

Republic of Rwanda



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

The Rwanda Diaspora Policy

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ABSTRACT

Rwandan Diaspora policy is the guiding framework which sets out how the Government of Rwanda wishes to see the Rwandan Diaspora being integrated in the national development of their native country. The policy defines Diaspora based on the different scholars. It discusses the need statement for Rwanda Diaspora policy and analyses different categories of Rwandan Diaspora.

The policy further proposes a Rwandan Diaspora sector analysis and stresses out its strengths and challenges. It underpins the strategic framework for the mobilization and integration of Rwandan Diaspora in the national development and proposes a structural framework for the implementation of the policy.

The Rwandan Diaspora policy stresses out its vision, objectives, strategies and approaches as to mobilize and integrate Rwandan Diaspora in the national development of their nation. Lastly it expresses the partner national and international institutions that will jointly work together for the realization of the outcomes of this policy.

The Rwandan Diaspora policy is the outcome of a process of extensive consultations that brought together representatives of local partner institutions, recommendations from Rwandan Diaspora Conventions (especially the 2008 Diaspora retreat), remarks of Rwandan delegates who met Diaspora in various occasions, individual consultations and Private sector.

This policy was developed based on the Constitution of Rwanda mainly on its article 7, 23 and 24, Rwandan vision 2020 mostly on its three pillars; Good Governance, private sector development and Knowledge based economy, EDPRS... This policy is in line with the policy of Rwanda unity and reconciliation commission, Rwanda's investment Strategy and it reinforces the Rwanda migration policy.

ACRONYMS

ADB	: African Development Bank
AU	: African Union
DGD	: Diaspora General Directorate
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GFMD	: Global Forum on Migration and Development
GoR	: Government of Rwanda
HIDA	: Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency
IOM	: International Organization for Migrations
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
MIDA	: Migration for Development in Africa
NEPAD	: New Partnership for Africa Development
NURC	: National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PSF	: Private Sector Federation
RDB	: Rwanda Development Board
RDGN	: Rwandan Diaspora Global Network
RNYC	: Rwanda National Youth Council
SFAR	: Student Financing Agency of Rwanda
TOKTEN	: Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
UN	: United Nations
UNICEF	: United Nations Children Fund
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
USD	: American Dollar

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1. INTRODUCTION

Realizing the importance of the Rwandan Diaspora in the national development and in the spirit of the policy of inclusion, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) strongly believes that the Rwandan Diaspora is an important constituent that cannot be ignored and which, if it is well harnessed, can contribute to national socio-economic development.

It is in this regard that GoR is committed to the mobilization of its Diaspora so as to help it (Diaspora) organize itself and build its capacity so that it can play its role in the development of the country through financial transfers, technology, knowledge and skills transfers as well as the mobilization of foreign investors and the promotion of the image of Rwanda as a cherished tourism and investment destination. Another possible role should be played in sourcing out markets of Rwandan products abroad, which would increase the volume of export earnings and would lead to a more favorable balance of payment. The Diaspora can also spearhead the struggle against the spreading of the genocide ideology among Rwandan living overseas.

It is in that perspective that a *Rwandan Diaspora Policy* was devised by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation with a view to establish a platform for the strategic framework for mobilizing and integrating Rwandans of the Diaspora in the national development as well as harnessing communication links within the Rwandan Diaspora community.

1.1. Definition of the Diaspora

Different scholars have defined Diaspora differently, mostly in the field of migration and development:

1. The term *diaspora* (Greek διασπορά, a scattering or sowing of seeds) is used (without capitalization) to refer to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture.¹ Originally, the term *Diaspora* (capitalized) was used to refer specifically to the populations of Jews exiled from Judea in 586 BC by the Babylonians, and Jerusalem AD 135 by the

¹ This definition is from wordiQ.com (<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Diaspora>)

Romans. This term is used interchangeably to refer to the historical movements of the dispersed ethnic population of Israel, the cultural development of that population, or the population itself. The term has been used in its modern sense since the late twentieth century.

2. The Diaspora is made up of migrants from a particular area living scattered outside their place of birth but remaining in contact with it through transnational linkages.²
3. The African Union has defined the African Diaspora as *"consisting of people 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."*

For purposes of this policy paper, the following working definition of “**diaspora**” will be used : «individuals originating from one country, living outside that country, irrespective of their citizenship or nationality, who, individually or collectively, are or could be willing to contribute to the development of their country. Descendants of these individuals are also included in this definition».³

In the Rwandan context, **Rwandan Diaspora** refers in general to *all Rwandans who left their country voluntarily or were forced to live in other countries of the world and are willing to contribute to the development of Rwanda.*

1.2. Background

The Diaspora is often seen as a resource that countries of origin can tap into for their development needs. In the Diaspora, reside some of the most educated, entrepreneurial and wealthy of a country’s citizens. If they are encouraged to return, or at least invest in their home country, considerable developmental impact might be expected.

In some countries, mobilized and integrated Diasporas have been identified as a potential source of tax revenue for the home country. The impacts of remittances from Diaspora are

² Source : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_diaspora#Definitions

³ Working definition of “diaspora” adopted at the Global Forum on Migration and Development, Manila, Philippines, 27-30 October 2008

always estimated in the socio-economic development of both developed and developing economies.

1.2.1. International and regional context

As migration increases every year, and more evidence emerges of the significant benefits it brings for development in both origin and destination countries, policy makers are seeking to understand this complex relationship better and to maximize its mutual benefits through smarter policies and practices.

At the international level, a **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)** was put in place with three main goals:

- a) To bring together government expertise from all regions to enhance dialogue, cooperation and partnership in the areas of migration and development;
- b) To address, in a transparent manner, the multidimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to international migration and its inter-linkages with development; and
- c) To foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at the national, regional and global levels.

The GFMD offers a unique multilateral space to examine the potential synergies between international migration and development and to steer current research findings and good practices towards more shared, cooperative forms of migration and development management.

The African Union since its inception has recognized the awakening of the Diaspora and created a Diaspora Department within its Secretariat. This is still an ongoing discussion to establish the African Diaspora (Others being Northern, Western, Central, Southern and Eastern) as the 6th region of Africa. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) is also looking for a link with the African Diaspora.

1.2.2. National context

For decades, Rwandans have been migrating into different parts of the world for political, social or economic reasons. This migratory dynamics dates back to pre-colonial times and

became more important during the colonial period and especially since 1960. As a result, Rwanda has an important Diaspora community in various countries across the world, with major concentrations in neighboring countries, Western and Central Europe and North America.

The Rwandan Diaspora registers an evolving important role in the national development of their nation. This importance is envisaged in various sectors of Rwanda such as; Education, Health, Private Sector Development, Business and Investment, Knowledge transfers, Image building, Culture development, Unity and Reconciliation, Community development, Remittances, mobilization of foreign investments etc.

1.2.3. Classification of Rwandan Diaspora

Due to historical or socio-economic reasons, Rwandan diaspora can be categorized into two (2) main groups:

- Temporary diaspora, and
- Permanent diaspora.

1. Temporary Rwandan diaspora

This comprises Rwandan citizens who reside for a definite period of time. It is the case for students, diplomats, tourists or business people on travel who need consular services.

According to the Student Financing Agency, SFAR, there are around 700 students carrying on their studies overseas with assistance from the agency (academic year 2008) and this number is on constant increase. This number does not include students who are supported by their own families or got financings from other sources. The total number of Rwandan students outside the country is therefore certainly much bigger than this figure from SFAR.

Rwandan Diplomats have other governing texts, but they can spearhead a larger action in mobilizing and networking with Rwandans and citizens of the countries they cover. Hence, they need better tools to achieve their mission of creating and maintaining close links between Rwanda and its expatriated citizens and the world at large.

Other Rwandans may need intervention from the mother country while in a foreign country for different reasons: international employees, on medical treatment, business or tourism journey.

2. Permanent Rwandan Diaspora

The biggest part of the Rwandan Diaspora is composed by Rwandans who live on a permanent basis in other countries.

The exodus of Rwandan nationals to different parts of the world was due to various reasons including political victimization, search for labor, search for career development and other economic opportunities. These reasons have classified Rwandans living abroad into different sub-categories in their host countries as discussed below:

(i) Rwandan citizens who fled Rwanda due to political and security reasons

This category registers a large population of Rwandans who fled between 1959-1994 in different events where Tutsis were persecuted, killed, and forced into exile.

After the 1994 genocide, a big group of Rwandans fled the country to different parts of world mostly in South and West Africa. Others fled to more remote countries in Europe and North America.

It was identified that part of this population are grouped into armed and political subversive groups, social, cultural and the so-called human rights associations while others operate as individuals to spread genocide ideology and sensitize other Rwandan Diaspora to go against Government's policies and programmes targeting national development.

However, there has been a positive group of Rwandan Diaspora of this category, especially composed of descendents of 1959 refugees that are returning to Rwanda and are playing in different ways a critical role towards the national development in the public and private sectors.

(ii) Rwandan citizens who left Rwanda for career development and other economic reasons

This category of migrants has settled in some countries in the region and is working or operating businesses in various countries around the world.

In this category of Rwandan Diaspora there is a number of Rwandans with high academic profiles, entrepreneurs, Physicians, Business communities, professional associations, etc.

The number of this group is increasing abroad due to the increasing rate of later types of Rwandans migrating to foreign countries searching for greener pastures thus increasing the rate of brain drain from Rwanda.

(iii) Descendents of long term refugees and Rwandans born to foreigners

Some of the Rwandans who fled long time ago have adopted other nationalities. But their descendents express the need to retrieve their roots.

This category is also composed of children born of inter-marriages between Rwandans and foreigners. This resulted into another community of Rwandan Diaspora of half breed that love Rwanda, fill attached to Rwanda and would like to participate in the national development of Rwanda.

1.2.4. Socio-economic importance of the Rwandan Diaspora

It is obvious that all the categories of Rwandan Diaspora are involved in formal or informal relationships with Rwanda and Rwandan residents (families, business partners...) through remittances and other types of transfers.

1. Remittances

A survey by the National Bank of Rwanda showed that remittances from the Diaspora represent almost 50% of the foreign currency exchanged on Kigali exchange market and is increasing very fast. From \$60 million in 2006, remittances from Diaspora were \$103 Million in 2007 and are amounting to over 150 million US dollars for the year 2008. Three quarter ($\frac{3}{4}$) of this amount is from informal transfers and is probably underestimated.

These remittances are used in different sectors like real estate development or community development and poverty alleviation.

(i) Real estate development

Diaspora has been remarkable for the construction of high standard buildings mostly in Rwandan urban centers and is linked with the recent development real estate market services

(mortgage finance; this increases high propensity of saving and housing market in Rwandan economy).

(ii) Community Development and poverty alleviation

Another part of these transfers is used by families to solve their day to day problems (health, education, welfare), thus participating in the national poverty alleviation effort.

The available data reveals that Rwandan Diaspora have also manifested interest in supporting disabled and vulnerable communities in Rwanda, mostly the survivors of genocide, in areas of education, empowering the small scale businesses of vulnerable, and infrastructure development mostly in rural areas.

2. Knowledge and Skills transfers

Knowledge transfer can be done through volunteer services (like in MIDA or TOKTEN programs), short-term consultancy services or partnership between local and Diaspora professionals organizations.

1.2.5. Socio-political importance of the Diaspora

Rwandan Diaspora also proved to be a breeding ground for a new, development oriented generation of leaders in all sectors, and a barrier to the spreading of genocide ideologies. It also plays a significant role in the building of a new image for Rwanda abroad.

2. OVERALL GUIDELINES

2.1. Introduction

This Diaspora policy intends to be an active part of the national planning toolkit and must harmoniously articulate with the other national policy and planning instruments. These are notably:

- Vision 2020;
- Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS);
- National Investment Strategy;
- Rwanda Government's seven years programme, and

- International Development Objectives (MDGs, NEPAD, UN & other international sector conventions,...) ;

2.2. Vision 2020

The Vision 2020 of the Government of Rwanda intends to transform Rwanda into a middle income country by reducing the percentage of the population under poverty line and bringing it down from the current level of 60% to less than 25% and by increasing the annual per capita income from the current 250 USD to 900 USD by the year 2020.

To achieve this wealth creation, Rwanda intends to rely foremost on her own human and natural resources, including those from the Rwandan Diaspora on one hand, and increased development cooperation with all foreign countries, through direct investments, transfer of knowledge and technology greater access to foreign and regional on the other hand.

2.3. National Investment Strategy

The implementation of the Vision 2020 needs a sustainable investment system. The required real GDP growth implies that capital formation rates must rise from less than 20 percent in 2005 to above 30 percent in the coming decade.

Two of the three strategies identified by the Long term investment framework (LTIF) to get there should involve the Diaspora:

- Reinforcing capacity building initiatives for entrepreneurship through support to the existing efforts through “business development services” at all levels and by putting in place pro-active mechanisms for the emergence of ambitious entrepreneurs,
- Attracting more foreign and local investors by establishing an attractive environment for doing business, including legal reforms, elimination of tax distortions, financial sector reforms, and pro-private sector administration.

2.4. Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS)

Midterm targets were also identified to monitor the achievement of Vision 2020. They appear in a 5 year planning document called “Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS)”. The current one (2008-2012) has identified 14 strategies to keep Vision 2020 on track, 6 of which involve clearly the Diaspora as main actors:

- Accelerate growth and reduce poverty
- Widen and strengthen the Financial Sector
- Develop skills for a knowledge-based society
- Promote science, technology and innovation for economic growth
- Promote vibrant and professional public and private media to enhance citizens' voice and dissemination of public information
- Support youth to participate in economic and social development

2.5. Rwanda Government's seven years programme

In logical harmony with national orientations and strategic policies of other sectors, each sector has been ascribed with objectives that it must reach within the 7 years of each presidential term of office. As for the Sector of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, its action is located in the domain of reinforcing good governance, security and promoting economy.

In the current GoR 7 years programme (2003-2010), the Ministry of Foreign affairs and Cooperation has been ascribed by GoR the mission to work out, implement and ensure the follow-up and evaluation of policies, strategies and programmes of the country in the field of international relations and cooperation, based on mutual respect and complementarity among countries. The Rwandan Diaspora was identified as a key partner to fulfil this mission.

2.6. International Development Objectives (MDGs, NEPAD, UN and other international sector conventions)

The GoR has expressed its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. RWANDA is also member of some trans-national bodies which have put up specific development targets and conditions with direct impact on the Diaspora (AU, NEPAD, ADB...).

Rwanda has always been committed to the efforts exerted by the international community to uphold the human rights and fundamental freedoms, by ratifying the core international legal instruments and regional conventions related to human rights. Among these instruments are:

- The international Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and members of their families;
- The Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children; and
- The Protocol against the smuggling by land, sea and air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational organized Crime.

All these instruments should be part of this policy and are intended to help the Department in charge of Diaspora Affairs assist and advocate for the Diaspora members when and where needed.

2.7. *Diaspora related policy issues*

The points developed above make it easy to understand that the Diaspora was in minds when national guiding texts and different sector policies were set up.

(i) *Constitution*

Deep roots of the present Rwanda Diaspora policy can be found in the 2003 national constitution, especially the following articles:

- Article 7, which guarantees the right of every Rwandan to nationality (§1), rehabilitates all who were deprived of their nationality at different occasions (§3) and facilitates those who want to acquire it,
- Article 23, which establish the right for everyone to circulate freely and to settle anywhere in Rwanda, to leave and to return to the country, and
- Article 24, by which “Every Rwandan has the right to his or her country” and “No Rwandan shall be banished from the country”.

(ii) *National unity and reconciliation policy*

Some of the strategies used to reach national unity and reconciliation are civic education, mobilization and advocacy (§5.1.). A special attention is raised toward the Rwandan Diaspora, as a sensitive group towards unity and reconciliation.

(iii) *Rwandan foreign policy, Rwandan immigration policy, aid policy, investment promotion code...*

Diaspora was also a crosscutting issue when some other sector planning instruments were put in place. It is the case in sectors like immigration, aid policy, investment promotion, youth, etc.

3. INTRODUCTION TO RWANDA DIASPORA SECTOR

3.1. *Problem Statement of the sector*

The Rwandan Diaspora spans the globe. This Rwandan Diaspora has got potentials that can be used in the national development of Rwanda.

There has been a constraint to GoR to know the Rwandan Diaspora in terms of its quality and quantity. Rwandan community abroad lacks credible information on realities back home and they are often not acquainted with GoR's socio-economic and political drives.

There is a real need of a well established structural and strategic framework both in Rwanda and abroad to mobilize, coordinate and integrate Rwandan Diaspora in the national development of Rwanda.

3.2. *Strengths and Constraints of the sector*

The different categories of Rwandan Diaspora have different potentials and strengths that can be reckoned with in the national development of Rwanda, there are also weaknesses and threats in Rwandan Diaspora that should not be underestimated. The following paragraphs discuss the strengths of this sector and the challenges it is facing.

3.2.1. The strengths and potentials of the sector

The Rwandan Diaspora policy is building on some tangible advantages:

(i) Political Will and explicit commitment of the Government of Rwanda

There has been a strong political will from GoR to mobilize and integrate Rwandan Diaspora towards the national development. It is in that perspective that GoR created a desk in charge of Rwandan Diaspora in 2001 within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to meet the needs and interests of Rwandan Diaspora. This desk was progressively reinforced to become a *Diaspora General Directorate* by the cabinet decision of 20th June, 2008.

Other government and non-government institutions have also initiated actions towards the Rwandan Diaspora. Among these are the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the National Youth Council, the Private Sector Federation, Rwanda Development Board...

The Rwanda Diplomatic and Consular Missions have also been given explicit instructions to mobilize the Rwandan Diaspora in their respective host countries and have been helping the Rwandan Diaspora to organize themselves, facilitating them to acquire consular documents and regularize their stay in their host countries.

Higher Government authorities also usually meet the Rwandan community whenever they are on official visits abroad.

(ii) Eagerness of the Diaspora to contribute to national development and image building

Rwandan community abroad is composed of people with high academic profiles, wealth and international networks. This is a precious and under-utilized resource of expertise, investments, experience, and entrepreneurship that can be deployed creatively on host of development fronts of Rwanda.

The Rwandan Diaspora has been striving to promote the image of Rwanda through organization of conventions, cultural events, conferences and Business Exhibitions in conjunction with the national line institutions in Rwanda. This is also done through networks of youth associations, professional bodies ...

Rwandan Diaspora has been acting through organizing conferences and debates in their host countries to promote Rwandan culture, unity and reconciliation among Rwandans as well as fighting genocide ideologies.

3.2.2. Constraints and challenges of the sector

However, there are still some challenges to deal with:

(i) Lack of information about their homeland by Rwandan Diaspora

On the one hand, Rwandans in the Diaspora do not have access to credible information on realities back home, information on Rwanda development progresses, local business and investment opportunities and Rwanda political agenda, hence they are often not acquainted with GoR's political drive ;

On the other hand, in the process of integrating Rwandan Diaspora in the socio-economic development of Rwanda, there has been lack of information from interested Rwandans of the

Diaspora about their needs, interests, and priorities as well as their areas of interests for them to play a significant role in the ongoing and planned development projects.

(ii) Need for Unity and Reconciliation within Rwandan Diaspora

Due to the political history of Rwanda and various reasons that caused the exodus of Rwandans, it was found out that, most of Rwandan Diaspora in their host countries lack unity and reconciliation among themselves thus increasing the spreading of genocide ideology.

(iii) Need for a strong structural framework in the Rwandan Diaspora

It was noted that, Rwandan communities abroad lack a strong organization and structural framework that can enable them to know each other and interact. This weakness has resulted into absence of leadership as well as communication network between Rwandan Diaspora members and between them and their nation.

(iv) Difficulties to know the mother tongue and need of civic education

Language is a great tool that establishes a permanent linkage between nationals abroad and their motherland. In this regard, Rwandan youth in the Diaspora do not know their mother tongue as well as positive traditional values and Rwandan culture at large. Civic education camps and visits should be organized for the Rwandan youth in Diaspora within Rwanda in order for them to master Rwandan culture.

(v) Need for recognition and protection

Some Rwandans in the Diaspora are not recognized as citizen in the host countries, mostly those who are living in neighboring countries (East Africa and Great lakes Region), and for this reason they are subjected to violation of their basic rights (property confiscation and other various violent acts). It is important to note that, when there is any political or security instabilities in their host countries, they often bear political and security consequences such as political persecution, political victimization, confiscation of their wealth, forced expatriation to Rwanda etc. These affect Rwandan Government in terms of political cooperation with the host countries and cultural influence in the region. The Government of Rwanda will continue to have good relations with neighboring countries hosting these communities and make sure that their basic rights are protected.

3.3. Sector policy principles

The Diaspora Policy should abide to sector policy principles:

- A Sector and participatory approach
- A safe policy
- Strategies related to resources
- Complementarity with national options

3.3.1. A Sector wide approach

This sector intervenes crosswise in many sectors, as it is an extension of the action of those sectors abroad for the development of the country. This is the reason why activities of this sector must be harmonized with those of partner sectors for better profitability of undertaken efforts.

3.3.2. A safe policy

This policy still needs testing to ensure that it is in harmony with the SWAp approach and that it really works towards fighting poverty, the ultimate objective of all actions undertaken by GoR.

3.3.3. Strategies related to resources

Different strategies used in the elaboration of sector policies must be coherent with available resources. This implies organizing expenses into a hierarchy in a coherent programme in harmony with the Medium-Term Expenses Framework (MTEF). The Diaspora policy is part of the MINAFFET planning and budgeting system. It will be implemented in the guidance and in accordance to the above strategies.

3.3.4. Complementarity with national options

As already mentioned (see Chapter 2), the Rwanda Diaspora Policy is in line with the other national development large strategies (Vision2020, EDPRS, National Investment Strategy, GoR Programme).

3.4. Vision of the sector

United Rwandan Diaspora dedicated to and integrated in the national development of their nation.

3.5. Mission of the sector

To mobilize Rwandan Diaspora communities for unity and cohesion among themselves targeted for the promotion of security, image building and socio-economic development of Rwanda.

3.6. Objectives of the Sector

3.6.1. The Overall Objective

To create a conducive environment enabling Rwandan Diaspora to be a strong and cohesive community with a constructive relationship with their nation aiming at national development of Rwanda.

3.6.2. The guiding pillars of the Diaspora policy

- The cohesion of the Rwandan Diaspora;
- The Rwandans in Diaspora are equipped with accurate information about their nation.
- The Rwandan Diaspora playing significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda.

3.6.3. Specific Objectives

Pillar # 1: Cohesion of Rwandan Diaspora

The corresponding specific objectives

1. To create a conducive environment among Rwandan Diaspora for unity and reconciliation;
2. To encourage the Rwandans in the Diaspora to build strong structures in their host countries aimed at addressing their respective needs and interests;
3. To advocate for the interests and rights of Rwandan Diaspora in their host countries and in their homeland;

4. To mobilize Rwandan Diaspora communities for sustained image building of their nation.

Pillar #2: *Rwandan Diaspora is equipped with credible information about their nation.*

The corresponding specific objectives are:

1. To disseminate accurate and credible information to the Rwandan Diaspora and encourage them to exploit it usefully and proactively;
2. Improve communication and working relationship between Rwandan public and private institutions and the Rwandan Diaspora.

Pillar #3: *Rwandan Diaspora is playing significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda*

The corresponding objectives under this pillar are:

1. To serve as a liaison between various public, private institutions in Rwanda and International Organizations with Rwandan Diaspora;
2. To coordinate and harmonize different initiatives and activities related to Rwandan Diaspora in Rwanda;
3. To mobilize expatriates and highly skilled Rwandan Diaspora on knowledge and skills transfer to Rwanda;
4. To mobilize and leverage Rwandan Diaspora business communities for investment and trade in Rwanda;
5. To create enabling environment for financial investment and remittances for Rwandan Diaspora in Rwanda;
6. To work with host countries to promote their interests, rights and to allow them to access job opportunities .

3.6.4. Summary of sector strategies

Pillar no 1: *Cohesion of Rwandan Diaspora*

The strategies and approaches that can be undertaken are as follows:

- Organize thematic events in Rwanda and abroad, aiming at Rwandan Diaspora cohesion as well as social economic development of Rwanda;
- Collaborate with local concerned institutions to organize camps/Itorero in Rwanda for Rwandan Diaspora mostly youth from Diaspora;

- Sensitize and help members of the Rwandan Diaspora to network and keep their cultural identity.

Pillar#2: Rwandan Diaspora is equipped with different credible information about their nation

Strategies to be developed:

- Use the Media to inform our Diaspora and the world about Rwanda's true image, her policies, programs and achievements as well as her true history.
- Organize regular knowledge exchange forums for Diaspora on GoR operational policies, procedures and guidelines
- Organize virtual learning environments and discussion forums;
- Use Internet and other electronic media to avail information to the Rwandan Diaspora.

Pillar #3: Rwandan Diaspora playing significant role in the socio-economic development of Rwanda

The strategies and approaches in this regard are as follows:

- Work with and support initiatives of Rwandan Diaspora locally and abroad;
- Study and develop mechanisms to facilitate investment and transfer of funds from the Diaspora in collaboration with Rwandan financial institutions;
- Study and develop interactive mechanisms and special incentives for Rwandan Diaspora Business communities;
- Encourage and facilitate the Rwandan Diaspora with rare skills in Rwanda, to put their expertise to the service of their country of origin;
- Work with international organizations related to migration and development;
- Organize study tours in other countries to learn from their best practices;
- Encourage Rwandan Diaspora to form professional forums abroad;
- Promote Diaspora interests in international organizations in which Rwanda is a member and encourage Rwandans to access international job opportunities;
- Organize thematic events (conferences, exhibitions,...) aiming at mobilizing Diaspora business community.

4. PROGRAMMES OF THE SECTOR

Besides ongoing programmes such as Unity and reconciliation (NURC) and investment Promotion (RDB), the Diaspora General Directorate should facilitate the initiation of some new programmes:

Programme 1: Mobilization, communication and image building

- Main outcomes:
 - Rwandans in the Diaspora are united and mobilized to serve the interests of their nation.
 - Rwandan Diaspora and the world in large are equipped with credible and up to date information about Rwanda.
- Main activities:
 - Put in place and regularly update a database on the Rwandan Diaspora;
 - Organize conferences, exhibitions and cultural events in Rwanda and abroad, aiming at promoting Rwandan Diaspora cohesion;
 - Develop and maintain an interactive Website to avail a credible information on Rwanda and its Diaspora;
 - Sensitize and help members of the Rwandan Diaspora to network and keep their cultural identity.

Programme 2: Advocacy and Protection of Rwandan Diaspora Interests

- Main outcomes:
 - The rights and interests of the Rwandans in the Diaspora are known and promoted, in Rwanda and abroad.
- Main activities:
 - Offer better consular services to the Rwandan Diaspora;
 - Advocate for the rights of Rwandans in the Diaspora;
 - Promote Diaspora interests in international organizations in which Rwanda is a member and encourage Rwandans to access international job opportunities;

- Monitoring of the reintegration of Rwandan Diaspora returning permanently.

Programme 3: Promotion and facilitation of Diaspora investment and remittances in Rwanda

- Main outcomes:
 - The volume of remittances increases significantly
 - External investments increase
- Main activities
 - In collaboration with Rwandan financial institutions and the ministry in charge of finance and economic planning, develop regulations to facilitate investment and transfer of funds from the Diaspora;
 - Study and develop interactive mechanisms and special incentives for Rwandan Diaspora Business communities;
 - Organize investment promotion events, inside and outside Rwanda

Programme 4: Capacity building, skills and knowledge transfers

- Main outcomes:
 - Rwandans in the Diaspora with rare skills are used to support the knowledge based economy in Rwanda
- Activities:
 - Work with line ministries and academic institutions to identify areas where Rwandans in the Diaspora with rare skills can intervene in Rwanda;
 - Work with international organizations related to migration and development (especially MIDA and TOKTEN) to promote and organize skills and knowledge transfers;

Programme 5: Promotion of community links between Diaspora and local organisations
(Women, sports people, professionals, business people,...)

- Main outcome :
 - Rwandans inside and outside the country unite efforts to fight poverty and promote Rwandan culture positive values.
- Main activities:
 - Organize on a regular basis meetings and conferences of academics, economists, doctors, professors...
 - Create and operate communities and professional networks
 - Initiate joint ventures between Rwandan of the Diaspora and their relatives living inside Rwanda

Programme 6: Mobilization of Rwandan Youth in the Diaspora

- Main outcome:
 - To link the youth inside and outside Rwanda to share information, experience and common cause to transform Rwanda through a vibrant and recognized institutional framework
- Activities:
 - Work with Ministry in charge of Youth, Rwanda National Youth Council (RNYC) and Youth Associations in the Diaspora to promote links between youth inside and outside Rwanda ;
 - Hold an annual youth forum for youth living in Diaspora and those who live in Rwanda;
 - Share information on opportunities like scholarships: this should be done by building a shared website/portal gateway and eventually a Newsletter;
 - Organize volunteer missions in Rwanda for Diaspora youth and summer camps.

Programme 7: Institutional support to Diaspora General Directorate

- Main outcomes:
 - The Diaspora General Directorate is a vibrant structure, well equipped and operational.
- Activities
 - Acquisition and maintenance of ICT equipment (hardware and software);
 - Develop and maintain a database on Rwandan Diaspora;
 - Capacity building : recruitment and training of staff;
 - Support partnerships with successful Diaspora institutions in other countries;
 - Financing for study tours, attend international events...

5. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Whereas the Ministry in charge of foreign affairs and Cooperation, through its DGD, plays the technical role, it is obvious that the implementation of the Rwandan Diaspora Policy will need a wider coordination structure as Diaspora is a crosscutting issue.

It is recommended to put in place a **Diaspora Advisory Council (DAC)**, which will provide the guidance and orientations on the implementation of the Diaspora policy.

The Council will be operating in Rwanda at national level as well as abroad at the global level.

At the national level, the DAC will be composed by representatives from the various line ministries, public and private institutions and the civil society dealing with Diaspora issues.

At the level of countries hosting a significant Rwandan community, a **Diaspora Advisory body (DAB)** will comprise of the representative of Rwandan Diplomatic Mission, opinion leaders in the Diaspora and Representatives of Rwandan Diaspora Associations.

At the global level measures will be taken to put in place a strong global umbrella organization, coordinating and representing all Rwandan Diaspora.

6. CONCLUSION

Like other African countries, Rwanda realizes the important role Diaspora can play in the areas of financial, virtual and physical transfers, image building, good governance, trade and investments. In addition, the Rwandan Diaspora can act as a catalyst in bringing innovation, and the best practices in different areas of public and private sectors.

But there is so far no harmonized and well coordinated framework for mobilizing and integrating Rwandan Diaspora in the socio-economic development of Rwanda. There is therefore an urgent need of a sector policy, participatively elaborated and owned by all stakeholders.

The adoption of this policy and its implementation by different stakeholders will give a clear platform for Rwandan Diaspora in the development of their nation.