

# *The Kenya Diaspora Policy 2015: An Overview & Critical Analysis*

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## **The Diaspora Commentary**

### **Rationale**

1. The absence of a policy to engage the diaspora
2. Kenyans are passionate about their homeland
3. Kenya has a well-trained labor force

### **Policy Objectives**

#### **Main Objective**

1. To maximize the potential of Kenyans abroad towards Kenya's transformational agenda and developing long term partnership

#### **Specific Objectives**

1. To develop and implement strategies to engage, empower, mainstream Kenyans Abroad into National Development process
2. To mobilize KA to have umbrella bodies for easier & effective engagement & representation
3. To develop measures to enhance protection of KA
4. To develop mechanisms for dialogue and partnership with KA
5. To establish institutions for coordination and administration issues facing KA

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Recognition
2. Participation
3. Engagement
4. Empowerment
5. Co-ordination
6. Gender and Youth
7. Decentralization

### **Strategies**

1. To promote continuous dialogue with KA
2. To enhance capacity to offer consular services
3. Develop mechanisms of reducing the high cost of remitting money

4. Develop an incentive framework to promote diaspora participation in national development
5. Enhance mechanisms for protecting KA
6. Develop an integrated database on KA
7. Develop an up to date inventory of diaspora expertise and skills
8. Leverage on the use of ICT enabled services
9. Develop re-integration mechanisms for returnees
10. Harmonize and conduct pre-departure training
11. Develop legislative framework
12. Promote participation in democratic process by KA
13. Promotion of philanthropic initiatives
14. Develop mechanisms of engagement with the diaspora youth

## **Institutional and Implementation Framework**

### **Role of the National Diaspora Council of Kenya**

1. Play an advisory role to the government on issues of KA
2. To carry out research and benchmark with countries with best practices diaspora policies with a view of improving policies, programmes and institutional arrangements for the mutual benefit of the country and KA
3. Consult with the MFA&IT, and stakeholders, to organize annual home coming conferences by KA
4. Organize annual award scheme for the recognition of outstanding performance of AKCA and any other activities within and outside the country
5. Council will operate under the MFA&IT

### **Role of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies**

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade**

1. Coordinator and Overseer of the implementation
2. Strengthen the directorate in charge of affairs of KA which will serve as the secretariat to NADICOK
3. Update and establish a database of KA

4. The Foreign Service Institute will develop a curriculum on KA to and CG with the necessary skills to facilitate productive engagement with KA; this will be done through research on KA and global best practices on diaspora engagement strategies.

#### **Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Services**

1. Establish a Labor Migration Unit to deal with labor migration issues
2. Review Labor Institutions Act 2007, the Employment Act 2007
3. Facilitate employment of youth in the international market

#### **Ministry of Devolution and Planning**

1. Ensure all government agencies integrate policies
2. youth facilitation to international job market (Youth Enterprise Development Fund Order 2007)
3. Develop indicators for monitoring and evaluation within the framework of the NIMES
4. Work with the KNBS, the MFA&IT and the Department of Immigration and Registration of Persons to set up database on KA
5. Work with KIPPRA to inform public policy issues affecting KA

#### **Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government**

1. Develop a policy framework on immigration
2. Open up passport issuance centers at Kenya Diplomatic missions abroad and strengthen the overseas passport issuance section at the immigration headquarters

#### **The National Treasury**

1. Enhance investor education and public awareness, reduce high cost of remitting money and develop investment products targeting KA
2. Provide incentives for KA to establish philanthropic initiatives

#### **Ministry of Education**

1. Develop a sector wide integrated education management information system to institutionalize data sharing, usage across government institutions and agencies
2. Integrate ICT in teaching and learning, facilitate networking between KA and Kenyan educational institutions
3. Create awareness on the ministry web portal on the educational resources available to KA and those within
4. Encourage KA to participate in the sports, games, music, drama festivals

5. Reform National Assessment and examinations, promote exchange programmes, market higher learning institutions
6. Engage KA in investments in National Education Sector support programmes
7. Advise Kenyans on most marketable courses abroad for employment sake
8. Kenyans' missions abroad to provide information to the ministry on skills required in their countries of accreditation
9. Develop public education programme aimed at creating awareness to parents/students travelling for further studies abroad

### **Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology**

1. Create publicly and awareness through electronic, print, social media on the events taking place abroad
2. Facilitate branding of events for KA through the Brand Kenya Board
3. Formulate ICT Policies to facilitate access of information by the KA
4. Enhance telecommunication infrastructure in order to facilitate universal access to information

### **Ministry of East African Community, Commerce and Tourism**

1. Provide accurate information on tourism investment opportunities
2. Offer investment initiatives in the tourism industry
3. Work with KNBS, Brand Kenya, Kenya Tourism Board, TRI
4. Work with the Tourism Regulatory Authority to develop a framework of enabling KA to leverage on tourism business start-ups
5. Establish "Kenya Tourism Ambassadors Programme" aimed at empowering KA to support promotion of tourism in various countries
6. The KTB will also develop special diaspora tourism packages targeting KA and develop a partnership framework on strategic partnerships through their respective agencies in tourism source markets

### **Ministry of Health**

1. Articulating opportunities for health professionals abroad
2. Maintain database of qualified health personnel's especially for those rare professions in Kenya
3. Promote telemedicine to enhance the quality of healthcare provision in Kenya
4. Provide direction on investment areas for the local production of essential health products and technologies

5. Explore ways of working with healthcare professionals abroad to carry out clinical trials on health technologies
6. Promote free health camps and conferences in Kenya targeting the poor citizens
7. Market the concept of medical tourism

### **Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission**

1. Provide a policy framework for the realization of progressive registration of KA
2. Update the voters' database for KA

### **Ministry of Sports, Culture and Arts**

1. Promote Kenyan talents abroad
2. Work with the AU in promotion of Kiswahili as continental and International Language

### **County Governments**

1. Facilitate the participation of KA in County Development
2. Develop tailor made incentives and investments targeted at KA such as the Exclusive Investment Zones

### **Association of Kenyan Communities Abroad**

1. Form Country umbrella associations and register them with the Kenyan diplomatic missions to enhance engagement between them and the government

### **Retirement Benefits Authority**

1. The RBA will establish a diaspora retirement savings scheme to provide a structured and secure mechanism upon which the diaspora will save and invest in opportunities in Kenya

### **Media**

1. Keep KA informed on events and programmes at home

Through the NIMES, provide for regular consultation and feedback between agencies entrusted with the implementation of this policy.

### **Commentary Notes**

- The policy is very timely and takes an expansive approach in looking at diaspora affairs. This is seen in the introduction of new ventures such as medical tourism concept, retirement savings scheme, investment in education sector, commitment to keep the KA informed on domestic news and issues.

- The youth factor has also been considered where there is a commitment from the government to facilitate employment of the youth to international job markets. These youth will be under the Youth Enterprise Development Fund Order 2007, which will be the body with authority under the ministry of Devolution and Planning.
- Noteworthy is that the Ministry of Education seems to have more work than other ministries from the tasks they are to implement. These tasks range from developing an online platform that will function as: an interaction tool between KA and learning institutions within; advice Kenyans on marketable courses abroad as well as public education programmes for students travelling abroad among other tasks.
- The MoE is also tasked with encouraging KA to participate in the sports, games, music, drama festivals. The MSCA is also mandated to promote Kenyan talents abroad. The MSCA has for a long time been there for a longer time promoting talent to various parts of the world through partnership with Brand Kenya and Kenya Tourism Board, the introduction of encouraging KA to participate in the domestic festivals seems like an overlap of the functions of the three institutions. The MSCA should be tasked with anything regarding promotion of Sports, Culture and Arts outside the country at any level starting from primary schools to higher learning institutions. This will not only avoid replication of duties but also allow for smoother running of operations from a central ministry.
- Within the education field, there is much focus on utilizing the existing knowledge base, there should also be proactive measures towards enhancing knowledge and creation of opportunities by the government for Kenyans to study abroad, a similar move was the "Airlift Program" which took bright Kenyans to study in the USA and return to work so as to build the country. The private sector led by the MasterCard Foundation is helping connect students to universities across the world; the government should lead, or further support such efforts financially so as to accommodate more people into the programs.
- The MEAC, should also be tasked with the mandate of enlarging its scope to include medical tourism, from the Diaspora policy the MoH is handling medical tourism which can be better managed by the Tourism department due to the already existing human resource and infrastructure.
- The Structure and Composition of the NADICOK has not been revealed yet, this paper proposes the membership to be comprised of the elected persons from the Association of Kenyan Communities Abroad (AKCA) who will represent the interests and priorities of their communities in the council. The council under the auspices of the MFA&IT should

meet about four times, on a quarterly basis so as to give direction and advice the government accordingly.

- There should also be a worldwide campaign led by the Kenyan Missions abroad supported by Brand Kenya on the slogan “Serve Kenya to Build Kenya”. The aim of this will be to build confidence in investment in Kenya and returning back home. Among the rationale of the policy includes the passionate nature of Kenyan about their Homeland, whether this is as a result of a scientific study or otherwise, facts should be stated as such a research to be conducted by the Kenyan Missions Abroad. This campaign should also promote the dual citizenship policy already adopted to encourage more people to be citizens.
- There is an area that can be explored and tapped into; this is the intellectual abilities of Kenyans. There should be collaborations between academicians in the country and outside the state; this can easily be done through the framework of “The Kenyan Scientific Community” which will include scholars of Kenyan origin and citizenship from various fields. The main objective of this is so as to share ideas, encourage research collaborations, provide ideas for improving the country.
- The digital platform as a means of communication should be further explored, the example set by Statehouse and the president on communication using the social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc.) should be extended to the Kenyan Missions Abroad as well as their Ambassadors, High Commissioners or Permanent Representatives, so as to encourage information sharing to be accessed by all Kenyans and stakeholders across the globe.

## **Abbreviations**

- AKCA                      Association of Kenyan Communities Abroad
- C.G.                      County Government
- F.S.I                      Foreign Service Institute
- I.E.B.C.                   Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
- K.A.                      Kenyans Abroad
- K.I.P.P.R.A              Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis
- K.N.B.S                   Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
- K.T.B.                      Kenya Tourism Board
- M.D.P.                      Ministry of Devolution and Planning
- M.E.A.C.                   Ministry of East Africa, Commerce and Tourism
- M.F.A & I.T.              Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

- M.I.C.N.G. Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government
- M.I.C.T. Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology
- M.L.S.S. Ministry of Labor and Social Security and Services
- MoE Ministry of Education
- MoH Ministry of Health
- M.S.C.A Ministry of Sports, Culture and Arts
- N.A.D.I.CO.K National Diaspora Council of Kenya
- N.I.M.E.S. National Integrated Monitoring Evaluation Systems
- R.B.A. Retirements Benefit Authority
- T.R.A. Tourism Regulatory Authority
  - T.R.I Tourism Research Board
  - T.N.T The National Treasury

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