over three times the SDG target of 3%²².

5.2 Diaspora Direct Investment and Diaspora Bonds

The highest ever inflow in of Foreign Direct Investment in The Gambia was 2006 at \$82m. In that year, diaspora remittances totalled \$64m. In the intervening 10 years, the trends have reversed. In 2016, FDI figures were in the negative, with \$1.5m being withdrawn from the Gambian economy²³, whilst diaspora remittance stood at an all time high at \$200m. The private remittances sent to family and friends are mostly used for social investment and consumption, paying recurrent costs of feeding, health, education and social amenities of families. The diaspora through their remittances play a fundamental role in reducing hunger and poverty, improving health, and attaining other key SDG goals and targets. Beyond recurrent consumptive expenditure, there is untapped opportunity to attract remittances towards durable investments and economically productive activities in the Gambian economy. This will be done through a wide range of schemes, including consolidating and updating current FDI and diaspora-related tax breaks and incentives, and structuring them to meet the specific and specialised needs of Direct Diaspora Investment (DDI). Laws, regulations and practices will be revised where appropriate to facilitate new and innovative forms of diaspora financing structures. Amongst other things, these will include: project-based diaspora bonds; Diaspora Public Private Partnership schemes; social security, savings and investment products.

²⁰ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=GM>

²¹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23743/9781464803192.pdf>

²² <https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org/en/corridor/United-Kingdom/Gambia>

²³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?locations=GM>

5.3 Diaspora Development Fund

In the global discourse on diaspora-development, it is recognised that the current limitations on transboundary financing is limiting the reach, scale and impact of the diaspora. As part of the 'Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development' the Civil Society Declaration noted the need for funding of "*transboundary and diaspora investment schemes*"²⁴. For Gambian diaspora organisations involved in community, civil society, social enterprise and cooperative activities in different parts of country, the Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) will provide project co-financing. This facility will expand and enhance the collective remittances sent for community projects. Hometown, district, alumni and sectoral non-for-profit diaspora groups will apply to the fund to leverage and supplement the resources they raise by themselves. For diaspora entrepreneurs and investors, the DDF shall provide loans, equity investment and other forms of co-investment, to stimulate and expand job creation and social impact investments in The Gambia.

6. Outcome III: Protection of Vulnerable Migrants and Facilitation of Regular Pathways

6.1 Preventing Irregular and Dysfunctional Migration

As a proportion of its population, The Gambia has the highest percentage of irregular migrants using the Saharan-Mediterranean (back-way) route to Europe. In Spain, 8% of the irregular migrants who arrived there in 2016 were young Gambians. In 2016, 181,436 people arrived by sea in Italy, of whom 11,929 (6.6%) were Gambians²⁵. This was a 41% increase from the 2015 number of 8,454. UNHCR reported that 27% of the Gambians who arrived in Italy in 2016 were Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). This was a 150% increase from 2015²⁶. Of these Gambian UASC migrants, 92% were aged between 15 and 17, and the remaining 8% were younger, aged between 5 and 14. This form of irregular and dysfunctional migration was caused by the combination of economic stagnation and political repression of two decades of dictatorship. By mid-2016, there were 10,070 Gambian refugees and 16,500 asylum-seekers. Italy hosts 63% of the Gambian refugees; 27% are equally-distributed in the United States and the United Kingdom. France and Germany host 4% of Gambian refugees, and the rest are in other EU countries.²⁷ For the Gambian asylum-seekers, 83% are in Germany and Italy. However, during the first half of 2016, before the fall of the dictatorship in The Gambia, 64% of the asylum applications filed by Gambians were rejected²⁸. There are villages in rural Gambia, like Saba in the North Bank, where 15% of the youth population (600 out of 4,000 residents) had left for Europe, predominantly through irregular routes.²⁹

²⁴ <https://csoforffd.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/addis-ababa-cso-ffd-forum-declaration-12-july-2015.pdf>

²⁵ UNHCR Update Italy, Sea Arrivals, December 2016

²⁶ Italy UASC Dashboard, UNHCR, December 2016

²⁷ <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>

²⁸ IOM (2017) Migration Profile: The Gambia, (unpublished final draft)

²⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/gambia/11979547/Inside-the-west-African-village-where-every-young-man-is-trying-to-migrate-to-Europe.html>

The end of dictatorship will reduce the rate of irregular migration, but it will not stop it. Working with international partners, the government will provide appropriate protection and support to Gambians abroad, especially distressed and vulnerable migrants, and unaccompanied and separated children. When necessary, the government will facilitate their safe and voluntary return home, in line with human rights provisions. The Gambia shares the United Nations' vision that, 'migration should be a choice, not a desperate necessity'. To achieve this, the government and stakeholders must confront and tackle head-on the major challenges of dysfunctional migration. It is essential to avert and prevent the situations whereby young people drop out of education or training, and families spend enormous resources on irregular migration pathways, putting children and family members in peril and jeopardy. The diaspora has a role to play in providing an alternative narrative of migrant life abroad. More importantly, through alumni and hometown associations, and social enterprise, cooperative and commercial ventures, the diaspora will be part of the national effort to create viable, decent and sustainable jobs, and reduce the number of young people 'Not in Education, Employment and Training' (NEETs). The main reasons given by Gambians as reasons for their migration are: search for better jobs (57%), and pursuit of education (21.5%). The diaspora has a specific role to play in creating viable options and opportunities for education, employment and training for young people in rural and urban Gambia³⁰.

6.2 Global Migration Dialogues and Bi-lateral Engagement

The Gambia will participate actively in global migration dialogues and processes aimed at facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration as set out in SDG target 10.7. The Gambia will particularly engage with, and seek to provide leadership in, processes such as: the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process); implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP); negotiations of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM); discussion of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD); negotiations on African Free Movement, discussions of Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA), Pan African Forum on Migration (PAfoM) and Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID). The Gambia will also improve consular services, as well as bi-lateral relations and migration dialogues with countries that have high numbers of Gambian citizens and vulnerable migrants, such as: Italy, United States, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden and Libya. Consultations, negotiations and partnerships will cover amongst other things: protection of vulnerable Gambians, portability of social security benefits, training and educational exchanges, investments and job creation in The Gambia.

³⁰ Data from 2010/11, Connecting with Emigrants, A Global Profile of Diasporas, OECD, 2015

6.3 Ethical Recruitment and Circular Migration

There is a risk that young people 'Not in Education, Employment and Training' (NEETs) may end up in irregular migration. To reduce that risk, the government will use global migration processes, Mobility Partnerships, temporary worker schemes and other bi-lateral arrangements to seek to create viable and regular migratory pathways for Gambian workers. This is especially relevant for Europe, which is the destination for Gambia's irregular migrants. This can be done through new and innovative forms of circular migration schemes, linking training, apprenticeships, employment, migration, return, redeployment and reintegration. These schemes will target disadvantaged and vulnerable youths, who will be trained on skills needed in diverse job markets. The first two pillars of the Joint Valletta Action Plan which emerged from the Europe-Africa Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015 are to: 'Address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement' and 'Enhance co-operation on legal migration and mobility'. In the September 2017 EU State of the Union address, the President of the European Commission stated that: *"We will also work on opening up legal pathways. Irregular migration will only stop if there is a real alternative to perilous journeys.....legal migration is an absolute necessity for Europe as an ageing continent. This is why the Commission made proposals to make it easier for skilled migrants to reach Europe with a Blue Card."*To facilitate regular pathways through labour migration, the government will also support the setting up of structured and regulated ethical recruitment agencies, which operate on the best practice standards set by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

7. Outcome IV: Enhanced Participation in National Policy and Development Practice

7.1 Physical and Online Forums for Engagement

In his Diaspora Policy statement in September 2017, the President declared that there would be an annual 'Stake in the Nation Forum (SNF)', as part of a 'Gambian Diaspora Month (GDM)', designated for the period 15 December to 14 January. Many members of the Gambian diaspora visit the country during the Christmas and New Year period. The purpose of GDM is to focus attention on positive diaspora action. Groups and organisations will coordinate amongst themselves, and schedule their diaspora-related events during this period. This will create synergies and increase the opportunity for people to participate in multiple diaspora-related consultations and activities. The SNF will be one of many events taking place during GDM, bringing diaspora groups together to engage with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, as well as NGOs and CSOs, on a wide range of developmental matters. Conferences and meetings will be complemented with webinars and online forums. Through the MSDG Technical Cooperation Project³¹, a Gambian diaspora website has already been created. This and other portals, as well as social media and mobile apps will be developed to facilitate user-friendly and substantive diaspora engagement in different aspects of Gambian development policy and practice. The diaspora will be able to contribute to formal policy, as well as strategic, thematic and sectoral consultations initiated by different government and quasi-government institutions.

³¹ <http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/MSDG-BP-2-MSDG-Project-Summary-Sep-2017.pdf>

7.2 Diaspora Voting at Presidential and National Assembly Elections

Section 39 of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia gives every Gambian citizen the right to vote in Presidential and National Assembly, irrespective of residency in The Gambia. Due to the undemocratic nature of the previous dictatorship, the diaspora were never given their constitutional right to vote. The diaspora continued to play an active and crucial political role in restoring democracy in The Gambia. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) will work with partners to facilitate diaspora voter registration and voting in future Presidential and National Assembly elections. Furthermore, the constitutional restriction preventing Gambians with dual citizenship from serving as Cabinet Ministers will be lifted. Activation of the franchise of the Gambian diaspora is also an opportunity to improve services provided by Gambian embassies and diplomatic missions. MOFA, working with the Ministry of Interior and other partners will create and issue a renewable Consular Card to every member of the Gambian diaspora who wants one. The Consular Card will be linked to secure databases, ensuring that data held by the issuing embassies and diplomatic missions provide credible information about the number and demographic profile of Gambians living outside the country. MOFA and GDD will be proactive in promoting the Consular Card as a form of national identity for Gambians Abroad. The Consular Card will give holders access to Gambia government services and other support and facilities identified in the NDP and Diaspora Strategy, irrespective of their immigration status in the country of residence. The Consular Card database can also be the basis for the diaspora electoral register.

7.3 Diaspora as the Eighth Region of The Gambia

In 2005, the African Union declared that the African diaspora constitute the sixth region of Africa. Since then several countries have declared their own diaspora to be a non-resident region of the country. To complement the seven (7) Local Government Areas in the country, the Gambian diaspora will be declared the Eighth Region of The Gambia. This is a symbolic and administrative instrument that will enable the government to target service provision to the diaspora, in a manner that strengthens diaspora ties with The Gambia as a country of origin and heritage, and maximizes diaspora input to development. Such a declaration is also very important for second, third and other generations who have much to contribute to Gambia's development. The Gambia Diaspora Directorate will take the lead in coordinating an all-of-government approach to service delivery to the diaspora as the Eighth Region. Each Local Government Area should have mechanism for Observer Status for representatives of the diaspora. In the medium term (post-NDP period), the diaspora should have an elected representative in the National Assembly.

7.4 Network of Diaspora-Development Organisations

A thematic and sectoral approach is one of the most effective forms of engagement for diaspora-development. This is because the most productive members of the diaspora concentrate on their area of expertise or specialized interest to make inputs to the countries of origin or heritage. Through online and social media tools, structures will be developed for a platform of Gambian diaspora-development networks, enabling organisations and individuals to cooperate and collaborate on projects and programmes.

7.5 Access to Diaspora Expertise

According to the OECD, The Gambia has the 15th highest rate of emigration of highly-educated individuals in the world (out of 144). They reside mainly in the United States and United Kingdom. However, 57% of the highly educated Gambians work in low- and medium-skilled jobs. Gambian migrants in high skilled jobs constitute 18.5% of Gambians abroad³². Schemes are needed to facilitate brain gain and counter the brain drain. Through innovative forms of diaspora diplomacy, suitably qualified Gambians in the diaspora can be appointed as Honorary Consuls or Consul Generals, promoting trade, investment, education, tourism, cultural exchange, whilst providing welfare and consular services to the diaspora. Through diaspora volunteering, it is possible to enable long term migrants, second and third generation Gambians to undertake productive work in The Gambia, leading to further skills transfer and other forms of beneficial activities. In The Gambia, there are skill shortages in many specialist professional and vocational areas. Gap analysis exercise will be undertaken, to be followed up with skills-matching, recruitment and deployment of highly skilled Gambian diaspora professionals on short term and circular assignments in The Gambia. The expertise of these highly skilled professionals can also be accessed for specific assignments in their countries of residence or within the diaspora. Where needed, they can join and strengthen official Gambian delegations for technical meetings and negotiations.

³² Data from 2010/11, Connecting with Emigrants, A Global Profile of Diasporas, OECD, 2015

Appendix I: Four-Year Budget of Diaspora in Development (within the NDP)

Outcome I: Structured and Facilitative Approach to Diaspora Engagement

- Diaspora Strategy (\$0.2m)
- Gambia Diaspora Directorate (\$0.6m)
- Capacity Development on Diaspora-Development (\$0.2m)

Sub-Total for Structured Diaspora Engagement: \$1m

Outcome II: Leveraging Diaspora Remittances and Investment

- Reducing the Transaction Cost of Remittances (\$1.5m)
- Diaspora Direct Investment and Diaspora Bonds (\$1.5m)
- Diaspora Development Fund (\$7m)

Sub-Total for Leveraging Remittances and Investment: \$10m

Outcome III:

Protection of Vulnerable Migrants and Facilitation of Regular Pathways

- Preventing Irregular and Dysfunctional Migration (\$8m)
- Global Migration Dialogues and Bi-lateral Engagement (\$0.5m)
- Ethical Recruitment and Circular Migration (\$1.5m)

Sub-Total for Vulnerable Migrants and Regular Pathways: \$10m

Outcome IV: Enhanced Participation in National Policy and Development Practice

- Physical and Online Forums for Engagement (\$1m)
- Diaspora Voting at Presidential and National Assembly Elections (\$1.5m)
- Diaspora as the Eighth Region of The Gambia (\$0.1m)
- Network of Diaspora-Development Organisations (\$0.4m)
- Access to Diaspora Expertise (\$1m)

Sub-Total for Enhanced Participation in National Policy: \$4m

TOTAL FOR DIASPORA IN DEVELOPMENT: \$25m

The work on ‘Structured Diaspora Engagement’ and ‘Enhanced Participation in National Policy’ have been designed such that costs are relatively low at \$5m (20% of the budget), as they need to be absorbed into core government funding in future years. The activities under ‘Leveraging Remittances and Investment’, and ‘Vulnerable Migrants and Regular Pathways’ are project/programme driven, and include one-off capital and costs.

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MIGRATION AND SUSTAINABLE
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