



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

**DRAFT EAC DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT  
POLICY**

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT**

**EAC SECRETARIAT  
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## FOREWORD

The East African Community recognizes its diaspora as integral stakeholders in the region's journey towards peace, prosperity, and unity. Across the world, East Africans are excelling in fields of science, medicine, innovation, education, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy. Their unwavering commitment and contributions to their countries of origin and the region at large are both inspiring and transformative.

The EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy marks a bold and necessary step towards institutionalizing the engagement of East Africans abroad. It affirms the Partner States collective resolve to build a dynamic partnership with the diaspora based on inclusion, respect, opportunity, and shared prosperity.

This policy is grounded in the belief that a well-supported and engaged diaspora is a strategic partner in the economic development of the region. Through this framework, the East African Community seeks to safeguard the rights and welfare of the diaspora, facilitate investment, enhance remittance flows, and promote knowledge and technology transfer. The policy also commits to fostering a structured return and reintegration, recognizing the diaspora's contributions, and strengthening our common identity as East Africans making the EAC Motto of “***One people one Destiny***” become a lived reality.

On behalf of the leadership of the East African Community, I commend the efforts behind this timely initiative and encourage all Partner States Ministries, Agencies, Institutions and Stakeholders to support its full and inclusive implementation. Let this policy be a foundation for deeper bonds between the region and its diaspora, and a beacon of unity for all East Africans, wherever they may be.

Her Excellency Veronica M. Nduva

**Secretary General**

East African Community

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
AU	African Union
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
BSSAs	Bilateral Social Security Agreements
CIDO	African Union Citizens Directorate
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EA	East Africa
EAC	East African Community
EACMP	East African Common Market Protocol
EACU	East African Customs Union Protocol
EACLMP	East African Labour Migration Policy
EEU	External Employment Unit
EUDiF	European Union Diaspora Facility
EU	European Union
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development

ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITES	Information Technology Enabled Services
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa
MLAs	Multilateral Labour Agreements
NIDCOM	Nigeria Diaspora Commission
NDP	National Development Plan
RCA	Rwandan Community Abroad
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for refugees

## WORKING DEFINITIONS

<b>Bilateral/Multilateral Labour Migration Agreements:</b>	Agreements concluded by two/ multiple states which are legally binding and are essentially concerned with interstate cooperation on Labour Migration
<b>Brain Gain:</b>	<p>From the perspective of a country of destination, immigration of skilled workers into the country, resulting into the acquisition of human capital;</p> <p>From the perspective of the country of origin, the positive spill over effects of the migration of highly skilled workers such as brain circulation, or the motivational effects of migration that spur aspiring migrants to acquire further skills. Brain gains also occurs when migrants return back to their country or communities of origin and bring back with them, new skills and knowledge acquired in migration.</p>
<b>Consular Protection and Assistance:</b>	The right to the provision of adequate consular and other services that are necessary to meet the social, cultural and other needs of nationals abroad or to protect their rights against any infringements by the receiving State.
<b>Country of Destination:</b>	In the Migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or groups of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	In the Migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or groups of persons, who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly
<b>Diaspora:</b>	Migrants and descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity or mutual experiences in the destination country.

<b>Remittances:</b>	Personal monetary transfers, cross border or within the same country, made by migrants to individuals or communities with whom the migrant has links
<b>Immigration:</b>	The act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of residence.
<b>Immigrant:</b>	A person who moves into a country other than that of his /her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.
<b>Engagement:</b>	ILO defines engagement in the context of employment as "a state where an individual is deeply involved in their work, feeling passionate about their role and the organisation, and actively contributing to its success."
<b>Labour mobility:</b>	is temporary or short-term movements of persons for employment-related purposes, particularly in the context of the free movement of workers in regional economic communities (ILO, 2018).
<b>Labour Mobility</b>	mobility of workers can be either occupational (movement across occupational ladder) or geographic (movement across geographic locations). In the context of migration, geographic labour mobility is required (IOM Glossary)
<b>Labour Migration:</b>	is the movement of people from one state to another or within their own country of residence for the purpose of employment.
<b>Push Factors:</b>	factors which make someone leave a country.
<b>Pull Factors:</b>	factors which make someone migrate/settle in a country
<b>Portability</b>	Often used to refer to measures aimed at the maintenance of rights that are acquired or in the course of acquisition and to the payment of benefits abroad. Portability requires cooperation between the host and origin countries. (source: Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families (ILO, 2021).
<b>Migration:</b>	movement by people from one place to another.

**Social protection or  
social security:**

is a human right and is defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle. Social protection includes benefits for children and families, maternity, unemployment, employment injury, sickness, old age, disability and survivors, as well as health protection. Social protection systems address all these policy areas by a mix of contributory schemes (social insurance) and non-contributory tax-financed benefits, including social assistance<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_605078.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_605078.pdf)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

FOREWORD	ii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	iii
WORKING DEFINITIONS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	x
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	3
1.2.1 Global Context	3
1.2.2 African Context	3
1.2.3 East African Community Context	5
1.3 Definition of Diaspora	9
2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	11
2.1 EAC Good Practices, Challenges and Opportunities	11
2.1.1 Republic of Burundi	11
2.1.2 The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	12
2.1.3 Republic of Kenya	13
2.1.4 Republic of Rwanda	16
Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place	16
2.1.5 Republic of South Sudan (RSS)	17
Diaspora Engagement	17
Established Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms	17
Challenges experienced in the engagement Process.	18
2.1.6 Federal Republic of Somalia (FRS)	18
2.1.7 The United Republic of Tanzania	19
2.1.8 Republic of Uganda	21
2.2 General Diaspora engagement challenges	22
2.3 Current Policy Gaps and Opportunities	22
2.4 Good Practices from Other Regions and Lessons for the EAC Region	24
2.4.1 INDIA	24
2.4.2 Federal Republic of Nigeria	26
2.4.3 MOROCCO	27
2.5 Rationale for the EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy	29
2.5.1 Importance of a Structured Regional Approach.	32
3. POLICY, LEGAL, REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS	35

3.1 Alignment with International and Regional Frameworks	35
3.1.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	35
3.1.2 International Frameworks	36
3.1.3 African Regional Frameworks	38
3.1.4 EAC Legal Frameworks	39
3.2 Legal Implications of the EAC Diaspora Policy	42
4. VISION, MISSION, POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND INTERVENTIONS	43
4.1 Vision	43
4.2 Mission	43
4.3 Goal	43
4.4 General Objective	43
4.4.1 Specific Objectives	43
4.5 Guiding Principles	44
5. PRIORITY INTERVENTION AREAS & POLICY ACTIONS	46
5.1 Protect the Rights and Safeguard the Welfare and Interests of the Diaspora	46
5.2 Strengthening Remittance Systems to Facilitate Cost Effective Transfers	47
5.3 Institutional Strengthening to Facilitate Effective Administration of the East African Diaspora	48
5.4 Promote Trade and Investments and EAC as Single Investment Destination	49
5.5 Promote Tourism, Culture & Arts	50
5.6 Facilitate Coordination & Portability of Social Security Benefits	51
5.7 Foster Knowledge and Skills Transfer	52
5.8 Return and Reintegration Programmes for Returnees	53
5.9 Establish a Regional Online Diaspora Data Base	54
5.10 Recognize and Reward Diaspora Participation in the EAC	55
5.11 Promote and recognize Diaspora Philanthropy support to EAC	56
6.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION	58
6.1 Implementation-Roles and Responsibilities	58
6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism	61
6.3 Policy Review	61
6.4 POLICY COORDINATION	61
7.0 References	63
Appendix 1. Summary Coordination Framework	65
Appendix 2. Draft EAC Diaspora Policy Action Plan	68

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diaspora engagement within the East African Community (EAC) has garnered significant political interest in recent years. At the regional level, the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination (2010) emphasizes the involvement of both Partner State citizens and the diaspora in the development of the Community. Similarly, the EAC Common Market Protocol (EAC CMP 2010) seeks to facilitate investment opportunities for the East African diaspora by guaranteeing their right of establishment and residence in any Partner State, alongside their families for various purposes including work, education, business or leisure.

The East African Diaspora Engagement Policy (EACDEP) represents a strategic milestone in harnessing the immense potential of East Africans living abroad. The policy provides a comprehensive framework to strengthen the engagement of the diaspora in contributing to regional development, economic integration, and the socio-political transformation of the East African Community (EAC). Anchored on the Treaty provisions of a people centered and private sector led regional integration and informed by regional priorities and global best practices on engagement, the policy recognizes the diaspora not only as remitters of financial resources, but as reliable partners in investment, innovation, trade, skills development, philanthropy, and cultural ambassadors.

Over the years, the EAC diaspora has significantly contributed to their countries of origin through remittances, knowledge exchange, and strategic partnerships. In 2024, remittance flows into the region exceeded USD 10 billion, positioning the diaspora as one of the largest sources of foreign exchange; surpassing even Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in some Partner States. However, the lack of a harmonized regional approach to diaspora engagement has resulted in fragmented efforts by Partner States due to gaps in coordination, legal frameworks, high remittance costs, data systems, information dissemination and program delivery.

The EACDEP is designed to address these challenges by aligning diaspora engagement with global frameworks such as the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the African Union's Migration Policy Framework (MPFA). It also draws from adopted regional instruments, including the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination, the EAC Common Market Protocol and national diaspora policies and strategies already under implementation by some Partner States.

The Policy Framework sets out ten strategic intervention areas:

- i. Promotion and Protection of Diaspora Rights and Welfare; ensuring diaspora access to consular services, legal protection, and equitable treatment.
- ii. Leveraging Remittances and Financial Inclusion by reducing remittance costs, improving digital transfer systems, and promoting diaspora-targeted financial products.

- iii. Promoting Trade and Investment by positioning the EAC as a single investment space and creating diaspora-friendly business environments.
- iv. Fostering Knowledge and Skills Transfer by enabling the return of expertise through partnerships with institutions and professional exchange programs.
- v. Support Return and Reintegration by establishing structured, dignified return programs and reintegration pathways for returning diaspora members.
- vi. Establishment of a Regional Diaspora Database to build a secure, self-updating data platform for diaspora mapping and engagement.
- vii. Promote Regional Tourism and Cultural Identity by leveraging on the diaspora to brand and market East Africa as a single tourist destination.
- viii. Strengthening Social Protection by promoting health, pension, and social security coverage for diaspora workers and ensuring portability of earned benefits
- ix. Recognize and Reward Diaspora Contribution to the region by Institutionalizing recognition of outstanding diaspora investments and initiatives at national and regional levels.
- x. Support Diaspora Philanthropy by encouraging and coordinating diaspora-led philanthropic initiatives in line with regional development goals.

The successful implementation of this policy requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach across Partner States and EAC Organs and Institutions. Key enablers include political commitment, harmonized legal frameworks, dedicated diaspora focal points, digital infrastructure, sustained partnerships and continuous dialogue with diaspora organizations, civil society, the private sector and development partners.

The EACDEP envisions a unified, empowered, and protected East African diaspora that is actively engaged and connected globally. It promotes a regional integration agenda that values diaspora participation not as a gesture of goodwill, but as a strategic partnership of East Africa's transformation anchored on the four integration pillars -ie Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and ultimately, the East African Political Federation.

It is envisaged that the policy implementation process will adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach by utilizing national and regional multi-stakeholders in the development agenda and thus creating an enabling environment for effective participation of the Diaspora in national and regional economic development. The framework is therefore a call to action to all Partner States to embrace and unlock the full potential of East African diaspora as agents of change, innovation, unity and socio-economic transformation.

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Migration has long been an integral aspect of human development, shaping societies and economies across the world. Despite the negative stereotypes often associated with it, migration; particularly emigration—holds immense potential as a driver of socio-economic transformation. It facilitates investment, fills labour gaps, nurtures innovation, enhances service delivery, and fosters transparency and global interconnectedness. Moreover, migration serves as an effective poverty reduction mechanism and a catalyst for new economic opportunities, benefiting not only migrants but also their families, communities, and both their countries of origin and destination.

Human capital is a fundamental driver of economic growth and sustainable development. Nations that seek to advance their development objectives must prioritize capacity building, mobilization, and strategic deployment of human resources, irrespective of geographical location. The global conversation on capacity development increasingly acknowledges the significant role of Diaspora communities in fostering economic and social progress. Across the world, governments are recognizing their Diaspora as valuable assets, capable of contributing through financial remittances, investment, knowledge transfer, philanthropy, and diplomatic networks.

The East African Diaspora has emerged as a vital force in the region's development. Over the years, East Africans living abroad have made substantial contributions, particularly through remittances in a substantial amount on the African continent to support medical missions, educational support, business investments, philanthropic activities and global networking. Beyond national and regional development, members of the East African Diaspora continue to play an essential role in the global economy, reinforcing the interconnectedness of migration and development.

At the international level, migration has been acknowledged as a key component of sustainable development. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development integrates migration as a cross-cutting issue in global development strategies. In 2018, states adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, recognizing the need for policies that maximize the positive impact of migration while addressing its challenges. Additionally, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development highlights the significance of remittances and provides a framework for aligning financial flows with economic, social, and environmental priorities.

Realizing the full potential of migration and Diaspora engagement requires coordinated, strategic efforts across multiple levels; international, regional, national, and community. When properly harnessed, migration can foster regional integration, strengthen economic ties, transform communities, and empower individuals. Diaspora communities, in particular, play a crucial role as development agents and carriers of social capital.

Diaspora outreach policies vary widely from country to country, as each Partner State has their own priority contributions and expectations from their overseas populations. Some States may facilitate work arrangements for nationals abroad to alleviate domestic job markets, others court investments and business linkages, while others seek the circulation of knowledge and skills gained abroad. Globally, diaspora mobilization projects have evolved away from philanthropic, one-sided

initiatives towards collaborative partnerships with mutual benefit at their core (Larner, 2007, p. 335). Engagement should therefore be viewed through the lens of collaborative, inclusive partnerships wherever possible.

Despite the recognition of the Diaspora's transformative potential, several challenges persist in fully leveraging their contributions. These include:

- i. Limited access to accurate and updated data on the Diaspora, hindering evidence-based policy making.
- ii. Inadequate human resource capacities in Missions Abroad to offer adequate consular services to the diaspora
- iii. High remittance costs, reducing the financial impact on recipient families and communities.
- iv. Inadequate data on remittances through informal or alternative channels;
- v. Inadequate environment for diaspora investments due to poor incentive regimes aimed at diaspora;
- vi. Poor transfer of technology and capacity arising from inadequate infrastructure and insecurity;
- vii. Skills and expertise gaps in key sectors.
- viii. Lack of an efficient information-sharing platform to facilitate engagement between the Diaspora and their home countries and for sharing national and regional trade and investment opportunities.
- ix. Fear of persecution emanating from past political regime connections by some diaspora
- x. Lack of Return and Reintegration frameworks to support and cushion diaspora members who wish to return to their home country.

Given these challenges and the growing recognition of the Diaspora's role in national and in regional development, it has become necessary to establish a structured framework for engaging the East African Diaspora. This necessitates the adoption of an *East African Diaspora Engagement Policy*, which will:

- a) Outline clear commitments and strategies by EAC Partner States for protecting, engaging, and safeguarding the rights and interests of the Diaspora.
- b) Address the high transaction costs of remittances to the region
- c) propose the development of a regional payment system to encourage the Diaspora to utilise formal remittance transfer channels
- d) Foster an enabling environment for Diaspora-driven economic development.
- e) Promote best practices in diaspora engagement and learning from each other;
- f) Define the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders.
- g) Serve as a tool for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Diaspora engagement.

- h) Act as an advocacy instrument for those invested in the development agenda of the East African Community (EAC).

This policy aims to create a well-coordinated, inclusive, and strategic approach to leveraging the immense potential of the East African Diaspora, ensuring that their contributions are effectively integrated into the region's long-term development agenda.

## 1.2 Background

### 1.2.1 Global Context

Globalization has accelerated the circulation of capital, goods, and information, leading to increased human migration. Modern transport and communication have made migration faster and more accessible. Currently, around 281 million people (3.6% of the global population) live outside their birthplace, with this number expected to rise by 2.9% annually. While migration can be triggered by conflicts, the primary driver remains economic disparity, as people move from their home countries to seek for better opportunities in other high-income countries.

Migration trends show a growing gender gap, with male migrants increasing from 50.6% in 2000 to 51.9% in 2020. The share of female Migrants has been decreasing since 2000 while the share of male migrants has increased by 1.3%- documenting a total of 146 million male migrants and 135 million female migrants (*World Migration Report 2024*). High-income countries, such as the U.S., Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Switzerland, are the largest sources of remittances, with the U.S. alone sending \$79 billion in 2022. India has the largest diaspora community in the world with nearly 18 million people living outside India, followed by Mexico (11.5 million) Russia 10.8 million and China 10 million people.

Governments increasingly recognize the role of the diaspora in economic development through financial contributions, knowledge transfer, trade, and investment among others. Many countries have established policies or strategies to engage their diaspora in economic activities and philanthropic initiatives. However, migration remains challenging for those from low-income nations due to restrictive visa policies, often forcing them into irregular migration routes.

The cost of sending remittances remains high, averaging 6.4% globally in late 2023, exceeding the 3% Sustainable Development Goal target. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the highest costs (7.9%), while East Asia and South Asia have the lowest (5.8%). Mobile transfers remain the cheapest at 4.4%, while banks are the most expensive at 12%.

During the year 2024, India received the highest remittances (\$125 billion), followed by Mexico USD 67 billion, China -USD 50 billion, the Philippines USD 40 billion and Egypt USD 24 Billion. According to the World Bank report 2023, remittances to many developing countries far outstrip official development assistance and remain vital for many smaller economies, contributing significantly to their GDP.

### 1.2.2 African Context

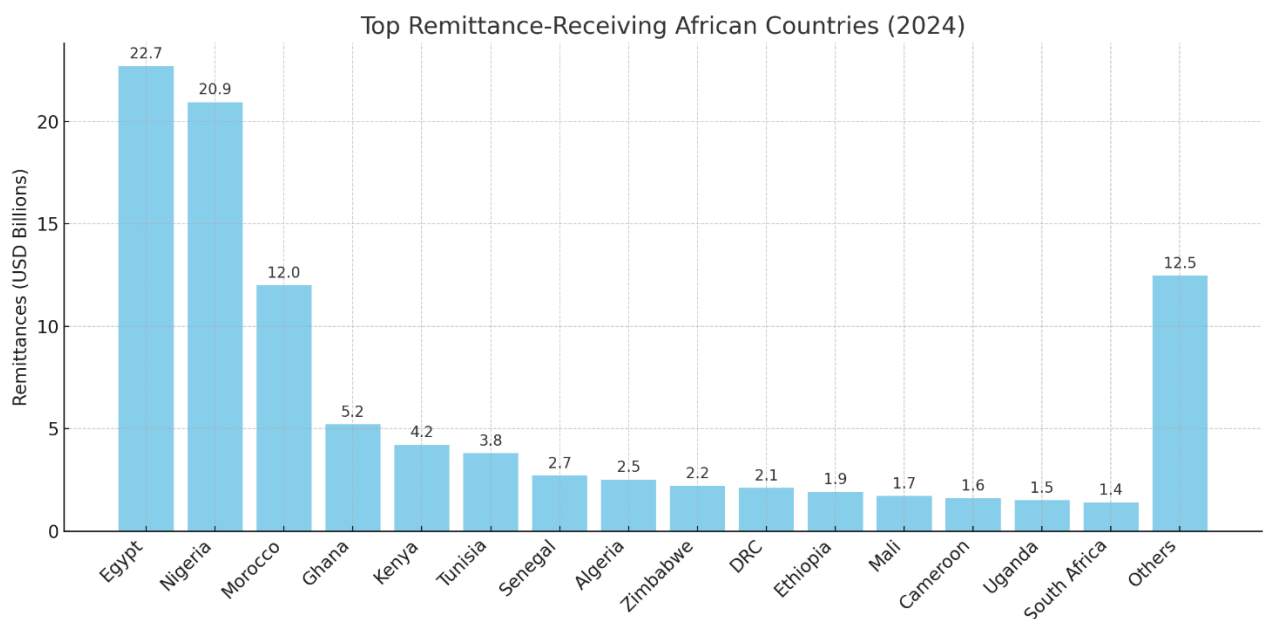
As at the end of 2024, in addition to the 1.5 billion people residing in Africa, the African diaspora was estimated to be around 200 million people globally, with the largest populations in the Americas, particularly Brazil and the United States, followed by Europe, the Caribbean, and parts of Asia. The number of Africans living in another African country by end of 2022, stood at 21 million, a significant increase from 2015 when approximately 18 million Africans were estimated to be living within

the region. Individuals of African descent currently make up a significant and growing share of the global diaspora population.

It is noteworthy to mention that many African countries have not yet succeeded to mobilize diaspora financing at significant levels and its potential remains largely unexploited. To properly engage and mobilize the diaspora, African countries need to understand their nature, motivations and needs, while keeping the process driven by the country's priorities. Ensuring buy-in from the diaspora is critical, hence the importance of having continuous dialogue channels structured around organized communities. Many governments have been proactive in reaching out to their diaspora, by organizing homecoming summits and putting in place ministries with portfolios dedicated to diaspora affairs. But this is not enough. Proper understanding of the emotional, financial, and social motivations of the diaspora is fundamental to guiding governments in structuring their offers, such as Diaspora bonds and attracting investment (Nielson and Riddle, 2009).

The economic contributions of the African diaspora are profound, particularly through remittances. In 2023, Africa received \$100 billion in remittances, representing 6% of its GDP—exceeding foreign direct investment (FDI) at \$48 billion and official development assistance at \$42 billion. The top remittance-receiving countries included Egypt (\$22.7 billion), Nigeria (\$20.94 billion), and Morocco (\$12 billion).

### TOP REMMITANCE RECEIVING AFRICAN COUNTRIES (2024)



However, sending money to Africa remains costly, with Sub-Saharan Africa experiencing the highest remittance fees globally at 8.46% for a \$200 transfer. This may be attributed to market dominance by Western Union and MoneyGram, restrictive banking regulations, and lack of competition. Financial Technology solutions such as mobile money services have shown promise in reducing transfer costs.

**Table 2: Average Costs of Remittance Transfers- 2024**

Region	Avg Cost of Remittance (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	8.46%
Middle East & North Africa	6.10%
South Asia	4.30%
East Asia & Pacific	5.90%
Latin America & Caribbean	5.80%
Europe & Central Asia	6.40%
<b>Global Average</b>	<b>6.25%</b>

*World Remittance Statistics, 2024*

Despite challenges like low internet access and digital literacy, Africa has witnessed the rise of transformative startups to address funds transfer such as Wave (Senegal), M-Pesa (Kenya), Mobile Money (Uganda), Wasoko (e-commerce) and Pharmarun (Nigeria) etc. However, many of these innovations are led by non-African founders, raising concerns about dependency, data protection and sustainability. Encouraging diaspora investment in indigenous entrepreneurship could not only help harness local talent and drive sustainable development but would also promote innovations that address African problems as understood by Africans.

Migration is often seen as a brain drain for source countries but also presents opportunities for economic growth. The diaspora's skills, cultural understanding, and financial support can be channelled into building an African-led innovation ecosystem, empowering young Africans to address local challenges and foster socio-economic development. Strengthening the link between the diaspora and Africa's growth could unlock immense potential for the continent's future.

### **1.2.3 East African Community Context**

Diaspora engagement within the East African Community (EAC) has garnered significant political interest in recent years. At the regional level, the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination (2010) emphasizes the involvement of both Partner State citizens and the diaspora in the development of the Community. Similarly, the EAC Common Market Protocol (EAC CMP 2010) seeks to facilitate investment opportunities for the East African diaspora by ensuring their right to establishment and residence in any Partner State, alongside their families, for various purposes including work, education, and business.

Despite variations in institutionalizing diaspora engagement, the EAC Partner States have taken notable steps to strengthen their ties with the diaspora. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and the Federal Republic of Somalia have dedicated diaspora departments within their Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and International Cooperation, while Tanzania and Uganda have established a sub-ministerial body for diaspora affairs. The Republics of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Federal Republic of Somalia have adopted formal diaspora policies which are under implementation and review. The Republic of Kenya adopted a new Diaspora Policy 2024 after a review of the 2014 Diaspora policy. The United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda's draft diaspora policy documents are still pending approval while the Republic of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are yet to adopt formal engagement frameworks.

Despite the progress made, EAC Partner States still face considerable challenges in effectively engaging, enabling, and empowering their diaspora.

These include:

- i. insufficient state-led initiatives to address diaspora rights, needs, motivations and interests,
- ii. fragmented policy coordination across different government Ministries and Agencies,
- iii. high cost of remittance transfer,
- iv. Informal channelling of remittances by the Diaspora which makes it hard to aggregate the total amount of remittances and to capture in national statistics;
- v. Weak structures and uncoordinated mechanisms to create awareness to East Africans on the trade and investment opportunities available at national and regional levels coupled with lack of an incentive framework to promote Diaspora investments
- vi. Lack of /inadequate legal labour migration frameworks coupled with complete lack of coordination mechanisms with countries of destination to facilitate portability of Social Security benefits
- vii. Lack of established mechanisms to support Return and Reintegration of the Diaspora when they decide to settle back in their home countries.
- viii. the absence of a comprehensive diaspora information system.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a coordinated regional approach, as recognized by the EAC Sectoral Council on Foreign Policy Coordination during its 12th meeting in January 2014. The Sectoral Council called for a strategic mobilization of the diaspora to actively participate in the EAC integration process, which aligns with the four pillars of the EAC Treaty: Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union, and ultimately, a Political Federation. The EAC Secretariat was accordingly tasked with developing a regional framework to optimize diaspora engagement in the region's socio-economic transformation.

### **Profile of the East African Diaspora**

The East African diaspora is primarily concentrated in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Belgium, Australia, Middle Eastern nations, southern Africa and within neighbouring African countries.

Labour migrants from East Africa, both skilled and semi-skilled, majorly move for employment opportunities abroad. Skilled workers often seek jobs in sectors such as healthcare, information technology, engineering, and finance, and semi-skilled labour migrants have been found to work in construction, agriculture, hospitality, and domestic service. They also engage as entrepreneurs and investors who have established businesses or invest in ventures abroad and in the country of origin. They seek opportunities in sectors such as real estate, hospitality, transport, agriculture, technology, and trade among others. The major push and pull factors over the years have been to seek for advanced training, education, better economic prospects, medical care and leisure. A large number of diasporas have also moved due to political issues and wars.

Family reunification is also a common motive for East Africans to migrate. Families or individuals may seek to join those who have already migrated to another country

as students, for work or other reasons. With the guaranteed freedom of movement of persons, workers and the right of establishment and residence, under the EAC Common Market Protocol, there is a lot of movement of citizens from one Partner State to another either seeking for work, business opportunities or for retirement purposes.

### **Role of Diaspora in National and Regional Development**

The East African diaspora plays a pivotal role in both national and regional development. Their contributions span economic, social, and cultural domains, significantly influencing the region's growth trajectory.

#### **Economic Contributions**

Remittances from the East African diaspora have seen a substantial increase, reaching over USD 10 billion in 2024, up from USD 5.4 billion in 2017 and are a substantial source of foreign exchange for EAC economies. In 2024, Kenya received \$4.2 billion, Uganda \$ 1.48 billion, DRC 1.35billion, Somalia \$ 1.73 billion, South Sudan \$ 1.14 billion, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda over \$1 billion in remittances (World Bank 2024). These funds often surpass Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows, bolstering household incomes, supporting education, healthcare, and fostering entrepreneurial activities. For instance, remittances have been instrumental in cushioning the economic impacts of global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Remittances (USD Billion)</b>	<b>GDP (USD Billion, est.)</b>	<b>Remittances as % of GDP</b>
Kenya	4.20	114	3.68%
Uganda	1.48	49	3.02%
DRC	1.35	64	2.11%
Somalia	1.73	8.5	20.35%
South Sudan	1.14	13.5	8.44%
Tanzania	0.747	85	0.88%
Rwanda	0.553	14.5	3.81%
Burundi	0.051	3.6	1.42%

*World bank, 2024*

Despite their significance, several challenges hinder their full potential, high remittance transfer costs, reliance on informal transfer channels and limited financial inclusion in rural areas. For instance, in Uganda, migrant workers pay an average 11.3% transfer fee—substantially above the global average of 6.25%, the African average of 8.35%, and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 3%.

Technology, particularly mobile money platforms, have played a transformative role in facilitating remittances in East Africa. Given the high mobile penetration rates in the region, mobile money services provide a convenient and cost-effective solution for diaspora communities to send funds home. Strengthening/enhancing digital financial services and reducing remittance costs are crucial steps toward maximizing the economic impact of diaspora contributions in the EAC.

#### **Investment and Trade**

The EAC Diaspora can significantly impact trade and investment if well incentivised and informed of all potential opportunities in the region. As such, the EAC recognizing the diaspora's potential, established a Diaspora Desk to facilitate investment and trade. This initiative aims to provide the diaspora with pertinent

information on investment opportunities, legal frameworks, and procedures within the region.

### **Labor Migration and Skill Development**

To address domestic unemployment and stimulate economic growth, some EAC countries are promoting labor migration. Kenya, Burundi and Uganda through national adopted labour migration frameworks, are facilitating the migration of workers to countries in Europe and the Middle East. This strategy not only provides employment opportunities for citizens but also enhances skill development and international exposure. The adoption of the EAC Labour Migration Policy 2024, also underscores the need for Partner States to adopt international standards and good practices to manage and promote labour migration of their citizens within the region and beyond.

### **Policy and Institutional Frameworks**

EAC Partner States have implemented various initiatives to create an enabling environment for diaspora engagement. The development of an EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy provides a cohesive framework for integrating the diaspora into the region's development agenda. Additionally, countries like Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Federal Republic of Somalia have established formal diaspora policies, while others have set up dedicated departments within their ministries to manage diaspora affairs. When a harmonised Framework is agreed upon, it will foster Diaspora engagement across the region.

The East African diaspora is integral to the region's development. By leveraging their economic contributions, fostering investment, and implementing supportive policies, the EAC can harness the full potential of its diaspora to achieve sustainable growth and regional integration

### **Socio-economic contributions of the East African Diaspora**

The East African diaspora plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the region through various contributions, including real estate investments, skills transfer, and innovation. Below are some key areas of their impact:

#### **Real Estate Investments**

The diaspora significantly contributes to the real estate sector by investing in residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties. In countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, diaspora funds have led to the growth of housing developments, with some governments offering incentives such as mortgage schemes to encourage investment. These investments not only provide housing solutions but also create jobs in construction, property management and related services

#### **Skills Transfer & Knowledge Sharing**

Many East Africans in the diaspora acquire advanced education, technical skills, and professional expertise in fields such as medicine, engineering, IT, and finance. Governments and private institutions are working to harness these skills through mentorship programs, research collaborations, and consultancy opportunities. Rwanda and Kenya have greatly benefitted from engaging diaspora for this purpose. For example, medical professionals from the diaspora often return to provide specialized healthcare services or train local practitioners who train others.

#### **Business & Entrepreneurship**

Diaspora members establish businesses in their home countries, creating employment and boosting local economies. Many diaspora entrepreneurs invest in ventures abroad, and in their home countries. They seek opportunities in sectors such as agribusiness, retail, health, technology, and manufacturing industries, driving economic diversification. Some governments have introduced diaspora focused investment funds and startup support programs to facilitate business growth.

### **Innovation & Technology Transfer**

The diaspora plays a role in bringing advanced technology and innovative business models into the region. Many tech startups in East Africa receive funding, mentorship, or partnerships from diaspora members working in global tech hubs. Examples include fintech solutions such as mobile banking and blockchain-based remittance platforms that improve financial inclusion.

### **Health & Education Support**

Many diaspora communities contribute to healthcare and education through donations, scholarships, and infrastructure development. Medical missions by East African professionals abroad provide free treatment and healthcare training programs in their home countries. Universities and research institutions benefit from diaspora-led collaborations that enhance academic programs and innovation.

### **Cultural & Social Impact**

The diaspora maintains strong cultural ties with their home countries, promoting East African traditions and heritage globally. Through cultural festivals, media channels, and networking events, they help market East African arts, music, and tourism. Some diaspora members engage in philanthropy, funding social programs for marginalized communities.

The socio-economic contributions of the East African diaspora are vast and transformative. From real estate investments and business creation to skills transfer and innovation, their involvement enhances economic growth and regional development. To maximize these contributions, EAC governments need to create more enabling policies, reduce barriers to investment, and strengthen diaspora engagement strategies.

## **1.3 Definition of Diaspora**

There are various definitions for Diaspora. These include:

Migrants and descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background.

They maintain links with their homelands and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity or mutual experiences in the destination country. **(IOM**

**Glossary on Migration 2019)**

A diaspora is a transnational community living outside of the country of origin and giving itself its own identity assuming to represent either the entire country of origin or certain social and political groups of the country of origin (Demmers,2007: 8f).

For the African Union, ***“The African Diaspora consists of 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.***” (AU, 2005) The AU also recognizes the growing importance of the Diaspora in the polity. Thus, the recognition of the African Diaspora as an important part of the continent prompted the African Union (AU) in 2003 to declare the African Diaspora as the sixth region of the continent. In the spirit of the African Union, the EAC recognises diaspora that associate with the Community in line with this definition

**For the purpose of this Policy,**

East African Community Diaspora means “**a national of a Partner State recognized under the laws governing citizenship/dual citizenship who is living outside the Partner State/region and willing to contribute to the economic development of his/ her Partner State and towards the East African integration process**”.

## 2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The East African Community is experiencing an important development in migratory flows. These movements occur essentially within the African continent and towards Europe, North America and some Middle East countries and could be voluntary (as a result of pull factors in destination countries) or involuntary/forced (due to push factors in countries of origin). These movements are sometimes legal or undocumented and encompass all social categories, including refugees, internally displaced persons, nomads migrating in search of pasture lands, youths and women setting off from the country side in search of job opportunities in the city. For the EAC region, free movement of people, labour, goods, services, capital and the right of establishment and residence are already guaranteed to Partner States citizens under the Common Market Protocol 2010, and therefore a lot of migration within the community is happening as people explore better economic possibilities in the neighbouring Partner State.

### 2.1 EAC Good Practices, Challenges and Opportunities

The East African Community (EAC) Partner States have implemented various policies, practices, strategies and frameworks to enhance diaspora engagement, leveraging their contributions to national development. These good practices highlight the increasing recognition of diaspora communities as valuable contributors to national economies and development across the EAC region and beyond. Four Partner States, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Federal Republic of Somalia have adopted National Diaspora Policies. The United Republic of Tanzania have developed Diaspora Policies which have not been adopted by the relevant Organs while the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan are yet to put in place any diaspora engagement framework. Below are the documented good practices and the challenges experienced by each Partner State:

#### 2.1.1 Republic of Burundi

According to the EU-DiF – Facts and Figures Study 2023, the estimated number of Burundians in the diaspora is **623,999**. Out of the total estimated Burundian Diaspora population - 49.1% are women and 50.1% are men. Due to past historical socio-political upheavals, Burundians moved in large numbers into neighbouring states such as the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Beyond these destinations, some Burundians settled in Europe (Switzerland, Sweden, France and Belgium) and in North America (Canada and the US). The Burundian diaspora is actively engaged in various sectors that contribute to national development which include education, healthcare, information and communication technology (ICT), entrepreneurship, transportation, agriculture, cultural tourism and social infrastructure. With the adoption of the National Migration Policy the government sought to put in place a balanced and relevant multi-sectoral policy to guide decisions and actions in the field of migration management.

#### Legal Frameworks and Policies at National Level

The Burundi Diaspora Policy contains key strategic objectives aimed at improving communication and coordination with the diaspora groups, associations and

networks. The policy recognizes the potential impact of the economic and social contributions of the Diaspora for the country's development. In 2022, the government developed a sector strategy for the implementation of the National Diaspora Policy.

Other developed frameworks that guide the engagement with the Diaspora and compliment the Diaspora policy include:

- i. Burundi's vision 2060, which outlines the country's strategic aspirations for becoming an emerging country by the year 2040, and a developed country by 2060 with emphasis on diaspora contributions;
- ii. The revised National Development Plan, Investment Code and policies on Migration, Labour & Social Protection establish foundational frameworks for the Diaspora;
- iii. Bilateral Agreements on Migrant Labour Mobility underscore the country's commitment to facilitating labour migration which is aligned with international Standards.

### **Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation has strengthened the existing institutional and political structures responsible for dialogue, management and mobilization of the diaspora. These structures include a department for Diaspora matters within the General Commissariat for Migration and a web-portal to encourage participation of Burundian diaspora in the country's development and to catalogue Diaspora achievements.

Other good practices include

- i. Institutionalization of an annual Diaspora Week since 2013.
- ii. Virtual meetings and elections for diaspora leaders every three years.
- iii. Implementation of the MIDA programme with IOM to recruit and return highly skilled diaspora members to selected sectors.
- iv. Upgrading of the Rungika domestic money transfer system to facilitate remittances.
- v. Regular meetings between the government and diaspora members through official visits and diplomatic missions.

### **Challenges Experienced**

Implementation of diaspora engagement policies and programmes is impacted by:

- i. Lack of accurate data on the number of Burundians who live abroad
- ii. Inadequate resources: under staffing and financial resources to implement migration and development policy issues and to undertake mapping studies of the Burundi diaspora
- iii. High remittance costs
- iv. inadequate human resource capacities in missions abroad to take care of Diaspora welfare and interests
- v. Low awareness by the Diaspora of the investment opportunities available in Burundi

### **2.1.2 The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo refers to its Diaspora as 'Congolese Abroad'. Migrants from DRC currently stand at 1,684, 615. The gender dimensions of the DRC migration are currently not available. Top countries of destination are Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo (Brazzaville), Angola, Tanzania and Zambia. A number of

other migrants have sought livelihood in Europe, North America and Australia mainly due to civil unrest among other reasons.

### **Diaspora Engagement**

Following the civil wars, managing the return of Congolese and other migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries has arguably been a greater priority for the government than attempting to engage the Congolese diaspora based permanently abroad in national development projects and business investment. However, for the few Congolese diaspora who wish to participate in national development, actively participate in various economic sectors, notably education, healthcare, construction, and information and communication technology (ICT).

### **Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

The government has not yet adopted a specific framework or policy focused on diaspora engagement, however, existing instruments such as the Direction and Immigration policy, facilitate some level of engagement.

### **Established Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms**

The creation of a dedicated Ministry responsible for diaspora engagement in 2006 reflects the growing importance of diaspora's contribution to the country's economy. The established structure called the *Direction of Congolese Living in Foreign Countries*, is housed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This structure facilitates engagement with the Congolese Diaspora, supported by inter ministerial agreements

### **Good practices identified in DRC's Diaspora Engagement Process**

currently, there are no documented good practices as the country does not have any formalized engagement framework.

### **Challenges**

- i. Lack of policy reference: There is no dedicated diaspora framework/ policy for the country to guide diaspora engagements;
- ii. Lack of diaspora political representation: The notion of citizenship remains deeply controversial as the Democratic Republic of the Congo places limitations on dual citizenship and diaspora voting, which can be a challenge for diaspora interested in returning and investing in the country;
- iii. Institutional focus on migration management: DR Congo has been affected by regional conflict and instability and has had to manage significant numbers of migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries whilst at the same time seeking to stem outward migration of its own citizens and resulting brain-drain. This has caused the focus of the government to be on border management rather than migration and development.

### **2.1.3 Republic of Kenya**

According to the newly adopted Kenya Diaspora Policy 2024, the current estimate of "Kenyans Abroad" is four million who have been migrating to different parts of the world for advanced training, education, job opportunities and in search of better economic prospects. Out of this total number of Kenyan emigrants, 47.1 % are male and 52.9 % are female. They reside in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia and within the African Continent. The economic sectors which the Kenyan Diaspora engage

include education, Health and Social Care, hospitality, agriculture, ICT, Financial Services, entrepreneurship, real estate and within the gulf countries-Domestic Work, Security and Construction Industry.

### **Diaspora Engagement**

Kenya Vision 2030 is the Kenyan government's national strategy that recognizes diaspora contribution as a major enabler to economic growth and a critical factor in the achievement of the government's Vision 2030 agenda. The Vision 2030 framework includes strategies to leverage the skills, resources and networks of the Diaspora to drive sustainable development and propel Kenya towards becoming a middle-income economy by the year 2030

The Kenya Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) recognizes the Diaspora as a valuable resource that contributes to the country's socio-economic development.

### **Diaspora Engagement Legal Frameworks and Policies**

The Kenya Government launched the first Kenya Diaspora Policy in 2014 in recognition of the urgent need to mainstream the Kenya Diaspora into the national Development process in line with the aspirations and goals of the Vision 2030.

The 2014 Policy has been reviewed and a new Diaspora Policy 2024 has been adopted. Amplified in the new Kenya Diaspora Policy 2024 is a notable shift in engaging with diaspora from harnessing the potential and remittances to one focused on protecting the rights and taking care of the welfare and interests of the diaspora.

The 2024 Policy goal is -" *An empowered and prosperous diaspora that contributes to Kenya's Development Agenda*"

The objectives of the policy are to:

- i. Protect the rights and promote the welfare and interest of the Kenya diaspora's
- ii. Facilitate Diaspora savings, Investments, Remittances and Technology Transfer;
- iii. Strengthen partnership and collaboration with the Kenyan diaspora; and
- iv. Facilitate placement of Kenyans in the international jobs market

### **Established Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms**

The Government of Kenya established the State Department of Diaspora Affairs under the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs to manage, protect and promote the affairs of the diaspora.

### **Other good practices include:**

- i. Voting rights extended to diaspora citizens,
- ii. Expansion of consular services, including new embassies and passport offices abroad.
- iii. Holding of regular town hall meetings and active social media engagement with diaspora communities.

- iv. Increased remittance inflows facilitated by financial products, partnerships with remittance providers, and mobile money services like M-Pesa.
- v. Jamhuri Awards to the Diaspora who excel in various areas or sectors like philanthropic work, art, health, education among others.
- vi. Provision within Europe and America in selected Embassies, a 24-hour toll free mental and psycho-social support as well as counselling services.
- vii. Implementation of a summer school programme with IOM, bringing diaspora professionals to work in key sectors annually.

### **Challenges Experienced in the engagement process**

Challenges of diaspora engagement highlighted in the 2024 Kenya Diaspora Policy include:

- i. Non – registration by Kenyans abroad with the Kenya Diplomatic Missions abroad attributed to government mistrust. However, this could be seen as due to mistrust between the embassies and Diaspora and lack of proper diaspora engagement
- ii. Fragmented data on Kenyan diaspora: Sourcing and management of data on Kenyans abroad has been a challenge characterized by fragmented and uncoordinated data from different government ministries, departments and agencies.
- iii. Low awareness on available investment opportunities in Kenya due to weak structures and inadequate coordination among Kenyans Abroad;
- iv. Inadequate incentive framework for remittances and diaspora investments;
- v. Weak structures and uncoordinated mechanisms to create awareness for Kenyans abroad on the investment opportunities available in different sectors of the economy is also another challenge, coupled with lack of incentive framework to promote Diaspora investments;
- vi. Slow uptake of Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) resulting in underutilization of online services and making it difficult to provide effective and efficient services to Kenyans abroad.
- vii. Inadequate labor migration and legal framework: The Government has a constitutional responsibility to protect its citizens and their property both within and outside the country. However, some Kenyans working abroad, both skilled and low skilled, are exposed to unsuitable working conditions attributed to inadequate national labour migration legal framework;
- viii. Inadequate frameworks for portability of social benefits: Kenyans abroad contribute to various social security services in their countries of residence. On termination of their services, there are no bilateral agreements or formal framework to facilitate transferability and portability of Social Security Benefits to Kenya. In addition, there is need to ensure full integration of returnees into society;
- ix. Increased mental related issues among the diaspora: Mental health issues are increasing among the diaspora due to culture shock, poor working/living conditions, discrimination and loss of livelihoods;
- x. Return and Reintegration Challenges for both skilled and low skilled diaspora

### **2.1.4 Republic of Rwanda**

The Republic of Rwanda has adopted the term “Rwanda Community Abroad” in reference to her diaspora. A record number of 590,044 migrants are documented as Rwandans living abroad. The gender dimensions of the Rwandan migration confirm that women migrants are more than men representing 51.4 % while men represent 48.6 %. They are spread out in African countries such as DRC, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and in the US, Canada and in some European countries such as Belgium, Sweden, Germany and France.

#### **Diaspora Engagement**

The Rwanda Community Abroad is a unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, which is mandated to interact with Rwandans living abroad. It works in coordination with Rwandan Diplomatic Missions abroad (Embassies & High Commissions)

Its main objective as a mobilization desk is to

- i. create strategies and mechanisms to facilitate the Rwandan Community living Abroad to support the implementation of different government programs as well as tap into their expertise and skills in different areas.
- ii. promote unity and cohesion among Rwandans living abroad.
- iii. protect their interests.
- iv. link diaspora to national, public and private institutions in Rwanda.

The National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2, (2024-2029), Goal (13) recognizes the Rwandan Community Abroad contributions to national economic development, while efforts will be made towards enhancement of the quality of services provided and encourages the diaspora involvement through a “Protection, Mobilization and Service” agenda”

#### **Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

The Republic of Rwanda adopted a Diaspora Policy in 2009. The policy document describes the framework for engaging diaspora to support national development goals and includes three pillars: “Cohesion of the Rwandan diaspora”; “Rwandans in the diaspora are equipped with accurate information about their nation”; and “the Rwandan Diaspora playing a significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda.”

Rwanda’s 2009 Diaspora Policy has been reviewed and integrated into Rwanda’s Foreign Policy through the “People to People and knowledge exchange” pillar and has leveraged the RCA to drive socioeconomic development via remittances, investments, philanthropic contributions, as well as the transfer of human capital. The government has further developed a five 5 Year RCA Strategy (2024-2029).

The Republic of Rwanda has developed a digital platform called IREMBO, that provides government services and has modules that provide online consular services to enhance service delivery and efficiency of documentation for Diaspora Communities.

Rwanda has continued to include diaspora programming in broader initiatives like the Rwandan Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, Vision 2050 and through the Umushyikirano (National Dialogue Council) initiative.

**Other documented good practices include:**

- i. Development of a National Diaspora Policy and Migration Framework.
- ii. Annual cultural days to strengthen diaspora identity and connection to Rwanda.
- iii. Establishment of a Diaspora Desk by the Rwanda Investment Board to facilitate diaspora investments.
- iv. Regular diaspora surveys and mappings to inform policy and engagement strategies.

**Challenges experienced in the engagement Process**

- i. Rwandan diaspora often complains about heavy bureaucratic processes for obtaining the required documentation in the country. This is particularly the case at the local level with problems of customer care, and a lack of information on opportunities.
- ii. Non registration by some members of the Rwanda Community Abroad and thus many remain undocumented and fail to access the services offered by embassies
- iii. High remittance charges

**2.1.5 Republic of South Sudan (RSS)**

**Characteristics of South Sudan Diaspora**

By the end of 2019, an estimated 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees were living in other countries, mostly in Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR, 2020). The mixed migration flows from South Sudan include economic migrants, refugees and children. The gender dimensions of this migration confirm that women migrants are more than men but data is scarce on the actual labour migrants. International key destinations include the USA, Canada and Australia. Migration within and from South Sudan is driven by civil war and critical food insecurity and it takes the form of mixed migration flows. The Republic of South Sudan is both a sender and a receiver country of Diaspora remittances with domestic, regional and international flows.

**Diaspora Engagement**

The Republic of South Sudan illustrates positive political will to engage the diaspora and harness the benefits that come with such engagement. RSS is working to achieve a more robust and coordinated engagement between the private sector and the Diaspora to fully harness the potential of the Diaspora's contributions.

**Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

A National Diaspora Policy was developed in 2021 and is currently awaiting adoption by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan. However, the legal framework which covers migration includes the National Comprehensive Migration Policy 2019 (NCMP). The policy was developed in line with the National Development Plan 2018-2021 and the RSS Vision 2040.

**Established Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms**

The Leading Institution for Migration in the Republic of South Sudan is the Ministry of Interior. There is no designated desk for diaspora engagement under any ministry. Although there is no established mechanism for diaspora engagement, the Republic of South Sudan has been packaging information on key sectors through their Consulates/ Embassies abroad in which diaspora can invest in. This includes infrastructure bonds, agriculture and the oil sector. Strengthening institutional frameworks is essential to effectively implement development programs that involve the Diaspora.

### **Good practices identified in South Sudan's Diaspora Engagement Process**

There is no documented evidence of good practices as diaspora engagement is minimal, and the absence of an adopted policy framework and coordination mechanism has made the diaspora engagement process to remain as a non priority.

### **Challenges experienced in the engagement Process.**

- i. Absence of a policy framework and a designated ministry for diaspora engagement;
- ii. Lack of coherent and reliable data on the RSS Diaspora.
- iii. Current data on the status and profiles of the South Sudanese Diaspora is primarily sourced from development partners rather than official government institutions.
- iv. inadequate sensitization of the South Sudanese citizens on the EAC integration agenda to foster implementation of instruments of EAC Integration.

### **2.1.6 Federal Republic of Somalia (FRS)**

According to the EU-DiF – Facts and Figures Study 2023, the estimated number of Somalis in the Diaspora are 2,054, 377 which represents 11.7% of the total population. Out of the total estimated Somali Diaspora population of 2,054,377, 51.71% are men and 48.3% are women. Women play a crucial and multifaceted role in both host and home countries. The economic sectors which the Somali Diaspora engage include education, Health, Entrepreneurship, Transport, Money Transfer and Real Estate. The Somali diaspora is actively engaged in transnational activities.

### **Diaspora Engagement**

The National Development Plan 2020-2024 recognizes Somalia diaspora financial skills and human development contributions to the country. It further acknowledges the importance of understanding the humanitarian-development nexus and the diasporas' role in providing assistance in times of crisis.

### **Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

The Somali National Diaspora Policy was adopted in 2023 to guide the federal government's engagement with the diaspora in support of Somalis national development. The Diaspora Policy provides a comprehensive framework for engaging with the diaspora at the State level. It outlines mechanisms for collaboration, investment opportunities, and ways to integrate diaspora contributions into national development plans. The policy further aims to streamline efforts across various levels of government, ensuring a cohesive approach to diaspora engagement. Thus, the overall objective of the Somalia National Diaspora Policy is

to ensure the central, coordinated effort to engage the diaspora by MOFAIC and to provide guidance for the design, implementation and monitoring of initiatives that facilitate diaspora participation in national development.

The Somali National Development Plan (2020-2024) prioritizes economic growth and poverty reduction, placing the role of the Somalia Diaspora at the center of the economic development of the Country.

#### **Establishment of State-Level Diaspora Offices:**

Galmudug State Ministry of Diaspora and Foreign Investment: This state-level ministry in Galmudug has been particularly proactive in attracting diaspora investments. It serves as a bridge between the diaspora and regional economic opportunities.

#### **Other documented good practices include**

- i. Establishment of the Department of Diaspora Affairs in 2013 to formalize diaspora engagement.
- ii. Coordination of diaspora activities to promote investment and maximize remittances for development.
- iii. Continuous dialogue with the Somali Umbrella Associations in Europe, Americas, Asia and in South Africa.
- iv. Return and reintegration of skilled Somali nationals into government as civil servants and in Cabinet positions
- v. Holding of an annual Somali Investment Forum to recognize and reward Somali Diaspora who have invested in Somalia
- vi. Establishment of Somali Returnees Association Network which work with Government to organize the Annual Diaspora Forum
- vii. Carrying out various Diaspora mappings in selected destinations
- viii. working closely with Diaspora Associations to mediate and provide accurate country status information

#### **Challenges experienced in the engagement Process**

- i. political instability;
- ii. Limited registration of Somalis with the existing diaspora associations and embassies
- iii. Weak coordination mechanisms between the national government and federal governments in diaspora engagement
- iv. inadequate human resources in missions abroad to address Somali diaspora challenges and interests
- v. Lack of awareness on ongoing developments at national level and investment opportunities by diaspora
- vi. High remittance costs on diaspora transfers
- vii. existing of many but fragmented Diaspora Associations

#### **2.1.7 The United Republic of Tanzania**

The estimated number of Tanzanians in the Diaspora are about 1.5 million which represents 0.7% of the total population. Out of the total estimated Diaspora

population 50.1% are women and 49.1% are men. The economic sectors which Tanzania Diaspora engage include Education, Health, Entrepreneurship and within the gulf countries-domestic work, as the country has signed three Bilateral Labour Agreements with Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Qatar. The push factors for migration in Tanzania include high levels of unemployment and the socio-economic and environmental conditions within the country, while the pull factors include opportunities for better life such as, higher salaries, better quality of education and health care in the countries of destination.

### **Diaspora Engagement**

Tanzania Development Vision 2025 puts an emphasis on mainstreaming the diaspora into national development and enhancing the capacity of the Diaspora Department to help strengthen the government's communication, outreach, and collection of information from its diaspora.

Zanzibar Diaspora Affairs Act defines the Zanzibari diaspora as someone who is affiliated with, and has allegiance to, Zanzibar. It gives the Zanzibari diaspora the right to obtain a Zanzibar identity card and other privileges, including exemption from needing a work permit, multiple entry long-term visas, and the right to long stays in the country. It also establishes a Diaspora Register, which is to serve as a diaspora expert database.

### **Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

Tanzania developed a draft diaspora policy in 2014 as an evolution of the national diaspora engagement strategic policy framework. A key feature of the policy includes the passing of a law recognizing all Tanzanians abroad regardless of whether they have taken up citizenship in their country of residence. Zanzibar already has a diaspora policy which was launched in 2020.

### **Established Institutional Structures/Coordination Mechanisms**

The Diaspora and Engagement and Opportunities Division (DEOD) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation engages the Tanzanian diaspora to effectively contribute to the political, socio-economic and cultural development of the country. It is responsible for diaspora policy development, diaspora engagement, and facilitation of diaspora investment opportunities.

The Department of International Cooperation is responsible for promoting Zanzibar's relations with the rest of the world, and for coordinating diaspora affairs with a view to engaging the diaspora in the socioeconomic development of Zanzibar. Its Diaspora Unit sits under the Department of International Cooperation, in the office of The President and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council.

Other documented good practices include:

- i. Creation of the Diaspora Engagement and Opportunities Division and the appointment of a director to oversee the activities of the Division.
- ii. Ongoing awareness campaigns through media and stakeholder meetings.
- iii. Organization of annual diaspora conventions to promote engagement.

### **Challenges encountered in engaging Diaspora**

- i. Absence of an up-to-date policy framework to effectively engage the diaspora in the country's development;
- ii. Inadequate reliable data regarding the Tanzanian diaspora
- iii. In-adequate communication and engagement of dispersed diaspora groups and organizations limits engagement. There are some governmental media channels targeting the diaspora, but these are underused and not always trusted.
- iv. Absence of incentives for Diaspora investment: Diaspora investors are treated in the same way as other foreign investors which leaves potential for targeted initiatives.

### **2.1.8 Republic of Uganda**

The government of Uganda refers to the Uganda diaspora as people of Uganda origin living and /or working outside Uganda. It includes all Ugandans who may have lost their citizenship through acquisition of other citizenship<sup>2</sup>. The EU-DiF Facts and Figures 2023 provide an estimate of 734,951 but this figure could be more as more Ugandans have migrated to the Gulf countries through legal means to work in the construction and security sectors, domestic work and the service sectors. Women migrants currently constitute 51.1% of the documented migrants while men account for 48.9%. Migration in Uganda is driven by continuous population growth, high youth unemployment rates, lack of attractive employment options, environmental risks. Ugandans have also been migrating over the years to neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and DRC in search of better economic opportunities. Other destinations include the Middle East countries, UK, Canada and the USA.

#### **Diaspora Engagement**

The National Development Plan III 2020-2025 is Uganda's current development plan and like its predecessor, it acknowledges the need to harness diaspora and the private sector to resource its full implementation, and proposes the use of diaspora bonds and online treasury bills as a means to achieve this. NDP III also includes objectives to operationalize the National Diaspora Policy and develop a National Diaspora Investment Strategy.

Diaspora are envisioned as contributing to private sector development through their remittance. While the Ugandan government's policy and strategy documents reference the importance of diversifying diaspora contributions beyond remittance flows, there is a lack of detailed planning on how this is to be achieved.

#### **Diaspora Engagement Frameworks/Policies in Place**

The Government of Uganda in 2013 developed a draft Diaspora Policy with the support of UNDP. The draft policy is yet to be approved by the relevant Organs. The intention of the policy is to accord the diaspora full participation in Uganda's national development.

The establishment of the Diaspora Services Department (DSD) in 2007 marked an important milestone in Uganda's diaspora engagement. DSD has sought to develop programs to enhance diaspora participation in the country's economic and technical development. Uganda's Office of the President, Parliament & MOFA all have

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<sup>2</sup> Diaspora service overview <https://www.mofa.go.ug/tour/diaspora>

established a dedicated diaspora desk, while the Ministry of Labour, Gender & Social Development's External Employment Unit (EEU) facilitates labour migration verification and approval processes.

**Other documented practices include:**

- i. Various annual summits, forums, and networking events, including the Home is Best Summits, Uganda Diaspora Conventions and Ugandan Diaspora Agribusiness Network; and
- ii. Embassies provide mentorship programs for diaspora members.

**2.2 General Diaspora engagement challenges**

- i. Lack of trust: Among the diaspora, there is a general lack of trust of government structures and schemes, and corruption (perceived or actual) is a barrier to diaspora engagement.
- ii. Uganda's National Diaspora Policy is yet to be finalized and adopted.
- iii. inadequate information and infrastructure: detailed information on government-led diaspora engagement opportunities is not easily accessible, with a lack of targeted communications and investment-support infrastructure.
- iv. Remittance channels continue to be a critical lifeline for families, yet transaction costs remain high.
- v. Capacity: Diaspora engagement structures and programmes lack adequate human and capital resourcing to maximize their potential
- vi. High cost of capital: accessing financing for diaspora investment, especially long-term finance, can be extremely expensive in Uganda. Matters are aggravated by the constant need for collateral by financial institutions.
- vii. Diaspora communities, particularly those in the workforce, currently lack adequate social security coverage and protection.

**2.3 Current Policy Gaps and Opportunities**

Following the Partner States national level situation analysis, the following are the diaspora engagement policy gaps seen as opportunities which need to be plugged in and addressed by the regional policy framework.

- i. Some Partner States do not have a dedicated legal institutional framework/ coordination mechanism for diaspora engagement -thus the regional policy framework would offer some basic standards for diaspora engagement;
- ii. There is generally an absence of adequate state led programmes/initiatives to protect the rights and safeguard the interests and needs of the EA diaspora;
- iii. High Cost of remittance transfers within the region and from beyond destinations needs to be addressed
- iv. Remittances sent through informal channels are not included in the official national estimates. Due to scarcity of official data on remittances, the current estimates may be an underestimation of diaspora contribution to the region

- v. Absence of a robust communication channel to showcase the region's investment and trade opportunities to attract diaspora investments
- vi. Lack of an incentive framework to promote diaspora trade and investments in key sectors at national and regional levels
- vii. Low awareness by the Diaspora Community on what investment opportunities are available and the philanthropic needs at both national and regional levels;
- viii. Inadequate human capacity in Partner States missions abroad to offer effective services to the Diaspora and non representation in terms of missions in some destinations where there are East Africans
- ix. Due to fragmentation of Diaspora units in Partner States, there is limited collaboration in data collection, analysis, exchange and utilisation among the various institutions/units that manage diaspora matters,
- x. inadequate legal migration frameworks which do not protect the rights and interests of the diaspora as migrant workers in destination countries
- xi. Complete lack of portability mechanisms for the social security benefits
- xii. No programmes in some Partner States to support Return and Reintegration of Diaspora members who wish to return home; and
- xiii. The non-existence of a clear and standardized framework of collaboration with the Diaspora in the region has aggravated the situation as each Partner State engages individually.

Thus, the regional diaspora framework needs to address the above policy gaps which are in line with the observations made by the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sectoral Council on Foreign Policy Coordination held in April 2024 in order to establish a mutually beneficial partnership with the East African Diaspora. The aim is to support those Partner States with existing policy frameworks to strengthen their engagement processes and to help those Partner States which do not currently have an engagement framework to adopt minimum standards based on best practices.

The policy gaps to be addressed include the need to:

- i. protect the rights and safeguard the welfare and interests of the East African Diaspora
- ii. leverage the high cost of remittance transfers
- iii. provide effective administration and consular services to the EA Diaspora
- iv. promote diaspora led incentive regimes for trade and investments
- v. Promote tourism, Culture and Arts and EA as a Single Investment/Tourism Destination
- vi. Facilitate Coordination and Portability of Social Security Benefits
- vii. Facilitate Knowledge and Skills Transfer
- viii. Establish a regional information online Diaspora Data base
- ix. Support Return and Reintegration programmes
- x. Recognize and Reward Diaspora participation in the EAC
- xi. Recognize and promote Philanthropy

## 2.4 Good Practices from Other Regions and Lessons for the EAC Region

### 2.4.1 INDIA

India is a country with good diaspora engagement practices that the EAC Partner States can learn from and as a region. India has a large diaspora – the largest in the world according to *World Migration Report 2024*, with almost 18 million Indians living abroad. Top destination countries for Indian migrants include the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Oman and Qatar. *World Migration Report 2024* further indicates that India was the top remittance-receiving country in 2024, with inflows amounting to USD 83.15 billion, followed by China (USD 59.51 billion) and Mexico (USD 42.55 billion). India has put measures in place such as building development think tanks and investing in the medical and technology sectors, which has contributed to India becoming a renowned hub for affordable, quality medical services. The Country has also gone a step further by signing bilateral agreements that have effectively facilitated the mobilization of remittances and social security benefits for its diaspora, including labour agreements that have facilitated the employment of Indians in other countries.

#### **Policy, Institutional and Legal reforms**

India does not have a diaspora engagement policy, but it has put in place institutional support and coordination mechanisms, among other initiatives, to maximize the success of its diaspora in destination countries while embracing their diverse contributions to communities of origin and national development.

Indians in the diaspora are categorized into two. The first group consist of non-resident Indians, who are Indian citizens, holding Indian passports, living and/or working in another country. The second comprises overseas citizens of India, who have taken up citizenship in another country and may have had to forfeit their Indian citizenship

During the early 1990s, the country initiated a policy of diaspora engagement after recognizing the potential of the huge Indian community residing abroad. The Government's strategy involved responding to a large and diverse diaspora, thereby introducing several institutional reforms to pursue national goals with its help. This resulted in the establishment of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in 2004 to address the lack of government policy coordination on migration and to implement programmes that reach out to the Indian diaspora

The Government has further initiated various institutions and legal reforms to address different aspects of diaspora engagement. Some of these initiatives include the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme, made possible through the amendment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2005. The programme grants citizenship to Indians in the diaspora and permits foreign citizens of Indian origin to live and work indefinitely in India. Other initiatives include the creation of the Indian Council of Overseas Employment (ICOE), a think tank specializing in international migration, and labour mobility partnership agreements with several European countries to diversify and secure overseas labour markets for Indian workers.

#### **Diaspora Welfare management**

The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) was created in 2009 to support a wide range of welfare services for overseas Indian workers. In 2017, the Government of India decentralized the decision-making process and empowered embassies and consulates to disburse funds managed by ambassadors and diaspora counsellors, to assist overseas Indian migrant workers in need.

## **Remittances, Foreign Direct Investment and Bilateral Agreements**

Remittances are another important source of diaspora contributions for India. Inflows began to increase significantly in the mid-1990s, due to the growing emigration of highly skilled migrants to the United States, coupled with a more liberal foreign exchange policy implemented by the country.

The establishment in 2007 of the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), a non-profit, public-private body under the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was a major milestone which promoted FDI in India. The OIFC has a mandate to implement initiatives dealing in investment facilitation, knowledge-networking and ensuring business-to-business (B2B) partnerships in real estate, wealth management, taxation, law, health care, education and infrastructure (*Hodiwala and European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF), 2020*).

In 2016, India and the European Union signed the Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility (CMM), a comprehensive framework for cooperation on migration management. Objectives of the framework include harnessing the contribution of migrants to the economies of both destination countries and countries of origin; facilitating the secure and cost-effective flow of remittances and their development effects; and supporting diaspora networks and optimizing the benefits of return. Further, India has established bilateral social security agreements (BSSAs) with various countries to protect the interests of expatriate workers and the companies that employ them on a reciprocal basis. India's Ministry of External Affairs has signed more than **20 BSSAs** to this effect.

### **Philanthropy**

Philanthropy is another significant area of Indian diaspora contribution. The Government has provided institutionalized platforms to facilitate these contributions, such as the Indian Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI), by helping forge partnerships between donors and recipients, the latter including volunteer organizations in India's social sector.

### **E-government**

India manages emigration through its E-governance Project. Implemented in collaboration with the India Centre for Migration, the project helps Indian migrants move up the value chain to position India as a preferred supplier of qualified and skilled human resource.

## **LESSONS FOR THE EAC REGION**

India's diaspora agenda offers lessons on how a country or a region can use legal and institutional frameworks to harness and support the potential of its diaspora to contribute to national/regional development. Apart from creating relevant institutions to advance its diaspora agenda, the country also relies heavily on coordination, networking and strong business links with its diaspora to realize its objectives and reap the financial and social benefits of diaspora engagement.

The country has also used bilateral agreements as a tool to secure employment for its nationals and facilitate the reduction of remittance costs. Another initiative-mobility partnership agreements signed by India – facilitate the portability of social security benefits across labour markets, which is particularly helpful to Indian migrant

workers who have lost or reached the end of their employment overseas. The EAC Partner States as a good practice and lesson from India, can broker similar bilateral/multilateral agreements to secure overseas employment opportunities for their nationals and make social security benefits portable, which will result in increased diaspora remittances and investments at both national and regional levels.

The Indian Diaspora plays a crucial role in shaping the country's foreign policy. This group, made up of around 18 million people across the globe, has the potential to influence international relations significantly. By better utilizing the skills and networks of the Indian diaspora, the country can strengthen its position as a global player and work towards its aspirations of becoming a superpower and this is a great lesson for the East African Community

#### **2.4.2 Federal Republic of Nigeria**

The Government of Nigeria has long acknowledged the importance of engaging with the Diaspora towards national development. In this respect, Nigeria had hitherto adopted a multifaceted approach, containing a variety of initiatives, rather than a singular, focused policy approach. Early efforts to engage the Diaspora included the establishment of the Nigerian National Volunteer Service and a National Diaspora Day (first celebrated in 2005). Recent efforts include the enactment of the legislation establishing the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, the support of diaspora investment in Nigeria through the floating of a diaspora bond and active engagement with the Diaspora organisations amongst others. The Government of Nigeria has demonstrated a desire to engage actively with the Diaspora in the pursuit of national development. Nigeria has also received support from organisations such as the International Organization for Migration in developing profiles of different skillsets, gaps and needs of the Diaspora.

#### **Nigeria's Institutional Approach to Diaspora Engagement**

The Nigerian Diaspora Policy proposes an institutional structure that stems from the Presidency. It identifies the creation of a Presidential Advisory Committee on Diaspora Matters and the appointment of a Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora to oversee and chair meetings of the committee. The policy also provides for the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through an Act of Parliament. In 2017, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (Establishment) Act, was passed to provide for the engagement of diasporic Nigerians in policymaking and to participate in the country's projects and national development; in the process utilizing human capital and material resources of the diaspora towards the overall socioeconomic, cultural and political development of Nigeria.

The National Diaspora policy 2021 was a direct response for the need to provide a comprehensive institutional framework and a strategy for the mobilization and involvement of Nigerians in the Diaspora in the national development process and to address the challenges militating against their participation.

NIDCOM which has been in operation for the last five years has a very active website, which it uses to disseminate information to the Nigerian diaspora. It uses

other online platforms to engage its diaspora and undertake business and social networking. NIDCOM has also been working with several stakeholders to come up with strategies and plans that would encourage Nigerians in the diaspora to invest back home, including by providing land for diaspora-based housing schemes.

The Commission has also taken the lead role in collaboration with Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) and other stakeholders to organize the yearly Diaspora Awards Ceremony to recognize and reward those diaspora members who have contributed to the socio-economic growth of Nigeria.

### **Lessons for the EAC Region**

The EAC region can draw valuable lessons from Nigeria's structured and proactive approach to diaspora engagement. Nigeria has established strong institutional frameworks such as the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), backed by legislation, which ensures consistent engagement, policymaking inclusion, and implementation of diaspora-centered initiatives. EAC Partner States can benefit from adopting a regionally coordinated institution, perhaps under the EAC Secretariat, to harmonize and drive diaspora policies across the bloc.

Nigeria's practice of assigning high-level political oversight—such as a Senior Special Assistant to the President on Diaspora Affairs—demonstrates the importance of political will and visibility in engaging the diaspora. Furthermore, the use of digital platforms, including NIDCOM's active website and social media, shows how technology can be leveraged to communicate, engage, and mobilize the diaspora effectively.

Nigeria's initiatives like diaspora bonds, business networks, land access for diaspora housing, and recognition awards are concrete incentives that the EAC could emulate to increase diaspora trust and participation in national and regional development. Finally, the collaborative efforts with development partners like IOM in mapping diaspora skills could help EAC countries tap into their diaspora's human capital more strategically.

### **2.4.3 MOROCCO**

Over 2.9 million of Morocco's total population is in the diaspora, most of whom are spread across France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands (*AFFORD et al., 2020*). Since the 1990s, the Government of Morocco has been making progressive efforts to ensure that its diaspora is integrated and informed of national development plans and strategies for inclusive development.

Morocco is country with good diaspora engagement practices as it has put in place measures aimed at lowering the costs of sending remittances to the country. Morocco has also addressed the issue of making social security benefits portable by signing bilateral agreements with host countries of Moroccan migrants and strengthening coordination mechanisms with social security institutions. The country has also signed employment agreements for the mobility of labour towards foreign labour markets, which has contributed to lowering unemployment in the country and mobilizing remittances. Additionally, Morocco has made amendments to its legal framework to facilitate dual citizenship and the political participation of its diaspora.

## **Policy, Legal and Institutional Reforms**

Morocco has been making several efforts at the policy, legal and institutional levels aimed at effectively engaging its diaspora for development. The country has invested in the creation of institutional reforms that would facilitate effective engagement with its diaspora. In 1990, Morocco created the Delegate Ministry in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad to strengthen links with Moroccans living abroad. In the same year, the Government launched the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Residing Abroad, whose purpose is to ensure that the Moroccan diaspora maintains ties with its country of origin through religion, education, culture and language. The foundation supports Moroccans living abroad and provides them with information in various areas, such as investment opportunities in Morocco. It also organizes summer camps or summer schools for Moroccan children living abroad, as well as financing the deployment of teachers to provide them with Arabic language instruction. The Government formed the Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad (French: Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger (CCME)) in 2007 and made a specific provision for this institution in the Constitution of 2011. The CCME is composed of Moroccan emigrants and its responsibilities include guiding the Government of Morocco on policy issues concerning its diaspora; monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policy decisions; protecting the interests of Moroccans living abroad; reinforcing diplomatic relations and cooperation between Morocco and countries hosting the largest populations of Moroccans living abroad; and boosting cultural ties with Moroccans in the diaspora, especially the youth.

In 2013, Morocco created an interministerial committee for Moroccans living abroad to enhance the coordination of its migration strategy. Morocco launched its National Strategy for Moroccans Living Abroad in 2014. The strategy focuses on mobilizing the skills of MLAs, attracting investments from them and improving their access to public services. It has three strategic objectives:

- i. Preserving the national and cultural identity of Moroccans living abroad;
- ii. Protecting the rights and interests of Moroccans living abroad;
- iii. Encouraging Moroccans living abroad contributions to the development of the country.

Apart from making institutional changes to facilitate its response to diaspora needs and affairs, Morocco has also made legislative reforms to support its diaspora agenda. In 2011, the country revised its Constitution, which sets out various provisions for recognizing MLAs, including by granting them dual citizenship under Article 16. The legal framework also provides for the right of Moroccans living abroad to participate in the governance of the country.

## **Social Security, Bilateral Agreements and Remittance Mobilization**

The National Social Security Fund is a public social security institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Professional Integration. The fund was created to manage social security protection for all employees in the private sector in Morocco. It is also given the mandate to address social security issues of Moroccans living abroad in countries where Morocco has sizeable numbers of its diaspora. Morocco has so far signed BSSAs with 16 countries, namely Algeria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Libya, Luxembourg, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Tunisia. Such initiatives,

among others, have facilitated the portability of social security benefits for Morocco's diaspora (ibid.).

remittances represent the second largest item in the balance of payments of revenue for Morocco at almost 6 per cent of GDP, after travel receipts. In order to maximize the benefits of remittances, Morocco has put in place measures to lower the cost of sending remittances by the diaspora.

### **Legal Services to Diaspora**

The Government of Morocco facilitates legal and other services to MLAs through the Delegate Ministry in charge of Moroccans Living Abroad. It has set up legal and judicial assistance mechanisms for the benefit of Moroccans living abroad across 22 countries of residence in Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Arab region (AFFORD, 2020), with embassies and consulates supervising the assistance. The initiative involves annually renewed agreements with law firms authorized to provide legal advice and guidance to Moroccan nationals abroad. In host countries not covered by such agreements, embassies can arrange for the appointment and remuneration of lawyers to defend the rights and interests of Moroccan citizens in court.

### **Lessons for the EAC Region**

The experience of Morocco, as a country that depends on migration for much of its social and economic development, offers practical lessons to the EAC region on the importance of putting in place the necessary mechanisms and frameworks and Institutions to harness the diaspora potential. Morocco has managed to lower the cost of sending remittances to the country, which has enabled the country to maximize the benefits from this resource and from the investments made by its diaspora. Equally, through strengthened coordination mechanisms and bilateral agreements, Morocco has addressed the issue of unemployment and facilitated the portability of its diaspora's social security benefits. The country has also made amendments to the legal framework to facilitate dual citizenship and grant Moroccans living abroad the right to vote in Moroccan elections.

## **2.5 Rationale for the EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy**

A Diaspora Policy aims to create favourable conditions for diasporas and support them in engaging in activities that promote the development of origin countries. Thus, diaspora policy takes on certain characteristics and roles, namely enabling, partnership and inclusive as well as catalytic roles (**Ionescu, 2006:53-54**) Policymakers can therefore support, attract and enable diasporas by: "lowering remittance transfer costs, alleviating the bureaucratic burden, simplifying documentation procedures, allowing dual citizenship, identifying investment projects, offering security for business transactions or ensuring the portability of social security rights"; "raising public awareness, and clearly defining development priorities and strategies requiring diaspora involvement"; creating trust and access to rights, status and provisions; ensuring the recognition of diasporas as full citizens and strengthening politicians' knowledge on the behaviour of the diaspora in order to find the right ways to attract them to engaging in human development initiatives<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Engaging Basotho diasporas in the South for national development-ACP Publications -2014

The rationale behind the development of the EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy is based on the Treaty principle of strengthening and consolidating cooperation in an agreed area and on the recognized need for EAC Partner States to engage their diaspora and harness their potential in national development and in the regional integration agenda. The rationale takes cognizance of the multidimensional nature of development and migration, and therefore, aims to supplement the efforts of each Partner State and relevant stakeholders in drawing up a road map for medium to long term interventions necessary to engage the East African diaspora. The ultimate goal for such engagement is not only the realization of the rights and protection of East Africans in the diaspora, but for them to be engaged and empowered through participation, partnership and dialogue for national and regional development.

The rationale is also grounded on the provisions of the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination 2010-under Article 3(f)- where Partner States agreed to undertake activities towards the promotion of tourism, investments and building international partnerships. The Protocol further under Objectives-Article 4 (g) calls the Partner States to ***“promote the participation of the peoples of the Partner States in the Diaspora in the development of the Community”***<sup>4</sup>.

The EAC Common Market Protocol 2010- further provides for the free movement of Persons, Labour, Goods, Services, Capital and the Rights to Establishment and Residence for East Africans. The right to move freely in the region, establish and reside in a Partner State of one’s choice have created a huge diaspora for each Partner State in the neighbouring countries. Articles 5, 7, 10, 13, and 14 of the EAC CMP stipulate that citizens of an EAC Partner State are guaranteed the freedom of movement from one Partner State to another, the right to work, the right of establishment and residence in any Partner State along with their spouse, dependents, and children for purposes of living, visiting, touring, transit, education, training and working<sup>5</sup>.

The Sectoral Council on Foreign Policy Coordination during its 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014, acknowledged the need to develop a regional approach to mobilize the EAC Diaspora to actively participate in the EAC integration process –as guided by the four pillars outlined in the EAC Treaty- the Customs Union, the Common Market, Monetary Union and ultimately the East African Political Federation. The Sectoral Council, therefore, observed the need to mobilize diaspora towards the regional integration process and, as such, directed the Secretariat to develop a regional approach to allow the East African diaspora to enjoy these opportunities and to harness their potential towards the socio-economic transformation of the region.

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<sup>4</sup> Article 4 (g)-Objectives of the EAC Foreign Policy Coordination 2010

<sup>5</sup> The EAC CMP has been under implementation since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. The EAC PS are at various levels of implementation of the various commitments, and some progresses have been made especially in the free movement of People and Workers-However, movement of labour has not been allowed for low skilled workers as the protocol has a classification list of the professions allowed to move.

Further, the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sectoral Council held on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2024, after consideration of a concept paper for the development of an EAC Diaspora Policy made the following observations:

- i. Protection of the welfare and rights of diaspora should be a priority intervention area;
- ii. The need, through a collective regional arrangement, for the EAC to work on the framework for lowering transfer cost of remittances;
- iii. The need for a structured approach to engaging with and protecting nationals abroad;
- iv. The need for trust and confidence building with the Diaspora;
- v. Skills and technology transfer by diaspora should be encouraged through dedicated facilitation of diaspora at various levels;
- vi. The need to address the plight of undocumented diaspora through access to various financial and investment streams at home;
- vii. Diaspora policy development at national levels is at different stages.

Overall, the Sectoral Council underscored the fact that an EAC Diaspora Policy would give meaning to the East African Passport and the declaration by the African Union that the diaspora is the 6<sup>th</sup> region of Africa.

### **The East African Diaspora**

The East African Diaspora represents a significant and growing segment of the global migration phenomenon. In recent years, emigration for employment has emerged as a new trend among East Africans, driven by the quest for better economic opportunities, higher education, and improved living standards abroad. This migration pattern has led to a notable increase in the East African population residing outside their home countries, contributing to both the economies of their host nations and their countries of origin through remittances, investments, and knowledge transfer.

Documented research and analysis inform us that migration is a driver of human development and can generate significant benefits for migrants, their families and countries of origin. The wages that migrants earn abroad can be many multiples of what they could earn doing similar jobs at home. International remittances have grown from an estimated USD 128 billion in 2000 to USD 831 billion in 2022 and now far outstrip official development assistance to developing countries and foreign direct investment (**IOM-2024 World Migration Report**)

Migration can also provide an important skills boost, which can be critically important for destination countries experiencing population declines. In addition to enhancing national income and average living standards, immigration can have a positive effect on the labour market by increasing labour supply in sectors and occupations suffering from shortages of workers, as well as helping address mismatches in the job market. These positive labour market effects are not just evident in high-skilled sectors, but can also occur in lower-skilled occupations. Immigration increases both the supply of and the demand for labour, which means that labour immigration (including of lower-skilled workers) can generate additional employment opportunities for existing workers. Research also shows that migrants provide a source of dynamism globally and are over represented in innovation and patents, arts and sciences awards, start-ups and successful companies.

The East African Community (EAC) recognizes the importance of the diaspora community as an important partner to foster cooperation and the role they can play

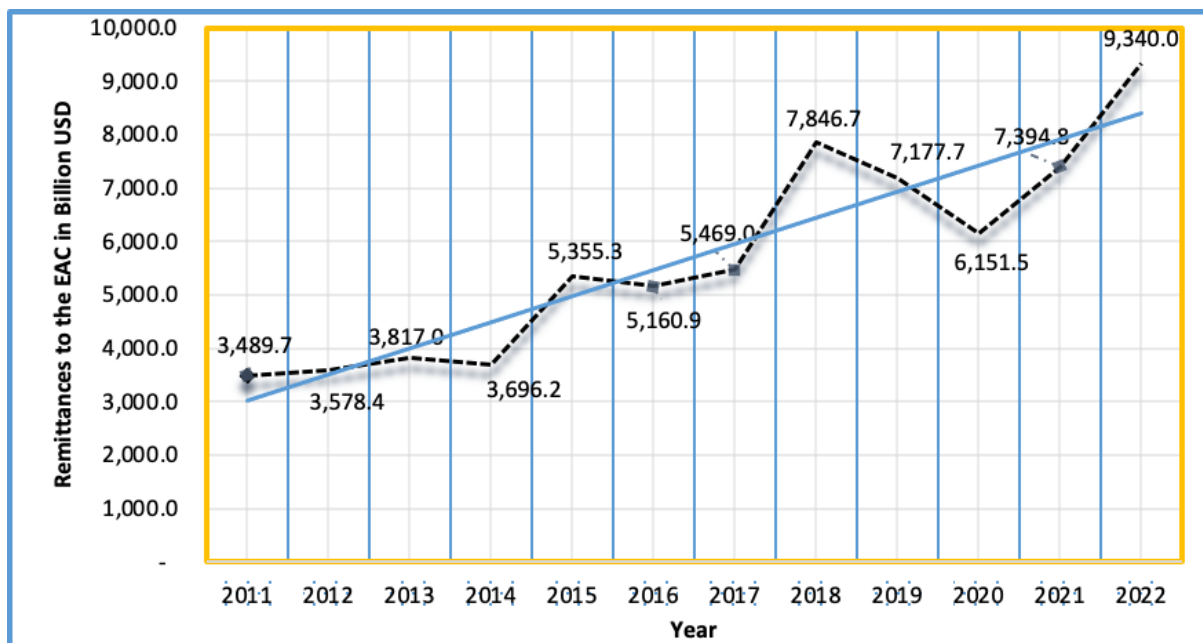
in the development of the Partner States' economies. The Partner States have undertaken initiatives that provide for an enabling environment for diaspora engagement. This Draft EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy proposes and provides for a comprehensive framework for the EAC Partner States and all stakeholders to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the Diaspora. The Policy seeks to maximize mutual benefits to all stakeholders that can be accrued by formally mainstreaming the Diaspora into the national and regional development agenda.

### 2.5.1 Importance of a Structured Regional Approach.

Although the EAC Partner States remain at different levels of progress in the institutionalization of diaspora engagement, the development of the policy framework, acknowledges that the combined 15 million plus East African diaspora has a huge untapped potential which should be harnessed for both national and regional development through investing in Business, Tourism, Education & Health, the Arts & Culture, Technology, Agriculture and skills transfer. Facilitating and structuring such activities would increase economic growth, employment opportunities and access to technology and increase of market share for the Partner States.

**Table 3** below captures the combined flow of remittances to the EAC region since 2011 to December 2024.

**Table 1: Remittance growth trend to the EAC, (in million USD)**



Source: World Bank 2023

In recognition of the importance of the diaspora in national development, there is an urgent need for the East African Community Partner States to coordinate their diaspora engagement efforts. Effective diaspora engagement can harness the potential of these communities, fostering economic growth, enhancing cultural exchange, and supporting national development agendas. A coordinated approach ensures that policies and programs are harmonized or have similar standards, thus maximizing the benefits of diaspora contributions to the region.

The policy framework acknowledges that, EAC Partner States remain at different levels of progress in the development of the legal frameworks and institutionalization of diaspora engagement, but there is encouraging evidence in attempts to improve engagement with the diaspora. The Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda have established departments responsible for diaspora affairs in their ministries responsible for foreign affairs. With regard to diaspora policy development, the Republics of Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, and Somalia have diaspora policies in place. The Republic of Kenya has gone ahead and reviewed the Diaspora policy of 2014 and based on the lessons learnt, adopted a new Diaspora Policy 2024 which is more focused on addressing the welfare, rights, and interests of the Diaspora.

The United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda have draft diaspora policies which are yet to be approved by the relevant government organs. The Republics of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo have established a Diaspora desk in the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs but are yet to develop any strategic framework or policy on diaspora engagement.

The following are some of the reasons why a collective regional approach towards diaspora engagement will bring in more benefits and compliment the national efforts:

#### **Unified Policy Framework**

A regional diaspora engagement policy would allow for a more nuanced understanding of diaspora needs, interests, and expectations and provide standards and benchmarks that would create a consistent policy framework across all Partner States.

#### **Enhanced Investment Opportunities**

Expanding the economic focus of diaspora engagement beyond remittances to provide for trade, investments, skills and knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, philanthropy and tourism in a single investment space offered by a combined population of over 340 million people and a land mass covering 5.4 million square kilometres.

#### **Effective Resource Mobilization and Bargaining Power**

A regional approach allows Partner States to pool their resources and expertise to better engage and leverage the diaspora's potential and further enhance the bargaining power of the region in negotiating better multilateral labour agreements and better terms for remittances and other financial services that benefit the diaspora

#### **Comprehensive Data Collection and Management**

Developing a regional data collection system can provide better insights into diaspora demographics, profiles, preferences, motivations and trends aiding in more effective policy-making.

#### **Cultural and Social Integration**

Engaging the diaspora through a regional lens fosters a stronger sense of regional identity and belonging, promoting cultural and social cohesion. This will eventually

bring to reality the EAC Motto of “One people, One Destiny” the words of the EAC Anthem; and give more meaning to the East African Passport. Highlighting shared cultural heritage and values can enhance the diaspora's connection to the region as a whole, rather than just individual Partner States.

### **Capacity Building, Knowledge and Skills Transfer**

The EAC Partner States stand to gain more utilizing the Regional Institutions, Networks and Platforms to facilitate the transfer of skills, knowledge, innovation and business acumen by diaspora professionals and entrepreneurs. This will be achieved by leveraging and working with the established EAC Organs, Institutions, Affiliated Networks and Platforms such as the Inter-University Council for East Africa, the East Africa Science and Technology Commission, The East Africa Health Research Commission, The East African Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Authority; the East African Business Council, The East African Law Society; the East African Chamber of Commerce and the East Africa Civil Society Organizations.

Through this Policy, the East Africa Partner States have the opportunity to standardize and formalize the established institutional structures to deal with Diaspora issues in a more harmonized and coherent manner. This will also help to eliminate the barriers and perceived bottlenecks that may hinder the maximization of the potential economic benefits from the Diaspora. It further aligns well with the intentions of the Dublin Declaration 2022, and contributes towards the effective implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) - Objectives 19 and 23; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets 8.3,10.2,10.7, and 17. 3.

## 3. POLICY, LEGAL, REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

### Introduction

Diaspora engagement policies are integral to maximizing the benefits of migration for African countries. They provide a comprehensive framework for protecting migrant workers, enhancing host state relations, contributing to international migration governance, and optimizing remittances. By effectively engaging the diaspora, African nations can leverage this valuable resource to drive socio-economic development and achieve sustainable growth. The EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy is being developed within a background of various international, regional legal frameworks and Partner States national policies and strategies

### 3.1 Alignment with International and Regional Frameworks.

#### 3.1.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Aligning the East African Diaspora Policy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can create a powerful framework to harness the skills, resources, and networks of diaspora communities for sustainable development in the region. This can be done through proper mapping of SDGs with Diaspora development motives for the region, in addition, identifying adequate implementation mechanisms and policy interventions to maximise the various benefits from Diaspora is the lynchpin in achieving sustainable growth.

#### SDG Mapping

##### SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals:

Build multi-stakeholder partnerships between governments, diaspora organizations, the private sector, and civil society. A robust network can facilitate knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, and coordinated development efforts.

##### SDG 1 & SDG 10: No Poverty and Reduced Inequalities

Leverage diaspora remittances and investments to reduce poverty and bridge income gaps. Policies can encourage financial flows that support community development projects, education, and health services.

##### SDG 4 & SDG 8: Quality Education and Decent Work and Economic Growth

Utilize diaspora expertise to improve education systems and vocational training. Initiatives like mentorship programs, exchange schemes, and online learning platforms can enhance local skills and stimulate entrepreneurship.

##### SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Encourage diaspora-led technology transfer and innovation initiatives. Facilitating diaspora investment in critical infrastructure and supporting local startups can drive sustainable industrial growth.

By strategically mapping diaspora initiatives to the SDGs, the East African Diaspora Policy can: Enhance partnerships (SDG 17) through coordinated efforts and multi-

stakeholder engagement. Reduce poverty and inequalities (SDG 1 & SDG 10) by channelling remittances and investments to local communities. Boost education and economic opportunities (SDG 4 & SDG 8) through skill transfer and entrepreneurial support. Drive infrastructure and innovation (SDG 9) by leveraging diaspora expertise and facilitating technology transfer.

### **3.1.2 International Frameworks**

#### **a) UN Agenda 2030**

The UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development recognizes migration as a central development consideration advancing the integration of migration as a cross-cutting feature of the global development agenda<sup>6</sup>. Sustainable Development Goal No. 8.8 anchors labour migration to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The goal also provides for protection of labour rights and promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment. In line with a global call to harness the positive contributions of migration and to mitigate its negative consequences, states adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018..

#### **b) ILO Conventions**

The first international instruments providing for more comprehensive solutions to the problems facing migrant workers include the Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (Revised) (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), together with their Recommendations. Because migration often has consequences on both the migrant workers and members of their families, ILO instruments on migrant workers provide for guarantees and facilities to assist migrant workers and their families in all stages of the migration processes. The protection of the interests of workers when employed in countries other than their own is also embedded in the preamble to the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (ILO) of 1919.

#### **c) The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration- (GCM 2018)**

The Global Compact for Migration underscores participant States' commitment to "create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries<sup>7</sup>." Achieving this objective entails, among other things, the promotion of "migration policies that optimize the benefits of diasporas for countries of origin and destination and their communities. Objective 19 of the GCM calls upon all states to create conditions for migrants and diaspora to fully contribute to sustainable development. The global commitment to engage with diasporas represents the culmination of two decades of sustained international consultations and policy making that form the backbone of the emerging global migration regime. Active efforts are therefore, underway to address all challenges in a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach. Migration has been recognized as an

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<sup>6</sup> Migration and the 2030 Agenda-A Guide for Practitioners

<sup>7</sup>The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) - Objectives 19 and 23 <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>

important input for the global sustainable development agenda. All EAC Partner States are signatories to the Global Compact on safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

**d) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**

Human rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments, such as Conventions, Covenants and Protocols, constitute a normative framework for the promotion and protection of the rights of all, including the diaspora. The UDHR sets a common standard of achievement for all peoples and contains all categories of rights, namely civil and political rights; economic, social, and cultural rights; and collective rights. In the context of the diaspora, the UDHR guarantees, among others, freedom of movement, which includes the right to leave and return to one's country of nationality or habitual residence (United Nations, 1948: art. 13); the right to take part in the government of one's country; and equal access to public services (ibid.: art. 21).

**e) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)**

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted through United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/158 of December 1990, takes into account the principles embodied in the basic human rights instruments of the United Nations, which, in addition to the UDHR, include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Under Part III of the ICRMW, migrant workers are entitled to human rights. For example, they are entitled to leave any State.

Article 8 of the convention provides thus: -1. ***Migrant workers and members of their families shall be free to leave any State, including their State of origin. This right shall not be subject to any restrictions except those that are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present part of the Convention.*** 2. ***Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right at any time to enter and remain in their State of origin.*** (United Nations, 1990: Art. 8)

Article 23 of the ICRMW, provide that: Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to have recourse to the protection and assistance of the consular or diplomatic authorities of their State of origin or of a State representing the interests of that State whenever the rights recognized in the present Convention are impaired... (ibid.: art. 23) ***Further, the convention expressly recognizes a migrant worker's child's right to a name, registration of birth and a nationality (ibid.:art. 29), as well as access to education on an equal basis (ibid.:art. 30).*** In addition, the convention stipulates that "upon the termination of their stay in the State of employment, migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to transfer their earnings and savings and, in accordance with the applicable legislation of the States concerned, their personal effects and belongings" (ibid.: art. 32).

Article 40, of the same Convention guarantees migrant workers and members of their families the right to form associations for, among other purposes, the promotion and protection of their economic, social, cultural and other interests.

In regard to remittances, Article 47 of the ICRMW states that migrant workers have the right to transfer their earnings and savings – in particular those funds necessary for the support of their families – from the State of employment to their State of origin or habitual residence, or any other State. However, transfers must be made in conformity with procedures established by applicable legislation of the State concerned and in conformity with applicable international agreements.

It is worth noting that none of the EAC Partner States has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. However, the Republics of Rwanda and Uganda have ratified the convention but the provisions are not yet in force.

#### ***f) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)***

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes the obligation of States to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and freedoms. The ICCPR applies to the diaspora with equal force. Without subtracting from the generality of the rights to which the diaspora is entitled, the ICCPR provides for, among others: the right to life (art. 6); freedom from torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 7); liberty and the right to security of person, including protection from arbitrary arrest or detention and the right for persons in detention to be brought before court promptly (art. 9); right to privacy (art. 17); freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 18); freedom of opinion and expression (art. 19); right to peaceful assembly (art. 21); and the right to freedom of association with others (art. 22) (United Nations, 1966).

### **3.1.3 African Regional Frameworks**

At the continental level, the African Union committed itself to widening the development constituency in Africa by incorporating the African Diaspora in the development process of the continent as valuable partners. As a result of this recognition, the AU designated Africans in the Diaspora as its “Sixth region”. Further, the AU created the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) to manage the relationship between Diasporas and homeland Governments.

The African Union hosted the first ever Global African Diaspora Summit, in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 25th May, 2012. The overall objective of the Summit was to discuss how best to harness skills and energies within the continent and abroad for the socio-economic development of Africa. The Summit was also aimed at boosting synergies in addition to facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship through sustainable partnership with the African Diaspora. African Governments were urged to formulate Diaspora policies in order to establish institutional engagement frameworks to coordinate Diaspora affairs.

#### ***a) African Union Constitutive (Amendment) Act of 2003***

The Constitutive Act (The Constitution) of the African Union was amended in 2003 to clarify its fundamental relationship with the diaspora and to invite diaspora to join the organization to help Africa “unify”. Article 3(q) of the Protocol on the Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union, invites and encourages “the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important part of the Continent, in the building of the African Union” (African Union, 2003).

*African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR)*

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees all categories of fundamental rights and freedoms to every person (i.e. civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and collective rights). In the area of civil and political rights, the ACHPR, in Article 5, recognizes the inherent dignity of the human person (Organization of African Unity, 1981). The Charter also guarantees the liberty and security of persons (art. 6), freedom of conscience and practice of religion (art. 8), freedom of expression (art. 9), freedom of association and assembly (arts. 10 and 11, respectively), and freedom of movement (art. 12) (ibid.). These articles are important to the promotion and protection of human rights. The rights enshrined under the ACHPR can be enjoyed individually or in association with others. As such, their importance to the diaspora cannot be overemphasized.

### ***b) African Union-Agenda 2063***

The African Union Agenda 2063 acknowledges that the Diaspora has the potential to contribute to Africa's economic development through investment, expertise and participation in the political, cultural and social integration in their homelands. The agenda envisions a state where the diaspora is integrated in all spheres of life and the democratic processes of the African states by 2030 and that dual citizenship will be the standard by 2025

## **3.1.4 EAC Legal Frameworks**

### **a) The EAC Treaty.**

The Treaty establishing the East African Community remains the anchor legal framework for programming EAC strategic interventions. Under article 5(1), the Treaty makes provisions for the development of policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defence, security and legal and judicial affairs for their mutual benefit.

Under Article 5(3), the Treaty stipulates that the Community shall ensure the:

- i. Attainment of sustainable growth and development of the Partner States,
- ii. Strengthening and consolidation of cooperation in agreed fields,
- iii. Promotion of sustainable utilization of the natural resource base in the region,
- iv. Strengthening and consolidation of the long-standing political, economic, social, cultural, and traditional ties,
- v. Promotion of people-centred mutual development,
- vi. Promotion of peace, security, and stability,
- vii. Adopting forward looking levels of preparedness to manage change and avert disasters,
- viii. Enhancement and strengthening of partnerships with the private sector and civil society and mainstreaming of gender in all its endeavours, among others.

Under Article 104 of the Treaty, Partner States agreed to adopt measures to achieve the free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence of their citizens within the Community.

### ***b) The EAC Common Market Protocol.***

The EAC Common Market Protocol 2010, provides for the free movement of Persons, Labour, Goods, Services, Capital and the Rights to Establishment and Residence for East Africans. The right to move freely in the region, establish and reside in a Partner State of one's choice have created a huge diaspora for each Partner State in the neighbouring countries. Articles 5, 7, 10, 13, and 14 of the EAC CMP stipulate that citizens of an EAC Partner State are guaranteed the freedom of movement from one Partner State to another, the right of establishment and residence in any Partner State along with their spouse, dependents, and children for purposes of living, visiting, touring, transit, education, training and working<sup>8</sup>.

### **c) Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination (2010)**

The EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination 2010 is the main document which anchors diaspora engagement-under Article 3(f)- Partner States agreed to undertake activities towards the promotion of tourism, investments and building international partnerships. The Protocol further under Objectives-Article 4 (g) calls the Partner States to ***“promote the participation of the peoples of the Partner States in the Diaspora in the development of the Community”***<sup>9</sup>.

### **d) The EAC Vision 2050**

The “EAC Vision 2050” details the aspirations and the desired state of the East Africans for the region. By 2050, East Africans envisage a prosperous, competitive, secure and politically united region. They expect to live in a border-less single region, providing a single space for operations within the framework of EA State that is socially coherent with harmonized economic development trajectory, steered by committed leadership and empowered Community. East Africans expect a region that is committed to itself and accountable to its citizens. The common vision is to have ***“A globally competitive upper-middle income region with a high quality of life for its population based on the principles of inclusiveness and accountability”***.

The 2050 vision harmonizes and consolidates the visions of Partners States as well as the EAC institutions and brings into focus the interests of the combined population of the community and aligns with the AU Agenda 2063 as well as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Vision 2050 recognizes that sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth in the region is a key requirement for eradicating poverty and hunger and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, the emphasis on economic transformation through judicious use of natural resources and value addition should be complemented by an enabling environment aimed at expanding the development opportunities of the citizens of the region which includes the diaspora.

### **e) The EAC Development Strategy 21/2022- 25/2026**

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<sup>8</sup> The EAC CMP has been under implementation since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. The EAC PS are at various levels of implementation of the various commitments, and some progress have been made especially in the free movement of People and Workers-However, movement of labour has not been allowed for low skilled workers as the protocol has a classification list of the professions allowed to move.

<sup>9</sup> Article 4 (g)-Objectives of the EAC Foreign Policy Coordination 2010

The 6<sup>th</sup> EAC Development Strategy, acknowledges that international relations are key for the Community to effectively work with countries outside the region. Thus, key interventions during the period include:

- i. Coordination and Harmonization of Partner States Foreign Policies
- ii. Adoption of a framework for Partner States' provision of visa and consular services on behalf of each other.
- iii. Enhance engagement of the EAC Diaspora in key diplomatic multilateral stations in regional integration.

#### ***f) The EAC Labour Migration Policy- 2024***

The EAC Labour Migration Policy is anchored under Article 104 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC where, Partner States agreed to adopt measures to achieve the free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence of their citizens within the Community. The Policy acknowledges the fact that remittances by migrant workers is not explicitly addressed in the EAC legal and regulatory provisions and therefore there is need to develop an appropriate mechanism for migrant workers engagement in the development of the Community. The policy is further anchored on sustainable development goal No. 8.8 that relates to labour migration to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Thus, the Diaspora Engagement policy compliments the provisions of the Labour migration policy in respect to migrant workers welfare, rights, remittances and social protection.

#### ***g) The EAC Gender Policy***

The policy has identified fourteen key priority action areas that when addressed will promote Diaspora participation and involvement within laws, policies, programmes and projects of the Community.

The actions address Gender concerns in Governance and Participation; Education and Training; Health and HIV/AIDS; Gender-Based Violence; Environment and Climate change; Energy; Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition; Gender Equality in Employment and Labour Force; Trade and Economic Empowerment; Security, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution; Mining and Extractive Industries; Access to Safe water, Sanitation and Housing; as well as Gender and Migration.

Among the stated objectives of the policy is to promote women's participation in political and decision-making at all levels and to promote equal access to and control of productive resources and participation in regional trade which alligns well with the objectives of the diaspora policy.

#### ***h) The EAC Youth Policy, 2013***

The East African Community Youth Policy, adopted in 2013. aims to promote meaningful youth participation in all aspects of regional integration, including socio-economic development, peacebuilding, and governance. It emphasizes youth empowerment through education, employment, entrepreneurship, and access to resources and decision-making processes.

This EAC Diaspora Policy aligns closely with the EAC Youth Policy by recognizing the diaspora; particularly youth in the diaspora; as vital contributors to the region's development. It seeks to create pathways for young East Africans abroad to engage

in investment, knowledge transfer, skills development, innovation, culture and arts, and sport. The diaspora policy also encourages youth participation in shaping regional priorities and policies, mirroring the youth policy's goals of inclusion, empowerment, and intergenerational equity. By tapping into the youthful EAC diaspora, the two policies together reinforce a vision of regional growth driven by the energy, skills, and global exposure of young people.

### **3.2 Legal Implications of the EAC Diaspora Policy.**

The development of the Regional Policy recognizes existing policy frameworks and established Institutional arrangements on diaspora engagement across the EAC Partner States and hence will consider coherence and alignment with such policies. The policy further aligns with the provisions of the EAC Labour Migration Policy 2024 in respect to free movement of workers within the region and beyond, remittances, return & reintegration, access to social protection and social security benefits and the EAC Council Directive on the Coordination of social security benefits in the East African Community.

This is aimed at providing rules and procedures for the coordination of social security benefits for workers and self-employed persons in the EAC. It takes into account the provisions of the EAC Common Market Protocol in regard to free movement of labour, services, capital and the right of establishment and residence and further knowledges the contents of the EAC Gender Policy, the EAC Youth Policy in regard to Gender and Migration.

As stated earlier, Partner States have embraced Diaspora engagement with some having established departments responsible for diaspora engagement and others have adopted policies and strategies to promote and coordinate diaspora affairs. The Visions of the respective countries -Vision 2030 of Kenya, Vision 2040 of Uganda, Vision 2025 of The United Republic of Tanzania, Vision 2050 of Rwanda, Vision 2025 of Burundi, and Vision 2040 of South Sudan and other key development strategies and National Development Plans have entrenched the Partner States intention to harness the potential of the Diaspora in national economic development.

## 4. VISION, MISSION, POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND INTERVENTIONS

The EAC Vision 2050 inspires the Partner States to work towards becoming middle-upper income nations by the year 2050. The EAC acknowledges the fact that the attainment of the Vision 2050 depends on the participation of all citizens of the EAC Partner States- including the Diaspora. It is envisaged that the policy implementation process will adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches by utilizing national and regional multi-stakeholders in the development agenda by creating an enabling environment for effective participation of the Diaspora in national and regional economic development and to promote their rights, interests and welfare abroad.

### 4.1 Vision

*“A unified, empowered, and protected EAC Diaspora, actively engaged and connected globally, contributing to inclusive national and regional development, integration, and sustainable socio-economic transformation.”*

### 4.2 Mission

*“To establish a comprehensive framework based on best practices that fosters strong, structured, and mutually beneficial engagement between the EAC and the diaspora.”*

### 4.3 Goal

An empowered and protected diaspora that willingly participates and contributes to national and regional economic development

### 4.4 General Objective:

The overall objective of this Policy is to provide a structured and institutionalized framework to engage and mainstream the East African Diaspora in the economic development and social transformation of their countries and in the regional integration agenda by creating standards, an enabling environment and to protect their basic rights, interests and welfare abroad.

#### 4.4.1 Specific Objectives

- i. Provide a structured framework for engagement which formally mainstream the Diaspora into national and regional development;
- ii. Develop measures that enhance the protection of East Africans in the Diaspora in order to safeguard their basic rights, working conditions and living standards through engagement with host governments;
- iii. Develop mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation with the Diaspora through expanding services offered by embassies and consulates serving all Partner States citizens in situations of emergency and distress;
- iv. Encourage the East African communities abroad to form national and regional umbrella associations and think tanks which can work directly with

established national and regional institutions for investment, trade promotion and knowledge transfer;

- v. Facilitate skills transfer programmes tailor made to engage the diaspora in circular migration providing professional know-how and experiences to national and within the EAC specialized institutions;
- vi. Encourage Partner States to create formal, transparent and lucrative channels of investment and economic opportunities for the Diaspora in order to harness remittances and maximize the potential of the Diaspora in contributing to national and regional development
- vii. Encourage Partner States to lower remittances transfer fees and/or introduce a regional cost-free money transfer settlement system, in order to reduce the financial burden of money transfers made by the diaspora and thus enhance the use of formal channels for remittances;
- viii. Establish mechanisms for the transfer and repatriation of terminal, pension and social security benefits for retired returnees through conclusion of bilateral/ multilateral labour agreements with host countries/regions.
- ix. Encourage Partner States to introduce/strengthen return and reintegration programmes
- x. Encourage Partner States to recognise and reward Diaspora that excel in several development and social programmes including Philanthropy

#### **4.5 Guiding Principles**

This policy framework is guided by the principles of good governance, transparency, rule of law and being people-centred, as enshrined in the EAC Treaty and amplified in adopted policies and ratified Protocols. It is further guided by the principles of gender equality and equity as enshrined in key regional and international frameworks. The following principles are expected to guide the engagement process:

##### **i. Engagement & Partnership**

All EAC Partner States are committed to engaging their diaspora albeit at different levels. Through the EAC engagement framework the Partner States will have a harmonized approach to mobilize and engage the diaspora for both national and regional development. In engaging and building empowering and mutually beneficial partnerships with the Diaspora, the EAC Partner States will progressively achieve the aspiration of Vision 2050 of becoming upper middle income class countries

##### **ii. Empowerment & Participation**

Through this Policy, the EAC Partner States will endeavour to put in place an enabling environment and empowerment initiatives as provided under the EAC Common Market Protocol to enable the diaspora participate in national and regional economic development. The policy acknowledges and recognizes the existence of all categories of the East African diaspora which includes professionals, investors, students and migrant workers, and thus ensuring their active involvement in national and regional development.

### iii. **Trust & Confidence Building**

For the objectives of this Policy to be realized, all Partner States acknowledge the importance of creating trust and confidence in their engagement with the Diaspora. Thus, national and regional strategies will be put in place to foster dialogue and understanding between the Diaspora and the various stakeholders of this process

### iv. **Good governance, Transparency & Accountability**

Good democratic governance is the bedrock of growth, poverty eradication and sustainable human development. Good governance practices are linked to the rule of law, ethics and anti-corruption, freedom of expression, participation and inclusiveness as well as social cohesion and protection. Good governance, transparency and accountability will therefore will be strengthened to ensure a continuous exchange between the various actors to ensure feedback and learning, thus creating greater trust in the mobilization of the diaspora resources and their prudent use to support economic growth and development. EAC will also develop regional values and governance ethics to promote social cohesiveness and moving into the future as “one People, one Destiny”.

### v. **Gender Equality and Equity**

The EAC Gender and Equality Policy amplifies the need for equal, fair and full participation of both men and women, boys and girls at all levels of development. Therefore, the EAC shall ensure that Partner States uphold the principle of gender equality and equity in the implementation of the Diaspora Policy and its Action Plan.

### vi. **Inclusiveness & Youth responsiveness**

The EAC is keen to ensure no one is left behind in the Diaspora engagement process. The EAC will encourage the Partner States to continuously involve all the stakeholders especially the Youth, Diaspora Associations, undocumented migrants in the design, implementation and evaluation of the agreed upon engagement programmes and initiatives. The engagement should be designed to provide mutual benefits for both the diaspora and their home countries, fostering shared prosperity.

### vii. **Continuous Consultation & Dialogue:**

This will involve engaging all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, social partners, civil society organizations, the private sector, and government entities, in the design, implementation, evaluation, and revision of diaspora engagement programmes and initiatives. This principle ensures that policies are responsive to the actual needs of the diaspora population, enhances transparency and accountability, and fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment.

### viii. **Solidarity**

This principle emphasizes the importance of collective responsibility and mutual support among EAC Partner States in engaging the diaspora. It advocates for pooling resources, sharing knowledge and collecting migration data to achieve greater social cohesion and economic stability across the region. Solidarity and regional integration mechanisms facilitate the movement of people and labour, ensuring that Partner States citizens' rights are maintained across borders.

### ix. **Sustainability and Long-Term Commitment**

This principle will ensure that diaspora engagement efforts are not ad hoc but rather embedded in national and regional development frameworks.

## 5. PRIORITY INTERVENTION AREAS & POLICY ACTIONS

### 5.1 Protect the Rights and Safeguard the Welfare and Interests of the Diaspora

The EAC Partner States acknowledge that the combined 15 million plus; East African diaspora has a huge untapped potential which should be harnessed for both national and regional development through investing in Business, Tourism, Education & Health, the Arts & Culture, Technology, Agriculture and skills transfer. Measures taken to protect the rights and safeguard the interests of the Diaspora should be linked to their rights at national level such as dual citizenship, voting rights, property rights, pension and social security benefit transfers, savings schemes, and lowering of remittance transfer costs are services that formally acknowledge their transnational belonging.

However, documented evidence showcases that East Africans in the Diaspora experience challenges related to violations of their rights as migrant workers, personal security, identity crisis and emotional wellbeing. By combining their efforts to address the challenges faced by Diaspora in countries of destination like violation of worker rights and providing consular services on behalf of each where they are not represented; in times of distress and political problems, through negotiated multilateral Labour agreements and providing legal services; the EAC Partner States stand better equipped and responsive to protect and safeguard the rights, welfare and interests of the Diaspora

**Policy Statement:** The EAC Partner States are committed to protect the rights and to safeguard the welfare and interests of the Diaspora by endorsing their rights as nationals and by implementing the non-discrimination provisions of the EAC Common Market protocol and the EAC Labour Migration Policy. They further commit to negotiate bilateral/ multilateral labour agreements with destination countries and to provide legal and consular services on behalf of each other, for the benefit of the diaspora.

**Objective:** to Safeguard the rights and interests of the East African Diaspora

#### Policy Actions

Partner States will:

- i. put in place measures to guarantee the welfare and rights of the EAC diaspora:
- ii. Strengthen and enhance the capacity of their Missions Abroad to effectively provide Consular and Legal Services to EAC Diaspora;
- iii. Encourage the Diaspora to register with the nearest EAC Missions and Honorary Consuls
- iv. negotiate as a block multilateral Labour Agreements which confer migrant workers their rights and social protection
- v. Promote East African Diaspora interests in international organizations and partner in the process of endorsing East African candidates to access international job opportunities;

EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Through Foreign Policy coordination, strengthen mechanisms for provision of consular services by Partner States on behalf of each other to the Diaspora
- ii. Establish a Comprehensive Regional Diaspora Database;
- iii. Encourage Partner States to establish coordination mechanisms with countries of destination to facilitate portability of Diaspora social security benefits
- iv. Develop a regional mechanism for addressing distress cases and emergency situations among the diaspora.
- viii. Establish at regional level a Technical Working Group to monitor and address Diaspora affairs; and
- ix. Establish an East African Legislative Assembly Committee to address Diaspora matters; and
- x. Consider the extension of jurisdiction of the East African Court of Justice to include handling East African Migrant Workers labour and legal disputes

## 5.2 Strengthening Remittance Systems to Facilitate Cost Effective Transfers

The East African Diaspora presents a huge potential for direct investments and social support to many families and communities. All EAC Partner States face the challenge of facilitating and leveraging remittances due to inadequate incentive frameworks at national level coupled with the high cost of remittance transfer charges which currently average at 6-7.5% in the region.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will work together to put in place a regional digital cross border currency settlement system and put in place an enabling environment to enable diaspora to invest at national and regional levels and reduce the high cost of remittances

**Objective:** to strengthen the money transfer systems, lower the cost of transfer of remittances to the SDG recommended 3% and enhance cross border investments and knowledge transfers

### Policy Actions

Partner States shall:

- i. Facilitate lowering the cost of sending remittances from the diaspora, with a view to maximizing the benefits of remittances
- ii. Provide information to members of the diaspora on mechanisms, policies and programmes pertaining to the various available remittance methods that have been put in place to ensure, secure and cost-effective remittance channels;
- iii. Continue to create the necessary monetary policies that will facilitate the transfer of resources from the Diaspora for national development;
- iv. develop systems to collate, monitor and assess the formal and informal inflow of social and financial remittances; and.
- v. Improve the efficiency, affordability, and accessibility of remittance services.
- vi. Expand mobile money and digital transfer systems to reduce transaction costs.

- vii. Encourage the use of remittances for development projects through structured investment programs.

EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. In collaboration with Partner States Private Sector actors and the EAC Payment systems project, develop and put in place a regional digital cross border currency settlement system in an effort to lower the costs of remittance transfers.
- ii. Negotiate as a block with other major destination countries a low-cost remittance transfer system.

### **5.3 Institutional Strengthening to Facilitate Effective Administration of the East African Diaspora**

A very strong incentive for diaspora contributions to home and regional development is the simplification of bureaucratic procedures such as being able to register or update papers online and access to a one-stop-shop for investment or business matters and any other. Reduction in the fragmentation of diaspora handling at national level will greatly encourage progressive and unified engagements.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will work towards full implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination in regard to Partner States providing consular services on behalf of each other and to avail trade and investment information to diaspora umbrella associations

**Objective:** To create effective institutions with adequate capacity to effectively unite and engage EAC Diaspora.

Partner States shall:

- i. Develop and implement national diaspora policies/strategies aligned with the regional framework.
- ii. Establish a Diaspora administrative structure within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate and mainstream Diaspora issues to ensure that the objective of the Diaspora contributing to national and regional development is achieved;
- iii. Establish Focal Points in the **relevant** Government Ministries, Institutions competent Authorities and in Missions Abroad,
- iv. Encourage partnerships, linkages and networks that will help realize the objectives of mainstreaming Diaspora issues in the national development agenda; and.
- v. Enhance coordination between Diaspora Associations in different geographical locations to establish wider networks, partnerships and linkages that will help realize the objectives of mainstreaming Diaspora issues.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. establish a Regional Diaspora Desk within the International Relations Department to oversee, coordinate and mainstream Diaspora issues into regional development;
- ii. ensure the provisions of the Protocol on Foreign Policy coordination in regard to Partner States providing consular services on behalf of each other become effective; and
- iii. Through the established regional communication channels, the EAC will create awareness on the availability of such services and develop the capacity in assisting the Diaspora to utilize investment opportunities within the region;

#### **5.4 Promote Trade and Investments and EAC as Single Investment Destination**

Through the establishment of the EAC Customs Union and the EAC Common market, the EAC Partner States have continued to facilitate Intra EAC trade within the region. The EAC is also a member of the Tripartite (EAC/COMESA/SADC) Free Trade area and the African Continent Free Trade Area (ACFTA). The EAC has further engaged and signed trade agreements with other Regional and International Economic Communities to open up East Africa for continental and global trade and investments.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC shall actively promote and position the region as a single, competitive, and attractive investment and trade destination by harnessing the collective potential of its Partner States. Building on the foundations of the EAC Customs Union, the Common Market Protocol, and participation in broader continental frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (EAC-COMESA-SADC), the EAC shall create an enabling environment that leverages diaspora capital, trade linkages, and entrepreneurship. The policy shall prioritize harmonization of investment frameworks, reduce trade barriers, enhance market access, and facilitate diaspora-led investments in strategic sectors, thus reinforcing East Africa's integration into regional and global value chains.

**Objective:** To promote and facilitate Diaspora to participate in trade and investments within the region and beyond.

#### **Policy Actions**

Partner States shall

- a) Establish/strengthen existing structures to provide real time information to the diaspora on available trade and investment opportunities and incentives at national and within the EAC region in order to encourage their participation;
- b) provide an enabling environment for Diaspora participation in trade and investment
- c) Encourage financial institutions to protect and regulate Diaspora financial inflows and outflows for cost effectiveness;
- d) Facilitate the establishment of diaspora investment funds in order to enhance the capacity of the diaspora to invest

- e) Encourage the diaspora to help promote Partner States trade and investment opportunities abroad;
- f) Encourage savings from the diaspora, through participation in social security, real estate and in money market funds,
- g) Create diaspora investment agencies or one-stop centers to facilitate investments in key sectors.
- h) Strengthen remittance channels by promoting financial products tailored to diaspora needs (e.g., diaspora bonds).

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Utilize the Diaspora Umbrella Associations Networks for market penetration and expansion of East African Products in host countries;
- ii. Promote through the East African private sector and Chamber of Commerce the EAC Motto of Buy East African, Build East Africa (BEA - BEA)
- iii. Continuously market East Africa as a single trade and investment destination
- iv. Convene Bi-annual East African Diaspora Trade and Investment Forums

### 5.5 Promote Tourism, Culture & Arts

The EAC Vision 2050 emphasizes the following specific areas of investment to promote East African Tourism, Culture and the Arts and to support the campaign to market EAC as a single investment/ Tourism destination: (i) aggressive marketing in key source markets focusing on increasing visibility; ii) product development and diversification; (iii) establishing centers of excellence in tourism and hospitality training in partnership with the private sector; and (iv) investing in tourism support infrastructures such ICTs, Accommodation and Transport.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC Treaty envisages the promotion of the region as a single tourism destination in line with implementation of the EAC single visa scheme. The East Africa Tourism Platform launched in Kigali in July 2012 aims to reduce obstacles to intra and inter-regional tourism, promote a regional tourism marketing approach and encourage continued human resource development and skills transfer. It also aims at promoting harmonized standards and codes of conduct for tourism facilities and services. Destination East Africa is an EAC initiative that seeks to encourage intra-regional tourism by providing incentives for East Africans, such as applying uniform rates for nationals of EAC Partner States in accessing tourism facilities and cultural monuments within the region.

**Objective:** To promote Tourism, Culture and the Arts of the Partner States and the EAC Region as a single investment area/destination

### Policy Actions

Partner States shall:

- i. Support the programmes and activities aimed at promoting tourism, art and culture;

- ii. Through Missions abroad, hold joint cultural festivals and events in destination countries that would enable the EAC Diaspora to celebrate their diverse cultural heritage;
- iii. Encourage and empower with the relevant information the EAC Diaspora population interested to invest in the Tourism, Culture and Arts sectors
- iv. In collaboration with the established network of the Partner States Tourism Boards, involve the Diaspora Associations to participate in the promotion of their countries and the region;
- v. Provide information on the web portal relating to tourism, arts and culture
- vi. Facilitate the establishment of Diaspora Associations and Regional Umbrella Associations
- vii. Establish mechanisms for acknowledging and rewarding Diaspora investments/ Initiatives
- viii. Through the Investment and Tourism Boards, promote East Africa as a single investment/tourism destination
- ix. Appoint exemplary Diaspora Members as “East African” brand ambassadors
- x. Support programs that foster identity preservation among second-generation diaspora members.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. provide in collaboration with the Tourism Boards and Culture Ministries of the Partner States promotional materials to facilitate promotion of EAC as a single Tourism/Investment destination in host countries
- ii. Involve selected representatives of Diaspora Associations in the planning and execution of the Bi-annual Jumuiya ya Africa Mashariki Culture and Arts Festival (JAMAFEST)
- iii. Mobilize the required resources for the execution of planned regional activities in regard to promotion of Tourism, Arts and Culture
- iv. Establish a framework for building partnerships between the Diaspora Regional Associations and the EAC Organs and Institutions

### **5.6 Facilitate Coordination & Portability of Social Security Benefits**

Social protection and the portability of the social security contributions and benefits of migrant workers are an integral part of the African Union labour migration agenda, especially the Social Policy Framework (2006). The EAC Partner States nationals and their families who move in accordance with Article 10 and Article 13 of the EAC Common Market Protocol are entitled to join the social security schemes of host countries and must abide by the laws of the host country. Partner States are to make the necessary amendments to their national policies, laws and systems on social security to enable self-employed migrant workers who are citizens of other Partner States to benefit from social security and to transfer them once their employment contracts have ended. Article 39(1) of the EAC CMP, provides for Partner States to coordinate and harmonize their social policies to promote and protect decent work and improve living conditions of their citizens and advocates for implementation of programmes that expand and improve their social protection. Currently Diaspora returnees are not receiving social security benefits from their former host countries especially from the Americas, Europe, Australia and other African Countries outside the EAC

**Policy Statement:** The access and portability of earned rights on social security benefits across countries is an increasing concern for East Africans in the Diaspora as well as policy makers. Cognisant of this fact, the EAC and Partner States governments will progressively endeavour to establish coordination mechanisms and enhance access to and portability of social security benefits through the following arrangements:

Partner States shall:

- ix. promote the protection and empowerment of migrant workers;
- x. maximize the benefits of labour migration for development in the EAC by strengthening social security frameworks to ensure diaspora access to healthcare, pension schemes, and insurance.
- xi. Establish mechanisms for the transfer and repatriation of terminal, pension and social security benefits for retired returnees through conclusion of Bilateral/Multilateral social security agreements with host countries; and
- xii. Ensure that the Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements include reconciliation of transfer rules and rates, assessment rules, legislation and reciprocity of policies and guidelines

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Spearhead and coordinate Partner States to sign multilateral Labour and Social Security Agreements with host states and regions where there is a huge representation of East African Diaspora such as the Gulf Cooperation Countries
- ii. develop a model Bilateral Social Security Agreement based on best practices for Partner States to reference on while negotiating with third parties

### **5.7 Foster Knowledge and Skills Transfer**

Fostering knowledge and skills transfer is essential for harnessing the potential of the EAC diaspora to contribute meaningfully to the region's development. The EAC recognizes that its diaspora possesses vast expertise, innovation, and professional experience accumulated from global exposure. To leverage this, Partner States are encouraged to create structured platforms that facilitate the transfer of skills in sectors such as health, education, ICT, agriculture, and entrepreneurship.

Several EAC legal and policy frameworks support this objective. The EAC Common Market Protocol (Articles 7, 13, and 14) promotes the free movement of persons, workers, and services as key enablers for skills mobility and exchange. The EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination also encourages active participation of the diaspora in the region's development. Additionally, education and labour policies within the region are increasingly aligned to recognize diaspora qualifications and promote regional academic and professional mobility. By strengthening institutional linkages, academic collaborations, and return programs, the EAC can transform its diaspora into a powerful engine for innovation, capacity building, and regional competitiveness.

**Policy Statement;** The EAC commits to create an enabling environment for knowledge, innovation and skills transfer and to promote the permanent, temporary and virtual return of skilled East Africans from the Diaspora;

**Objective:** to facilitate knowledge, innovation and skills transfer in the region

Partner States shall:

- i. Create a conducive environment for temporary and permanent transfer of critical skills and expertise of East Africans in Diaspora;
- ii. Implement structured return and reintegration programs to attract highly skilled diaspora members.
- iii. Match the Diaspora skills to national and regional needs;
- iv. Promote mentorship, research collaboration, and digital platforms for knowledge exchange; and
- v. Promote collaboration between the Diaspora, with national and EAC regional institutions to strengthen partnerships for experience, knowledge and skills transfer

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Establish a database of available skills in the Diaspora and use it for, among other things, the placement of East Africans in International Organizations;
- ii. Establish a framework for recognition of negotiated Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) to facilitate professional mobility within and outside the EAC
- iii. Through negotiated MOUs encourage collaborative research between the East African Specialized Institutions and the Professional Diaspora Think Tanks/ Associations;
- iv. promote the transfer of knowledge, innovation & technology by leveraging on the established Regional Networks and EAC Specialized Institutions;
- v. Develop a framework for engagement with the Diaspora on regional Intellectual projects and programmes

### **5.8 Return and Reintegration Programmes for Returnees**

The Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (MPFA) 2018 – 2030, recognises the need to establish best practices, standards, and procedures for return and re-admission, as well as sustainable re-integration for migrants and returnees in Africa. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through target 10.7 highlights the importance of facilitating voluntary returns as an essential part of comprehensive migration management in assisting returning migrants and UN Member States to address challenges associated with return migration and re-inclusion. The Global Compact for Migration (GCM), objective 21, provides a blueprint for how countries can effectively manage migration by calling on governments to cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and re-admission, as well as sustainable re-integration.

Despite the existence of these global and continental migration frameworks and their explicit reference to the subject, there remains an evident gap in the legal and policy frameworks that governs the conduct of return and reintegration at the regional and national levels in the EAC region. This has resulted in among others, the application

of varying standards, lack of accountability, and limited cooperation amongst Partner States, with significant consequences for migrants and returnees.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC Partner States are committed to address the challenge of returned migrants and Diaspora members and to reintegrate them as productive members of the society. Thus, the Partner States will endeavour to develop return and reintegration programmes at national level and further adopt at regional level, an EAC Framework on Return and Reintegration (RFRR) for migrant workers to improve the management of migration in a rights-based manner and ensure safe, orderly, and humane return as well as sustainable reintegration of returning migrants.

**Objective:** To improve the management of migration in a rights-based manner and ensure safe, orderly, and humane return of diaspora

### **Policy Actions**

Partner States Shall:

- i. Develop National Return and Reintegration Policies through Establishing comprehensive legal and policy frameworks for returnees, aligned with international and continental instruments (e.g., GCM, MPFA, SDGs), and Integrate return and reintegration into national migration and diaspora strategies.
- ii. Establish Returnee Support Systems by setting up dedicated reintegration units or desks within Ministries responsible for diaspora affairs or migration.
- iii. Integrate diaspora returnees' programmes in national development strategies aimed at providing access to psycho-social support, housing, healthcare, and employment services to returnees.
- iv. Promote voluntary return as the preferred option and create mechanisms to ensure returns are safe and dignified, while cooperating with host countries and international organizations to support voluntary return logistics, and
- v. Develop systems to recognize skills, certifications, and qualifications acquired abroad for better re-employment.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Adopt a Regional Framework on Return and Reintegration (RFRR) aimed at Harmonizing approaches across Partner States through a binding or guiding EAC Framework that sets minimum standards for return and reintegration processes.
- ii. Strengthen Regional Coordination and Data Sharing platform that will establish a centralized regional returnee information system to monitor flows, trends, and reintegration outcomes.
- iii. Facilitate cross-border cooperation and protocols for referral of returnees.
- iv. Support Partner States with training, best practices, and funding mechanisms to operationalize national return and reintegration programmes.
- v. Collaborate with the African Union, IOM, UN agencies, and diaspora associations to leverage resources and expertise for sustainable reintegration.

### **5.9 Establish a Regional Online Diaspora Data Base**

There is currently no database on the quantum and spatial distribution of the East African Diaspora. There is need to promote, on a self reporting basis, the building of a skills data bank indicating how best to tap into the skills and

to set up effective dissemination platforms for information, skills and knowledge transfer.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC and Partner States commit to establishing a comprehensive, secure, and regularly updated regional online diaspora database to enhance engagement, support evidence-based policymaking, and facilitate skills mapping, knowledge transfer, and investment mobilization.

Partner States shall;

- i. Conduct regular diaspora mappings and surveys to assess skills, demographics, and potential contributions.
- ii. Develop and maintain national diaspora databases linked to the regional system.
- iii. Promote self-registration and voluntary profiling of diaspora members through embassies and digital platforms.
- iv. Collect and verify data on skills, qualifications, professional experience, and sectoral interests.
- v. Develop databases for tracking remittance flows, diaspora investments, and policy impact.
- vi. Ensure data protection and privacy in compliance with national laws.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall:

- i. Design and operationalize a centralized regional diaspora data platform accessible to all Partner States.
- ii. Provide technical guidance, standards, and protocols for data collection and integration.
- iii. Facilitate regional campaigns to encourage diaspora self-registration and participation.
- iv. Use the database for strategic planning, diaspora engagement programmes, and matchmaking for skills transfer and investment opportunities.

### **5.10 Recognize and Reward Diaspora Participation in the EAC**

Some Partner States of the EAC like the Republic of Rwanda and Kenya have already initiated national programmes aimed at recognizing and rewarding members of the Diaspora Community who have participated in contributing to the socio-economic development of the country in sectors such as investments, trade, real estate, tourism, philanthropy etc. This however needs to be a standard practice by all Partner States and the EAC as a bloc

**Policy Statement:** The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will establish a recognize and reward system of East African Diasporas who have contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of the region through trade and investments, health, philanthropy, and enhancing the visibility of the region as a single tourist destination among other crucial

areas. The event will be marked and celebrated at the regional level during the Summit of the Heads of States meetings.

**Objective:** To recognize and reward the EAC Diaspora who have contributed to the socio-economic development of the region.

**Policy Actions:**

Partner States Shall;

- i. Develop National Recognition Frameworks for rewarding diaspora members contributing to socio-economic development.
- ii. Document and profile diaspora contributions in sectors such as health, education, investment, tourism, philanthropy, and innovation.
- iii. Nominate outstanding diaspora individuals or organizations annually for national and regional recognition.
- iv. Collaborate with diaspora associations and embassies to identify and validate eligible contributors.
- v. Encourage public-private partnerships in organizing diaspora appreciation Forums and Events.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall;

- i. Establish a Regional Recognition and Awards Scheme for outstanding diaspora contributions across the Partner States.
- ii. Host an Annual/Biannual EAC Diaspora Recognition Ceremony during the EAC Heads of State Summit or during a dedicated EAC Diaspora Day.
- iii. Develop unified criteria and guidelines for selection, evaluation, and awarding of diaspora individuals/entities.
- iv. Promote the visibility of diaspora achievements through EAC media platforms, diplomatic missions, and the regional diaspora database.
- v. Partner with the private sector and development partners to sponsor and support diaspora award programmes.

### **5.11 Promote and recognize Diaspora Philanthropy support to EAC**

Diaspora philanthropy plays a significant role in supporting social and economic development across the East African Community (EAC). Remittances from the diaspora often go beyond personal and household needs, supporting health clinics, schools, scholarships, community infrastructure, emergency relief, and faith-based initiatives. These philanthropic contributions complement government programs and foster inclusive development, especially in underserved and rural communities.

Diaspora-led philanthropic initiatives also build people-to-people solidarity, cultural exchange, and strengthen civic ties between host countries and EAC Partner States. Additionally, they serve as entry points for broader investment and knowledge transfer. The African Union Migration Policy Framework (2018–2030) recognizes diaspora contributions to development, including philanthropy, The Global Compact for Migration (GCM), Objective 19, encourages states to create enabling environments for diaspora contributions, including philanthropic support while National diaspora policies of countries like Kenya and Rwanda include provisions to support and recognize philanthropic initiatives by diaspora communities.

**Policy Statement:** The EAC and its Partner States commit to promoting, facilitating, and recognizing diaspora philanthropy as a vital contribution to regional integration, community development, and social cohesion. The EAC shall create a conducive environment and institutional framework that encourages diaspora-led philanthropic initiatives and aligns them with national and regional development goals

**Policy Actions:**

Partner States Shall;

- i. Establish national mechanisms to support, monitor, and coordinate diaspora philanthropic activities.
- ii. Provide tax incentives and streamlined registration processes for diaspora-funded charitable organizations and initiatives.
- iii. Document and publish data and success stories of diaspora philanthropy to inspire broader engagement.
- iv. Create platforms for matching diaspora philanthropic efforts with local community needs and national development priorities.
- v. Integrate diaspora philanthropy into national development plans, especially in the health, education, and social welfare sectors.

The EAC Organs and Institutions shall;

- i. Develop a regional framework to coordinate, promote, and monitor diaspora philanthropy across Partner States.
- ii. Establish a recognition platform for outstanding diaspora philanthropic initiatives during the EAC Diaspora Engagement Events.
- iii. Collaborate with Partner States, development partners, and civil society to enhance the impact and accountability of diaspora philanthropy.
- iv. Maintain a regional database of diaspora philanthropic organizations and their impact across the region.
- v. Encourage partnerships between diaspora organizations and EAC institutions to advance community development and humanitarian work.

## 6.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

This chapter outlines the comprehensive and practical implementation framework for the EAC Diaspora Policy. This framework defines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the EAC region to ensure effective coordination, implementation, and impact of diaspora engagement efforts. Implementation of this policy will require a whole of government and a whole of society approach. The EAC Secretariat will play the central role in coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the EAC Diaspora Policy at the regional level. It will provide strategic leadership and ensure harmonization of diaspora related initiatives across Partner States. The Secretariat will develop regional guidelines, facilitate capacity building, and create a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Furthermore, the Secretariat will establish a dedicated EAC Diaspora Coordination Desk under the International Relations Department to liaise with national focal points, develop and manage a regional diaspora data hub, and host a digital portal to enhance communication with diaspora communities. It will also work with development partners and international organizations to mobilize technical and financial resources.

The Partner States shall be responsible for domesticating the EAC Diaspora Policy by aligning their national diaspora frameworks to the regional guidelines. Governments will designate national focal institutions or units/ state departments within their respective ministries, typically the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to oversee diaspora affairs. These national units will coordinate diaspora engagement strategies, organize national-level diaspora events, and implement country; specific initiatives aimed at integrating diaspora into national development processes. Partner States will also ensure that laws and policies are diaspora friendly, including provisions for dual citizenship, property ownership, and political participation.

### 6.1 Implementation-Roles and Responsibilities

#### The EAC Shall:

- i. coordinate and guide the overall implementation of the Policy and its Action
- ii. Support/ encourage Partner States to develop national Diaspora Engagement policies aligned to the regional policy
- iii. Involve a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, parliaments, civil society, the private sector and Diaspora associations in the process to ensure that the policies and strategies are inclusive and address the needs of the Diaspora.
- iv. Organize workshops and awareness sessions for lawmakers, legal experts, and policymakers, Diaspora Communities on the diaspora engagement policy
- v. Facilitate Partner States to benchmark best practices in other countries on diaspora engagement to develop/improve their policy intentions
- vi. Establish a Regional Technical Working Committee for the Implementation of this policy;
- vii. report on the implementation progress of the Policy to the relevant policy organs of the Community;
- viii. establish a regional database on Diaspora Umbrella Associations
- ix. spearhead strategies for mobilization of technical and financial resources;
- x. identify and spearhead regional research in identified critical areas

## **Duties of Partner States**

The Partner States as major stakeholders in the implementation of this policy shall:

- i. protect the rights and safeguard the welfare and interests of the Diaspora as enshrined in their national policies/strategies and complimented by the Regional Policy;
- ii. conduct a comprehensive review of existing national laws strategies and policies related to Diaspora engagement in-order to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas for improvement in order to align the provisions with the regional policy framework.
- iii. develop their respective national Diaspora Engagement policies and Action plans based the regional policy as a reference or benchmark;
- iv. Strengthen their Diaspora institutional and coordination mechanisms;
- v. develop systems for sharing diaspora data.
- vi. undertake steps, in accordance with their constitutional processes, (where necessary) to adopt such legislative or other measures to give effect to the provisions of this Policy;
- vii. put in place the necessary infrastructure to support development of human, financial, technical resource, and skills necessary to implement this, Policy.

## **Diaspora Communities and Umbrella Organizations**

Diaspora associations and umbrella organizations will be actively involved in the policy's implementation by serving as grassroots mobilizers and development partners.

They shall:

- i. Disseminate the contents of the policy to their membership and promote the interests of the EAC in their host countries;
- ii. engage in advocacy, cultural promotion, philanthropy and investment mobilization;
- iii. provide feedback to their respective Partner States and to the EAC
- iv. Support new members in the Diaspora and act as a bridge for knowledge and resource transfer;
- v. Appoint and represent their Associations interests in the established regional Committees and Networks;
- vi. Participate in the regional Recognize and Reward Biannual Diaspora Award ceremonies and the Diaspora Trade and Investment Forums

## **Local Governments and Decentralized Authorities**

Local governments have the advantage of being directly involved in grassroots development, making them ideal partners in implementing community-level diaspora initiatives.

They shall:

- i. mobilize diaspora hometown associations, match diaspora investments to local needs, and ensure that subnational development planning integrates diaspora contributions.
- ii. Act as coordinators of diaspora philanthropy and humanitarian aid;

- iii. facilitate town twinning initiatives with diaspora led networks abroad and.
- iv. Recognize and reward outstanding diaspora members for their contributions

### **Role of Employers' and Workers' Organizations**

The regional umbrella employers' and workers' organizations shall: -

- i. cooperate with Partner States' in monitoring the achievement and dissemination of the objectives of the policy;
- ii. undertake lobbying, advocacy and awareness creation on the implementation of the Policy;
- iii. promote social dialogue and mobilize their membership for effective implementation of the Policy; and
- iv. Participate in the development of Bilateral and Multilateral Labour Migration Agreements advocating for conducive working environment and labour standards for migrant workers

### **Academia and Research Institutions**

Research institutions and universities will play a crucial role in generating evidence for policy implementation.

They shall:

- i. undertake diaspora mapping, impact assessments, and monitoring of diaspora contributions across sectors.
- ii. collaborate in designing diaspora targeted educational programs, mentorship schemes, and knowledge transfer platforms.
- iii. participate in monitoring the implementation of the Policy in their area of jurisdiction;
- iv. provide avenues for mentoring and capacity building of the youth interested in engaging in labour migration activities;

### **Private Sector Actors**

Private Sector Actors, particularly in the financial, telecom, real estate, and logistics sectors, will be key drivers of diaspora engagement.

They will:

- i. will develop innovative diaspora banking products, such as diaspora mortgages, money market funds, savings accounts, and insurance schemes.
- ii. Mobile network operators will enable low-cost remittance services.
- iii. partner with governments in diaspora led investment ventures and Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) initiatives at national and regional levels, as well as sponsor diaspora forums and trade fairs.
- iv. participate in the implementation of the Policy through employment creation;

- v. undertake lobbying and advocacy activities with a view to influence the labour migration agenda.

### **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) & Faith Based Organizations**

Civil society organizations will complement Partner States engagement efforts through advocacy, service delivery, and community mobilization.

NGOs will

- i. help reach marginalized, undocumented diaspora groups,
- ii. provide reintegration support for returnees, and monitor the human rights of migrant populations.
- iii. partner with diaspora associations to implement community development projects and awareness campaigns.

### **Regional and International Partners**

Regional bodies such as the African Union and Development Partners UN specialized Organizations such as IOM, ILO, UNDP, and the African Development Bank and others will:

- i. provide technical and financial assistance
- ii. support pilot initiatives, training programs, regional platforms and home to home cooperation efforts that enhance diaspora engagement across the EAC.

### **6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism**

Monitoring and evaluation will be led by the EAC Secretariat, working closely with national diaspora focal points, academia, and CSOs. A robust M&E framework will be developed and shall include baseline indicators, annual reporting mechanisms, and regional evaluation cycles.

Periodic impact assessments and diaspora satisfaction surveys shall be conducted to track policy outcomes and inform continuous improvement. The M&E framework will be aligned with the EAC Vision 2050, AU Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **6.3 Policy Review**

The EAC Diaspora Engagement Policy will undergo a comprehensive review every ten years to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of the East African diaspora. This review process will be led by the EAC Secretariat in close collaboration with Partner States, and will include a mid-term evaluation at the 5-year mark to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. Should urgent or unforeseen changes in the global or regional diaspora environment arise, an extraordinary review may be initiated with approval from the EAC Council of Ministers.

### **6.4 POLICY COORDINATION**

The coordination of the EAC Diaspora Policy shall follow a top-down yet cooperative model, led by the EAC Secretariat and implemented through Partner States. In accordance with the EAC's operational norms, coordination will be

undertaken strictly through the Partner States who, in turn, will domesticate the policy, designate national focal points, and engage national actors as appropriate.

The EAC Secretariat,

working in collaboration with its Sectoral Councils and Technical Committees, will be responsible for:

- i. Providing overall policy direction and coordination for diaspora affairs at the regional level.
- ii. Facilitating the adoption of the EAC Diaspora Policy and ensuring its integration into broader EAC frameworks.
- iii. Supporting Partner States with technical assistance, knowledge exchange platforms, and harmonized data frameworks.
- iv. Establishing regional dialogue mechanisms and facilitating peer learning through sectoral committees.
- v. Monitoring and reporting progress of policy implementation through formal mechanisms such as the Council of Ministers and the EAC Summit.

The Partner States will take full responsibility for:

- i. Localizing and integrating the regional diaspora policy into national legal, institutional, and strategic frameworks.
- ii. Designating national focal points or lead ministries/agencies for diaspora engagement.
- iii. Coordinating with their own relevant institutions (e.g., immigration, investment authorities, central banks, social security bodies, academia, private sector) to implement various components of the policy.
- iv. Developing national implementation plans and aligning them with regional priorities and reporting mechanisms.
- v. Participating actively in regional coordination platforms convened by the EAC Secretariat and sharing best practices, data, and policy feedback.

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## Appendix 1. Summary Coordination Framework

<b>Action Areas</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Roles in Coordination</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>Establish a Harmonized Regional Framework for Diaspora Engagement</b>	EAC Secretariat	Provide regional policy direction, adopt the Diaspora Policy through sectoral councils, support regional integration of diaspora frameworks.	Short Term	A unified policy framework adopted by all Partner States.
	Partner States	Localize the policy, develop national implementation plans, designate lead institutions for diaspora engagement.	Short to Medium Term	National diaspora policies aligned with EAC priorities.
<b>Develop Comprehensive Diaspora Databases and Mapping</b>	EAC Secretariat	Develop harmonized regional data templates, facilitate knowledge exchange and peer learning.	Short Term	Comparable diaspora statistics and shared data systems.
	Partner States	Conduct national diaspora mapping, share data with EAC, and use findings to inform domestic planning.	Short to Medium Term	Up-to-date and accurate diaspora profiles informing interventions.
<b>Facilitate Free Movement and Mobility of Diaspora within the Region</b>	EAC Secretariat	Develop regional migration frameworks and guidelines to promote ease of movement and dual citizenship among diaspora.	Medium Term	Enhanced mobility and regional integration.
	Partner States	Harmonize national immigration laws and practices, facilitate issuance of IDs, passports, and dual nationality.	Medium Term	Improved diaspora reintegration and access to services.
<b>Promote Diaspora Investment and Access to Financial Services</b>	EAC Secretariat	Coordinate regional investment promotion campaigns and financial inclusion strategies targeting diaspora.	Medium Term	Regional-level incentives for diaspora investors.
	Partner States	Develop and implement national diaspora investment incentives and remittance frameworks.	Medium to Long Term	Increased diaspora investment in local development.
<b>Strengthen</b>	EAC	Facilitate inter-state recognition of	Medium to	Regional knowledge exchange and

<b>Human Capital Transfer and Skills Mobility</b>	Secretariat	qualifications and skills, coordinate regional capacity-building programs with diaspora professionals.	Long Term	professional mobility enhanced.
	Partner States	Recognize foreign-acquired qualifications, partner with academia and diaspora experts to enhance skills transfer.	Long Term	Boosted national innovation and sectoral capacity.
<b>Enhance Social Security and Portability of Benefits</b>	EAC Secretariat	Develop model agreements for social protection portability, facilitate regional discussions on social security harmonization.	Long Term	Regional frameworks guiding social protection portability.
	Partner States	Engage national social security institutions to implement portability schemes and extend coverage to diaspora populations.	Long Term	Improved diaspora social welfare and reintegration.
<b>Foster Cultural and Regional Identity among the Diaspora</b>	EAC Secretariat	Promote EAC cultural diplomacy and organize regional diaspora events.	Short Term	A stronger sense of EAC identity among diaspora communities.
	Partner States	Celebrate cultural days, promote language and heritage in diaspora communities, and engage cultural attachés abroad.	Short to Medium Term	Increased cultural engagement and national pride among diaspora.
<b>Strengthen Diaspora Engagement in Philanthropy</b>	EAC Secretariat	promote regional philanthropic campaigns and platforms.	Short Term	Increased diaspora-driven development support and strengthened community impact initiatives.
	Partner States	Coordinate and channel diaspora giving to community-driven projects.	Short to Medium Term	
<b>Promote Diaspora Engagement in Tourism, Sports &amp; Arts</b>	EAC Secretariat	EAC facilitates regional campaigns and recognition events	Short Term	Increased visibility and participation of diaspora in regional tourism, Arts and Sports promotions
	Partner States	Integrate diaspora in national tourism and arts strategies	Short to Medium Term	
<b>Promote Public-Private Partnership in</b>	EAC Secretariat	Encourages Diaspora led innovation and private sector participation regionally	Short Term	Multi-sector collaboration resulting in efficient diaspora service delivery and entrepreneurship

<b><i>Diaspora Engagement</i></b>	Partner States	Mobilize national NGOs and businesses to co-create diaspora solutions.	Short to Medium Term	
<b><i>Establish Regional Mechanisms for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Review</i></b>	EAC Secretariat	Develop regional M&E framework, coordinate reviews, compile reports, and present them to EAC Sectoral Councils and Summit.	Every 5 Years	A data-driven, regionally coordinated diaspora policy review mechanism.
	Partner States	Track and report on policy progress, share findings and lessons learned with the EAC Secretariat.	Every 5 Years	National feedback informs regional reviews and continuous policy improvement.

## Appendix 2.

## Draft EAC Diaspora Policy Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA 1	PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND SAFEGUARD THE WELFARE AND INTERESTS OF THE DIASPORA				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC Partner States are committed to protect the rights and safeguarding the welfare and interests of the Diaspora by endorsing their rights as nationals and by implementing the non-discrimination provisions of the EAC Common Market protocol and the EAC Labour Migration Policy. The further commit to negotiate bilateral/ multilateral labour agreements with destination countries and to provide legal and consular services on behalf of their diaspora				
STRATEGIC INTERVENTION	INDICATORS	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	ESTIMATED COST (USD)	PERIOD
Enhance the capacity of Missions Abroad to provide Consular and Legal Services.	Missions abroad strengthened with technical and financial resources; Labour attachés deployed.	Strong and effective Missions abroad capable of addressing Diaspora Affairs.	Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs; Diaspora Affairs Desks; Ministries of Labour and Social Protection.	20,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Establish a Diaspora Desk in the EAC Secretariat to handle Diaspora matters	Diaspora Desk established under the International Relations Department and equipped with necessary resources	Diaspora affairs prioritized and integrated into the EAC Integration Agenda	EAC Council/EAC Secretariat, Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs; Diaspora Affairs Departments/Desks;	500,000	Short to Medium Term
Establish a Regional Technical Working Group to monitor and address Diaspora Affairs.	Number of Bilateral/Multilateral Labour Agreements concluded.	More consistent implementation of state-led Diaspora Programs.	EAC Council of Ministers; Partner States' Ministries responsible for Labour, Foreign Affairs and EAC Affairs.	2,000,000	Medium Term
Establish an Oversight Committee under the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).	Technical Working Group in place; Number of oversight missions undertaken.	Improved Diaspora Engagement and additional national frameworks developed.	Partner States respective MDAs; EALA.	1,500,000	Short to Medium Term
Integrate best practices into Diaspora engagement programming.	Number of best practices mainstreamed into national strategies.	More effective diaspora engagement strategies adopted.	Partner States respective MDAs; EAC Secretariat.	800,000	Medium Term
Facilitate regional dialogues with policymakers, social partners and Diaspora Associations.	Number of stakeholder consultations and policy dialogues held.	Inclusive and participatory policymaking process.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	1,200,000	Short to Medium Term

<b>PRIORITY AREA 2</b>	<b>Strengthening Remittance Systems to Facilitate Cost Effective Transfers</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will work together to put in place a regional digital cross border currency settlement system and an enabling environment to enable diaspora to invest at national and regional levels and to reduce the high cost of remittances				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Expand mobile money and digital transfer systems to the diaspora.	Number of Mobile Money and Digital Transfer Systems expanded and in use.	Reduced transaction costs; improved access to remittance channels.	Partner States; Private Sector Stakeholders.	20,000,000	2026-2030
Establish partnerships with financial institutions for diaspora financial services.	Number of diaspora-focused financial products and services introduced.	Increased diaspora savings, investments, and financial inclusion.	Partner States; Banks and Financial Institutions.	10,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Promote use of fintech innovations to ease remittance transfers.	Number of fintech platforms supported for diaspora transfers.	Safer, faster, and cheaper remittance options.	EAC Secretariat; Fintech Industry Players.	5,000,000	Short Term
Develop a regional digital cross border currency settlement system in an effort to lower the costs of remittance transfers.	Regional Cross border currency settlement in place	Efficient and cost-effective currency settlement in place	EAC, Banks and Financial Institutions and Fintech Industry Players.		Long term
<b>PRIORITY AREA 3</b>	<b>Institutional Strengthening to Facilitate Effective Administration of the East African Diaspora</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will work towards full implementation of the provisions of the Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination in regard to Partner States providing consular services on behalf of each other and to avail trade and investment information to diaspora umbrella associations				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Establish and strengthen Diaspora Units in relevant Ministries.	Number of Diaspora Units established and fully operational.	Institutionalized diaspora affairs coordination.	Partner States' Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs and Labour.	10,000,000	Short Term
Develop and implement training programmes for diaspora officers.	Number of officers trained on diaspora affairs.	Improved service delivery to the diaspora.	Partner States; EAC Secretariat.	2,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Promote exchange programs for best practices on diaspora engagement.	Number of exchanges and best practices integrated into policies.	Enhanced capacity and regional harmonization.	Partner States; EAC Secretariat.	1,500,000	Medium Term

<b>PRIORITY AREA 4</b>	<b>Promote Trade and Investments, Single Investment Destination</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC shall actively promote and position the region as a single, competitive, and attractive investment and trade destination by harnessing the collective potential of its Partner States. Building on the foundations of the EAC Customs Union, the Common Market Protocol, and participation in broader continental frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (EAC-COMESA-SADC), the EAC shall create an enabling environment that leverages diaspora capital, trade linkages, and entrepreneurship. The policy shall prioritize harmonization of investment frameworks, reduce trade barriers, enhance market access, and facilitate diaspora-led investments in strategic sectors, thus reinforcing East Africa's integration into regional and global value chains				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Develop regional investment platforms targeting diaspora investors.	Number of regional diaspora investment platforms operational.	Increased diaspora investments across EAC Partner States.	EAC Secretariat; Investment Promotion Agencies.	15,000,000	Medium Term
Facilitate diaspora-focused trade missions and expos.	Number of trade missions and expos conducted with diaspora participation.	Expanded trade links and market access by diaspora businesses.	Ministries of Trade; EAC Secretariat.	8,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Harmonize investment laws and incentives across EAC Partner States to attract diaspora investments.	Number of harmonized investment frameworks adopted.	Easier and more attractive investment climate for diaspora.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States' Investment Authorities.	5,000,000	Medium Term
Create a regional online portal showcasing investment opportunities for the diaspora.	Regional portal launched and regularly updated.	Increased visibility and accessibility of investment opportunities for diaspora.	EAC Secretariat; ICT Departments.	2,000,000	Short Term
<b>PRIORITY AREA 5</b>	<b>Promote Tourism, Culture &amp; Arts</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC Treaty envisages the promotion of the region as a single tourism destination in line with implementation of the EAC single visa scheme. The East Africa Tourism Platform launched in Kigali in July 2012 aims to reduce obstacles to intra and inter-regional tourism, promote a regional tourism marketing approach and encourage continued human resource development and skills transfer. It also aims at promoting harmonized standards and codes of conduct for tourism facilities and services. Destination East Africa is an EAC initiative that seeks to encourage intra-regional tourism by providing incentives for East Africans, such as applying uniform rates for nationals of EAC Partner States in accessing tourism facilities and cultural monuments within the region				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Develop and implement a regional diaspora tourism promotion strategy.	Regional tourism strategy targeting diaspora launched.	Increased number of diaspora tourists visiting EAC states.	EAC Secretariat; Ministries of Tourism; National Tourism Boards.	5,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Organize annual diaspora tourism and	Number of diaspora	Stronger cultural	Partner States; EAC Secretariat.	3,000,000	Annually

culture weeks across Partner States.	cultural/tourism events held annually.	connections and regional branding.			
Brand East Africa as a single tourist destination using diaspora networks.	Number of diaspora-led tourism campaigns launched.	Unified East African tourism brand in global markets.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States; Private Sector (Tourism Boards).	2,000,000	Ongoing
Promote investment by diaspora in cultural industries (film, fashion, crafts, sport, music).	Number of diaspora investments in creative industries recorded.	Growth of the regional creative economy.	Ministries of Culture; Investment Promotion Agencies.	4,000,000	Medium Term
<b>PRIORITY AREA 6</b>	<b>Facilitate Coordination &amp; Portability of Social Security Benefits</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The access and portability of earned rights on social security benefits across countries is an increasing concern for East Africans in the Diaspora as well as policy makers. Cognisant of this fact, the EAC and Partner States governments will progressively endeavor to establish coordination mechanisms and enhance access to and portability of social security benefits through the following arrangements				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Develop regional agreements for social security portability.	Number of bilateral/multilateral agreements signed.	Diaspora able to maintain social security benefits across borders.	Ministries of Labour and Social Protection; EAC Secretariat.	3,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Facilitate access of diaspora to national health insurance schemes.	Number of diasporas enrolled in national insurance programs.	Improved health protection for diaspora workers.	Ministries of Health; Insurance Providers; Diaspora Units.	2,500,000	Medium Term
Promote inclusion of diaspora workers in pension schemes.	Number of diaspora-eligible pension schemes developed.	Secure retirement savings for diaspora members.	Ministries of Finance; Social Security Agencies.	2,000,000	Medium Term
Conduct outreach and sensitization campaigns on diaspora social protection options.	Number of outreach campaigns held per year.	Increased awareness and enrolment in social protection programs.	Partner States' Ministries of Labour and Diaspora Affairs.	1,000,000	Ongoing
<b>PRIORITY AREA 7</b>	<b>Foster Knowledge and Skills Transfer</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC commits to create an enabling environment for knowledge, innovation and skills transfer and to promote the permanent, temporary and virtual return of skilled East Africans from the Diaspora				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Establish diaspora knowledge exchange programs with universities and industries.	Number of programs initiated and diaspora experts engaged.	Strengthened human capital development across the EAC.	Ministries of Education; Ministries of Labour; EAC Secretariat.	7,000,000	Medium Term

Facilitate short-term return and expert missions from diaspora professionals.	Number of short-term expert missions conducted annually.	Knowledge transfer to local institutions and industries.	Partner States; EAC Secretariat.	4,000,000	Short Term
Recognize and accredit diaspora skills and qualifications.	Mechanisms for recognition and accreditation operational.	Diaspora qualifications accepted across Partner States.	National Qualification Authorities; EAC Secretariat.	3,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Develop a regional platform to map diaspora skills by sector and expertise.	Skills database operational and regularly updated.	Targeted engagement of diaspora professionals based on needs.	EAC Secretariat; National Diaspora Units.	2,000,000	Short Term
<b>PRIORITY AREA 8</b>	<b>Return and Reintegration Programmes for Returnees</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC Partner States are committed to address the challenge of returned migrants and Diaspora members and to reintegrate them as productive members of the society. Thus, the Partner States will endeavor to develop return and reintegration programmes at national level and further adopt at regional level, an EAC Framework on Return and Reintegration (RFRR) for migrant workers to improve the management of migration in a rights-based manner and ensure safe, orderly, and humane return as well as sustainable reintegration of returning migrants.				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Develop national return and reintegration programs.	Number of Partner States with operational return and reintegration frameworks.	Dignified and sustainable reintegration of returnees.	Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs, Labour, and Diaspora Affairs.	6,000,000	Short to Medium Term
Adopt a regional EAC Framework on Return and Reintegration (RFRR).	Regional framework endorsed by EAC Council of Ministers.	Harmonized regional approach to return migration.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	2,000,000	Short Term
Establish regional referral systems and support services for returnees.	Regional referral networks operational.	Easier access to services for returning diaspora.	EAC Secretariat; Ministries of Labour and Immigration.	4,000,000	Medium Term
Integrate returnees into national development plans and entrepreneurship programs.	Number of programs integrating returnees established and operational	Economic empowerment and social inclusion of returnees.	Partner States; National Development Agencies.	5,000,000	Medium Term
<b>PRIORITY AREA 9</b>	<b>Establish a Regional Online Diaspora Data Base</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC and Partner States commit to establishing a comprehensive, secure, and regularly updated regional online diaspora database to enhance engagement, support evidence-based policymaking, and facilitate skills mapping, knowledge transfer, and investment mobilization				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Design and launch a regional diaspora	Regional database operational	Better planning, engagement, and targeting	EAC Secretariat; Partner States'	2,500,000	Short Term

database accessible to all Partner States.	and accessible.	of diaspora programs.	Diaspora Units.		
Establish online Diaspora Registration Database and promote registration through Missions.	Existence of an Online Registration Database.	Regional registration system for Diaspora operational.	EAC Secretariat; EAC Organs and Institutions.	3,000,000	Short Term
Promote voluntary diaspora registration through embassies	Percentage increase in diaspora registration numbers annually.	Comprehensive diaspora profiles available regionally.	Ministries of Foreign Affairs; EAC Secretariat.	1,500,000	Ongoing
Develop data-sharing protocols to safeguard privacy and enhance coordination.	Data sharing agreements in place among Partner States.	Trust and security of diaspora data management improved.	EAC Secretariat; National Data Protection Authorities.	1,000,000	Short Term
Update and maintain database regularly with diaspora profiles by skills, location, and interests.	Frequency of database updates; Number of active profiles.	Dynamic and accurate diaspora mapping for regional use.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	500,000 annually	Ongoing
<b>PRIORITY AREA 10</b>	<b>Recognize and Reward Diaspora Participation in the EAC</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC in collaboration with the Partner States will establish a recognize and reward system of East African Diasporas who have contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of the region through trade and investments, health, philanthropy, and enhancing the visibility of the region as a single tourist destination among other crucial areas. The event will be marked and celebrated at the regional level during the Summit of the Heads of States meetings				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Establish a regional diaspora recognition and awards program.	Number of annual regional diaspora awards organized.	Motivation and encouragement of diaspora engagement.	EAC Secretariat; Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Affairs.	2,500,000	Annually
Develop criteria and guidelines for identifying outstanding diaspora contributors.	Regional criteria and guidelines adopted.	Transparent and standardized recognition process.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	500,000	Short Term
Host diaspora award ceremonies during major EAC events (Council & Summit meetings of the Heads of State).	Number of awards ceremonies hosted.	Visibility and prestige for diaspora contributions.	EAC Secretariat; EALA; Partner States.	1,500,000	Annually
Publicize diaspora achievements in national, regional and international media.	Number of diaspora success stories published.	Enhanced image of the EAC and diaspora contributions globally.	EAC Secretariat; Communication Departments.	500,000	Ongoing

<b>PRIORITY AREA 11</b>	<b>Promote and recognize Diaspora Philanthropy support to EAC</b>				
<b>Policy Statement</b>	The EAC and its Partner States commit to promoting, facilitating, and recognizing diaspora philanthropy as a vital contribution to regional integration, community development, and social cohesion. The EAC shall create a conducive environment and institutional framework that encourages diaspora-led philanthropic initiatives and aligns them with national and regional development goals				
<b>STRATEGIC INTERVENTION</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST (USD)</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>
Develop national and regional frameworks to facilitate diaspora philanthropy.	Number of frameworks developed and operationalized.	Coordinated and impactful diaspora philanthropic initiatives.	Ministries responsible for Diaspora Affairs; EAC Secretariat.	3,000,000	Medium Term
Provide tax and administrative incentives for diaspora-funded community development projects.	Incentive schemes developed and implemented.	Increased diaspora contributions to social projects.	Ministries of Finance; National Revenue Authorities.	2,500,000	Medium Term
Create a regional platform to showcase diaspora-funded initiatives.	Online platform established and number of projects showcased.	Increased visibility and replication of best practices in diaspora philanthropy.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	1,500,000	Short Term
Recognize outstanding diaspora philanthropic initiatives at national and regional levels.	Number of philanthropic awards conferred.	Encouraged and celebrated culture of giving among diaspora.	EAC Secretariat; Partner States.	500,000	Annually