

### **3<sup>RD</sup> GLOBAL MAYORAL FORUM ON HUMAN MOBILITY, MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Quezon City, 29-30 September 2016**

**Dialogue between Mayors and Civil Society Representatives – Consultation document  
presented by MFA**

#### ***Civil Society Intervention Following MFA Presentation***

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First of all, I would like to say thank you to the organisers of the [3<sup>rd</sup> Global Mayoral] Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, for extending an invitation to AFFORD. We are also very delighted that we are possibly one of the first, if not the first, diaspora-led organisation attending the Global Mayoral Forum.

AFFORD is a diaspora-led organisation that has become a pioneer and innovator in the field of policy and practice on 'diaspora and development' over a period of 22 years.

The second thing I would like to come to, before I address the Civil Society recommendations, is to very briefly address two key concerns that have been raised over the last two days. 1. Are diaspora and migrants obliged to make contributions to their countries of origin? And 2. Is it fair to see diaspora and migrants as – as someone said – as dollar bills? If I may use the premise of AFFORD's own story and how it began – it began on the premise that diaspora and migrants, regardless of support they receive, make a significant contribution to development and to countries of origin. The size of remittances is enough to tell us this – the officially recorded global diaspora remittances in 2015 reached \$431 billion, according to the World Bank. But not only that – beyond the financial, there are other forms of capital that they contribute and are equally important – these are intellectual (such as skills transfer); political (such as lobbying and advocacy); social (such as related to trust networks like old school alumni); cultural (such as ambassadors and promoters of language, music, arts etc); and finally time (such as time spent transferring knowledge and expecting nothing in return). So, our focus on diaspora and development is on the premise of adding value to the work of those who do, while creating more opportunities for all those interested in engaging. So, we ask ourselves the question - how can we add value to the diaspora's contribution to development and maximise the social impact? How can we pool remittances for development purposes rather than consumption? How do we create more opportunities for diaspora and migrants who are already investing in countries of origin as well as those looking for opportunities, while at the same time creating more choices so that migration becomes a choice, not a necessity? In a nutshell, from our experience, while not all diaspora and migrants will engage with their countries of origin, we work with those who are already contributing and those who would like to do so, and there really is no shortage of work. And we do this by focusing on all five forms of capital, not just the financial, and in truth more on the intellectual capital.

Now, I will come to the civil society recommendations, which we also had the privilege of contributing to, among other CSOs, of course. And thank you to MFA, GCM, Jmpl and other colleagues who drafted this consultation document, Global migration and development is often spoken about internationally. It is important to acknowledge that migration is local, and development is local. Every

level of discussion, be it global, national, regional needs to recognise migration in the localities, towns and cities that we live in. That also means diversity and we need to figure out the special issues that come with it.

Local governments and local authorities play an important role and can play an even more influential role. You are important sources of local knowledge about realities on the ground, and, as has been said previously, can be vocal supporters of the positive contributions of migrants and diverse societies. Very recently, as part of the Migration and Development Civil Society Network (MADE), AFFORD initiated a Global Diaspora Day online campaign intended to showcase the contributions of diaspora and migrants to development, as well as showcase initiatives addressing anti-xenophobia. While many worthwhile submissions were received and shared online, it was evident how much more could have been gained with some of these initiatives if these individual initiatives had been delivered with the support of local government and local media. In response to the UN High-level Summit “New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants”, Civil Society, through its ‘ActNow’ document, called on the UN to ‘implement policies and vigorous campaigns at national and local levels to counter xenophobia, discrimination and racism’. Civil society organisations are well-placed to work with local authorities and contribute to their training on developing sensitivities around the rights of migrants. Similarly, local governments are indeed well-placed to be vocal supporters of the positive contributions of migrants and diaspora and can help transform the language around ‘illegal migration’ to decriminalise migration, through for example, more collaborative campaigns.

Migrants and diaspora make significant contributions to societies here and there. If I can focus on the role of diaspora and migrants in job creation, in entrepreneurship and investment in both countries of origin and residence, one of the key recommendations from Civil Society Days (CSD) at the Global Forum for Migration and development (GFMD) in Istanbul last October, called for the inclusion of diaspora and migrant policies in not only national development policies but crucially in local development plans to ensure a cohesive approach to migration and development.

Diaspora and migrant entrepreneurs make their contributions practically at a local level. Several initiatives abound, but often not in partnership (or a formal partnership) with the local government. In the case of Africa, when you refer to the hometown association typology of diaspora networks, these will often operate at chieftaincy level in villages within the cities, therefore traditional methods may also abound. Whichever partnerships diaspora networks choose, their interventions are often local.

While recent statistics from the World Bank Migration and Development publication show that global remittance flows are larger than Official Development Assistance (ODA), it also shows that in poor countries, the larger portion of remittances are channelled into education, health and business investments. Knowledge of the collective diaspora is still wanting and there is a lack of cohesion on relevant information as initiatives on engagement, investments, networks and partnerships are nascent, country specific (even home-town specific), often facilitated through international cooperation, or are local, diaspora-led, often informal, direct and have no engagement with government structures – be it local or national. So, a holistic approach to migration management that involves the global level, national government, local government and civil society including diaspora and migrant networks and organisations, and other stakeholders such as the private sector is crucial.