



POLICY BRIEFING

Roadmap for diaspora engagement in Sudan

AUGUST 2021

Summary and main recommendations

This policy brief is the result of multiple consultations Shabaka undertook between June and July 2021 on diaspora¹ engagement in Sudan; specifically, a series of three roundtable discussions exploring a roadmap for effective diaspora engagement. It is an independent initiative set up by Shabaka to facilitate more robust diaspora engagement with the Government of Sudan during this critical transitional period.

These roundtable discussions involved 12 Sudanese experts on diaspora engagement from various fields – including academia, NGOs, and other skilled professionals– active and committed to drawing a skeleton policy briefing targeted at the Government of Sudan.

Thus, this brief presents both the ideas and recommendations directly raised in these discussions and outlines Shabaka’s analysis of cross-cutting considerations and recommendations. Key recommendations are delineated below, including the first steps the Government of Sudan and other key stakeholders can take to ensure the effective development of a cross-governmental diaspora policy and action plan.

¹ A working definition of diaspora: Those who have resided abroad for one year or more (first-generation), or born to a parent(s) who live outside their countries or region of origin (second and subsequent generations); and who have contributed, or are interested in engaging with countries or regions of origin, whether politically, economically, socially or culturally.

Recommendations (summarised)

Policy and legislative frameworks

- **Development of a cross-governmental diaspora policy and action plan** as a priority. This includes a review of current policies, to ensure it aligns with relevant national, regional and international frameworks, such as the [United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)² and the [African Union's Agenda 2063](#)³.
- Conduct a needs assessment of existing structures for diaspora engagement to identify capacity needs and support resource allocation to deliver on any subsequent policy and action plan.
- Establish independent, centralised coordination for engagement with, and the delivery of, services to the diaspora.
- Recognise the diversity of the Sudanese diaspora and ensure that policies and programmes address the needs and nuances of diverse diaspora individuals and communities using more disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data.

Outreach and Communication

- Scale-up centralised multilingual communications, such as regularly updated websites available in languages commonly used in the diaspora, to facilitate engagement of second and subsequent generation diaspora and strengthen its ties to Sudan

² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

³ <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

- Use evidence-based engagement and improved data collection to develop services and structures for diaspora engagement, as there is a lack of disaggregated data regarding active available diaspora networks

Diaspora Engagement

- Through policymakers' active engagement with Sudanese migrant and diaspora communities in key settlement countries, governments can create 'triple wins for migrants, countries of origin, and destination countries' ([Kofi Anan, 2006](#))⁴. Diaspora engagement benefits both origin and settlement countries, as harnessing different perspectives and exchanging knowledge and skills creates space for more credible ideas and solutions.
- Ensure the focus of diaspora engagement extends beyond their financial contributions, i.e. the Sudanese diaspora are also engaged in promoting social cohesion, peacebuilding, culture, and the histories of Sudan.
- Ensure cross-generational engagement with Sudanese diaspora, extending engagement beyond the first generation to second and subsequent generations.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sgsm10634.doc.htm>

Introduction

Since December 2018, the Sudanese diaspora have been active in raising the visibility of Sudan's revolution. Their participation has varied in form and intensity, and included global solidarity protests including Europe, North America and the Middle East. There have also been both public and private fundraising efforts to support the families of those killed and injured. Still, most diaspora individuals see amplifying the voices of those in Sudan to be their main role. This was clear also in the COVID-19 context and 2020 floods response, where Sudanese diasporas provided critical assistance to Sudan's response, such as fundraising and sharing knowledge.

Shabaka's working definition of diaspora: those who have resided abroad for one year or more (first-generation) or born to a parent(s) who live outside their countries or region of origin (second and subsequent generations); and who have contributed, or are interested in engaging with countries or regions of origin, whether politically, economically, socially or culturally.

However, the Sudanese diaspora were also involved and connected with Sudan prior to this period, contributing through remittances, skills and knowledge sharing, and a commitment to ensuring the country's visibility internationally. However, Sudan has no formal diaspora engagement policy, meaning it has not been able to effectively harness and maximise the substantial financial and social potential its diaspora can contribute.

Indeed, as early as December 2018, over 500 Sudanese diaspora individuals signed on to the ['rebuilding of new Sudan'](#)⁵, a document outlining the expectations of the diaspora's role and commitments during the transitional period (Mohamed, 2019).

Behind the scenes, the Sudanese diaspora have also provided their skills, knowledge, and utilised the explosion of new and existing networks in Sudan and in the diaspora to advise on media,

⁵ <http://akhbarelyoum.net/tfr/3095>

advocacy, and campaigning. There were also a few experts involved in senior leadership and advisory committees, and ad-hoc consultations with the diaspora, such as [consultations led by the Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok with diaspora communities in July 2021](#)⁶ (Prime Minister's Office, 2021).

The most significant difference between pre- and post-December 2018 is the second-generation diaspora's unprecedented engagement in the latter. In addition, social media has also been at the forefront of maintaining a focus on Sudan through highly visible public campaigning, such as [Blue for Sudan](#)⁷ (Bendimerad and Faisal 2019).

However, two years into the transitional period, the outcome and results of Sudanese diaspora engagement are still not visible. The focus remains largely limited to remittances and business investment opportunities in the private sector. As a result, there is growing frustration and disappointment among the diaspora, alongside confusion around how to engage effectively.

The democratic transition faces significant challenges, including the economic crisis, inter-communal violence, social cohesion, peacebuilding and reconciliation, the dismantling of the previous regime, fighting corruption, and achieving transitional justice. These persistent factors have led to a fragile state where embedding the principles of democratic change has increasing resonance both inside and outside Sudan. Accordingly, various stakeholders have concluded that, to guide the government's diaspora engagement via an independent national team and ensure inclusiveness and governance, establishing a formal diaspora policy is necessary.

⁶ [consultations led by the Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok with diaspora communities in July 2021](#)

⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/6/13/blueforsudan-why-is-social-media-turning-blue-for-sudan>

As of August 2021, two years since establishing the new transitional government, Sudan still has no integrated policy for diaspora engagement, but has instigated several initiatives and mapping programmes to create data.

The importance of diaspora engagement

Today, Sudan has the opportunity to draw on the enormous potential of a diaspora increasing in numbers for over 50 years. Indeed, the energy and accomplishments of the Sudanese diaspora have steadily built Sudan's reach and reputation around the world, and have been critical at historical moments, such as during the democratic change of the 1980s.

To ensure the continuity and maximisation of this potential, policies must be enacted to facilitate diaspora mobilisation and strengthen the bonds that make connecting with Sudan possible.

The diaspora can enrich Sudan in every way, including through:

Economic Cooperation:

Diaspora can create trade, investment, and mentorship opportunities to contribute to businesses that foster development and sustainable impact, and support preparedness and response to humanitarian crises. Diaspora remittances exceed aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) to low- and middle-income countries.

[According to the World Bank remittances in 2020 globally reached \\$540 billion, despite COVID-19 pandemic, surpassing combined \(foreign direct investment \(FDI\) \(\\$259 billion\) and Overseas Development Assistance \(\\$179 billion\) in 2020](#) (World Bank, 2021).

Examples include the [Ethiopian Diaspora Trust Fund](#)⁸ that focus on

⁸ https://www.ethiopiastrustfund.org/home_take-2/

humanitarian initiatives and the [Nepali Diaspora Investment Fund](#)⁹ that focuses on investing in public company securities.

According to World Bank data, the Sudanese diaspora remitted an estimated at \$425 million in 2019 (EUDiF and Shabaka, 2021). However, due to the fact that most transfers bypass the traditional banking system (in part due to US sanctions imposed in 1997 and lifted in late 2020), the actual amount is likely much higher.

Cultural, Intellectual, and Social Cooperation

Knowledge and skills transfer as a development strategy is key to capturing the gains of migration, including the engagement of second and subsequent generations and promoting Sudanese culture internationally. In addition, creating knowledge transfer platforms will support human development in innovation and public management institutions. This includes the creation of links between academic and research institutions. Also, technical assistance, which has been critical at the outset of the transition. Additionally, utilise diaspora networks and media channels to underscore Sudan and Sudanese people's positive and unique image, raising awareness about the country's rich cultural heritage, arts, and diversity.

Political Cooperation

The diaspora can extend the country's global reach and create a sense of belonging for Sudanese and their descendants worldwide, essential allies in future diplomatic engagements. Additionally, this extension can ensure that vulnerable Sudanese are offered services and protection.

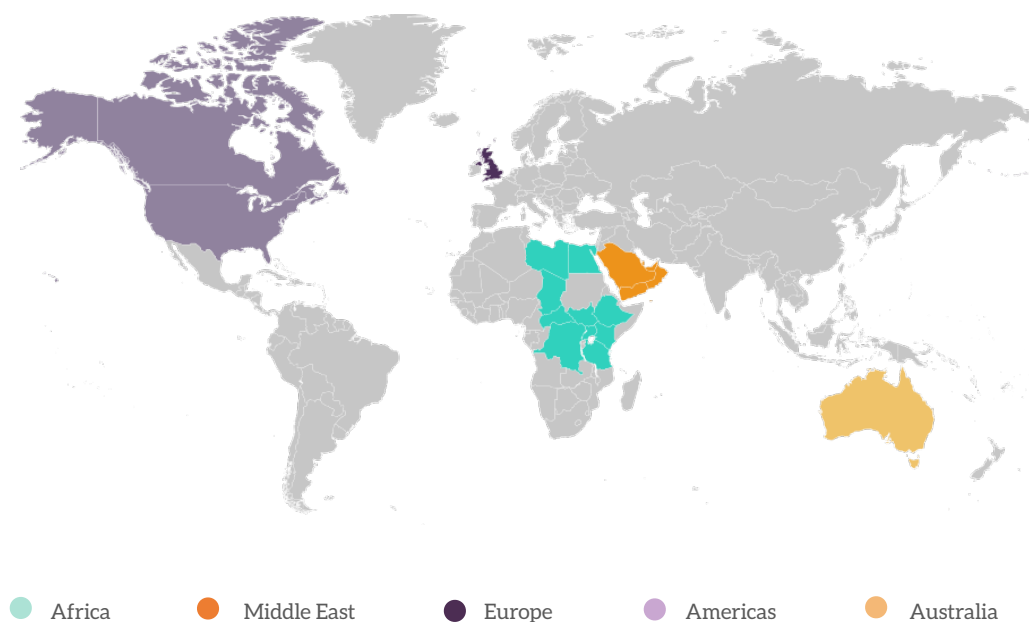
⁹ <https://www.nepdif.com/>

Diaspora engagement should be a two-way street, with partnerships built on trust, respect, and reciprocity. A diaspora policy can benefit Sudan and Sudanese people both at home and abroad but will only have significant impact if it ensures mutually beneficial strategies. Engaging with the diaspora, and ensuring the diversity of this engagement, is about building for the future at this critical time in Sudan's history.

Brief background to migration to Sudan

Successive civil wars (from 1955 to 1972 and from 1983 to 2005) in the South of Sudan, and restart of conflicts in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile state since South Sudan's succession since 2011, as well as in Darfur (where the conflict peaked in 2003/2004) are the main factor in terms of the number of people displaced and migration from Sudan (Hammond, 2021).

According to IOM estimates, between 1.2 and 1.7 million Sudanese citizens are currently living abroad, primarily in neighbouring African countries and the Gulf region, an important destination for labour migrants (IOM, 2011). South Sudan, Chad, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are the top four host countries for Sudanese migrants overall; in the Global North, the key sites include the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia.



Historically, Sudanese began migrating as traders and sailors. In the 1960s and 1970s, the early oil boom years, a wave of migration saw an increase in those migrating to Gulf countries and a much smaller number migrating to the Global North. Another wave took place in the late 1980s to early 1990s, when the government led by the National Congress Party took power and began an Arabisation and Islamisation programme. As a result, many intellectuals, opposition figures, religious minorities, and those deemed a threat to the government's rule fled the country, many forcibly. Indeed, since the 1956 declaration of Sudan's independence, emigration has never stopped and was particularly intense during the two civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) (Woodward, 2013).

Sudan has hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries, notably in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, with the onset of the second civil war in 1983, Sudan also became a significant generator of forced migration and humanitarian crisis. Moreover, the civil wars in South Sudan became a catalyst for other conflicts in the country, including: in the western region of Darfur, where conflict has raged for over a decade; in the east of the country; and along the newly-established borders with South Sudan. As a result, millions of Sudanese and South Sudanese have been displaced and their numbers keep rising due to even

further increasing conflict. In 2011, the UN estimated that more than two million have died due to conflict and six million have been displaced, of which four million were Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (IOM, 2011).

Sudan has a complex challenge: it is both a host to migrant communities from neighbouring countries (primarily from South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) and must deal with armed conflict coupled with poor transport infrastructure and insecurity within its borders, which chronically obstructs humanitarian aid to affected populations.

State of play of diaspora and migration engagement and management

Over the decades, Sudan has engaged its diaspora through maintaining and increasing financial flows into the country and attempting to stem the brain drain. Sudanese diaspora professionals and investors are active in Sudan, and the country has also engaged its diaspora to lobby and advocate in their countries of residence for sanctions to be lifted, particularly restrictions on the import of medicines and medical equipment that remain largely in place. Following a coup d'état and popular uprising against the military regime in 2019, Sudanese diaspora groups and networks became involved in advising the uprising, including by engaging the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) alliance in advocacy, governance, and media outreach (African Union, 2021). The Government of Sudan has now invited the Sudanese diaspora to take part in building a new Sudan. It is due to begin developing a formal diaspora policy over the next few months and consult with diaspora worldwide to create new schemes and incentives to encourage diaspora resource flows, skills transfer, and productive return.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 has lent this outreach added urgency. Sudanese health professionals based in Canada, the UK, US, and Gulf states have been actively mobilising medical and other supplies (African Union, 2021). In April 2020, Prime Minister Hamdok launched the 'Stand for Sudan' campaign, calling on Sudanese nationals worldwide to contribute financially to support the country's economy during a crisis (Prime Minister's Office, 2021).



What do we mean by governance? It is not just laws and policies. It is also about the processes for institutional decision making, accountability, control, and involvement. One of the challenges for diaspora engagement in Sudan is the lack of clarity on which ministries and departments the 'government' is, a theme common in many countries. Most African states have a specific branch in ministries reserved for diaspora engagement. Members of the task force cited what is happening in Sudan in general, and in the Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA) specifically.

Currently, Sudan's diaspora engagement is limited by governmental institutions' lack of capacity and lack of clarity over internal structures, particularly regarding the lead ministry for diaspora engagement. There is a multiplicity of diaspora engagement efforts by different departments and ministries, which creates confusion and complicates governance. While the Sudanese diaspora is often perceived as a cash machine, ministries in other African countries have come to hold a much broader view of diaspora contributions. For example, other countries see that their diasporas can also be social and political, as well as financial, investors. Various diasporas have different opinions on socio-economic and political progress.

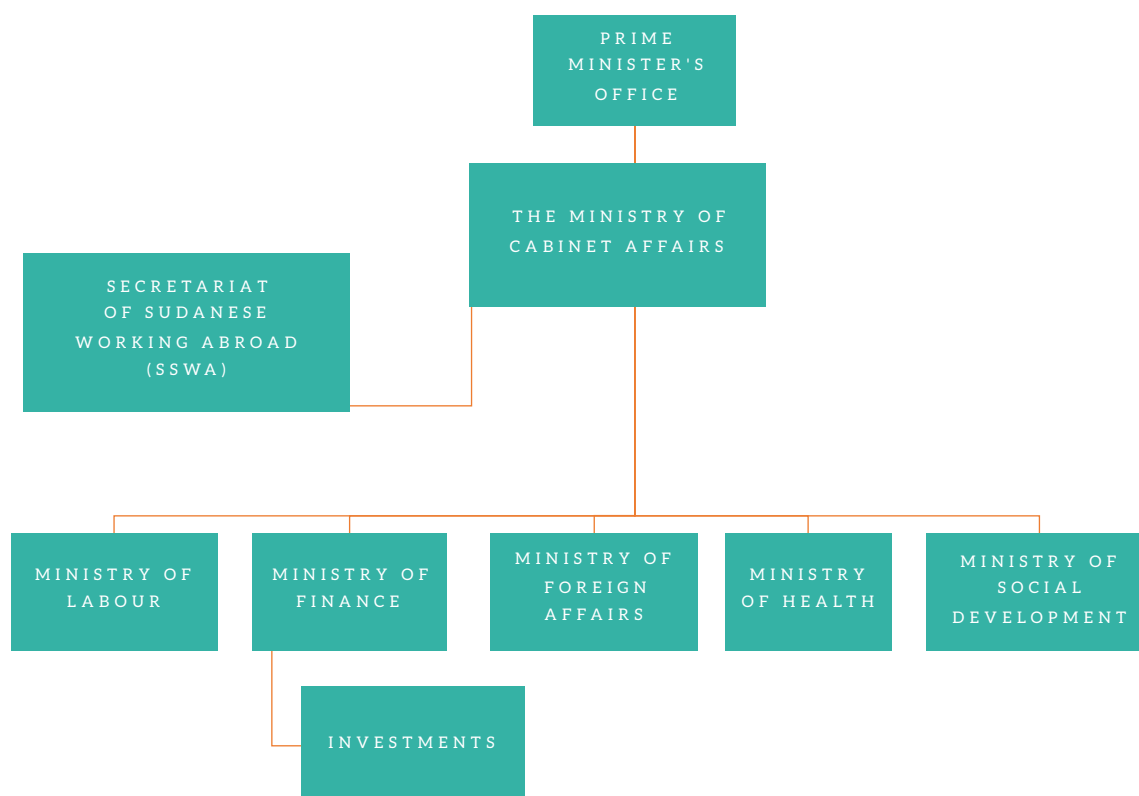
First-generation diasporas often engage differently than second and third generation. While the needs of first-generation diaspora are relatively well recognised, this is not necessarily true for 1.5, second, and subsequent generation engagement. This gap raises a critical question: What are the needs of and motivations for these generations' engagement?

Legislative and policy framework

ACT TEXT AND LEAD MINISTRY	SUMMARY
Labour Code (1997)	The Labour Code requires all Sudanese who wish to work abroad to register with and gain permission from the Ministry of Labour.
The Organisation of the Affairs of Sudanese Working Abroad Act (1998)	This Act regulates Sudanese emigration. Article 4 created the Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA), a Ministry of Cabinet Affairs department, as the lead agency for diaspora engagement in Sudan.
Passports and Immigration Act (2003)	This Act sets out Sudan's entry/exit requirements for both Sudanese and foreigners. The Act also requires all Sudanese to obtain an exit visa and leave through an approved port of entry when leaving the country. Exit visa charges were paid to the Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad, but these were abolished in May 2020.
The Five-Year Programme for Economic Reform (2015-2019)	This Act includes references to increasing remittances from and the savings of Sudanese working abroad by stabilising and unifying the exchange rate.

<p>'Stand for Sudan' initiative by the Prime Minister (2020)</p>	<p>Stand for Sudan' campaign, calling on Sudanese nationals worldwide to contribute financially to support the country's economy during a time of crisis.</p>
<p>Juba Peace Agreement (2020)</p>	<p>Sudan's civilian-led Transitional Government and a coalition of armed groups called the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) signed the landmark deal on 3 October 2020 in Juba, South Sudan. The agreement seeks to address the root causes and consequences of these conflicts, such as the safe and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees to their original lands and compensation, eviction of illegal settlers and the development and reconstruction of the conflict-affected areas.</p>

Migrant and diaspora-focused institutions in Sudan



Government of Sudan

Prime Minister's Office

The [Prime Minister's Office](#) has consulted with the diaspora, including about their role in new political initiatives. Some of these meetings were initiated by the PM and others in response to diaspora requests.

The Ministry of Cabinet Affairs

The [Ministry of Cabinet Affairs](#) is the lead ministry for diaspora engagement in Sudan.

Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA)

The [Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad \(SSWA\)](#) is a sub-ministerial agency within the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs responsible for diaspora affairs, policy development, and coordination of diaspora services. The SSWA provides a one-stop service centre for the diaspora in Sudan and e-services for migrants abroad, such as ID cards, National Contribution and zakat payments, and information on investment and skills transfer opportunities and cultural and heritage activities.

The SSWA established the Sudan Centre for Migration, Development, and Population Studies in 2019 to conduct research and monitor population movements to and from Sudan, exploring the economic, social, psychological, health, and security implications.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There is a public expectation that [diplomatic missions](#) will have better communication links with the Sudanese diaspora. This will require building trust in and the capacity of diplomatic missions.

Positive experiences have been reported in some locations abroad, reflecting the change expected following the revolution.

Ministry of Labour

The Ministry of Labour (MoLAR), alongside the Ministry of Social Development, created a coordination unit for diaspora engagement¹⁰. Prior to that, there was an earlier attempt at the former combined Ministry of Labour and Social Development (MoLSD) to establish a coordination unit at the MoLSD to utilise the expertise of Sudanese diasporas at government institutions.

Ministry of Health

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, there is ongoing engagement by the [Ministry of Health](#), including by making connections with the PM's Office, Minister of Health, and the Global Health Unit in the Ministry of Health. In addition, the Sudanese medical diaspora have also started several initiatives, e.g. Sudan Health Volunteers.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

In the area of [investments and facilitating the sending of remittances](#), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning will be critical/

¹⁰ The MoLAR issues work permissions for expatriates, receives employment requests from embassies and such.



Roadmap for diaspora engagement: opportunities and challenges

Why does the Sudanese government want to engage the diaspora? There are several reasons. Firstly, the revolution was heavily supported by the diaspora and the government is aware of this. Secondly, the current financial crisis in Sudan makes diaspora financial support critical. Thirdly, the Prime Minister, several cabinet ministers, and other senior officials are themselves from the diaspora; and finally, while the government has projects, it does not have the capacity to implement them. The diaspora has the expertise to support the government to build and implement such projects, but questions remain around how the diaspora can be best used, the government's needs from the diaspora, and how these needs can be aligned with the diaspora's own aspirations. There is a major challenge in re-establishing the public sector as part of ongoing reforms in the country.

Consultation to build a solid foundation for effective implementation

The diaspora consultation process should be a bidirectional exchange of skills and ideas that celebrates Sudanese diversity. It must be an equitable and inclusive process. It should have clear goals and objectives, as well as transparent communication of outcomes, implementation, and delivery. The diaspora consultation process is crucial to designing an efficient mapping process.

Consultation projects should be as inclusive and equitable as possible, and not solely driven by politics.

Dynamic diaspora mapping

Diaspora mapping processes should be dynamic, continuous activities, not one-offs. For example, in Sudan this is important because there are issues around information governance, data protection, and data sharing.

Diaspora engagement as an exchange

Most existing policies focus on remittances and view diaspora members as contributors. However, alongside what the government can gain from the diaspora, it is also essential to consider what the government can provide in terms of opportunities and services.

Ensuring equality in reaching and engaging with diverse diaspora communities

Currently, the government is focused on a specific social class, educational background, and sometimes gender (typically male) to harness (primarily financial) diaspora contributions. However, ensuring engagement with all segments of the diaspora is critical to inclusivity and success.

Engagement policies should acknowledge that motivations for engagement are diverse, go beyond the political, and can include individual interests such as investment, consultancy, settlement, and familiarising second and subsequent generations with the country. In addition, second and subsequent generations face issues of language and identity, which raises questions around how interest and commitment can be generated.

Supporting temporary, circular, and permanent (re)return to Sudan

The issue of return is different for first, second, and subsequent generation diaspora members. Those interested may face barriers in engaging with and returning to Sudan. Task force members referenced skills transfer schemes such as TOKTEN or Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) that match qualified diaspora returnees with relevant national institutions in Sudan (or other origin countries) for one to two years as volunteers (covering their travel and accommodation expenses).

Aside from the cost of these programmes, as obtaining funding is a challenge, placements of this length may not be suitable for diaspora professionals with family and financial commitments in settlement countries. There needs to be a greater range of short and longer-term return options for diaspora returnees.

The issue of citizenship is critical. Some diaspora members may have to return to Sudan if they do not hold a second citizenship. Thus, cases of voluntary and involuntary return to Sudan must also be considered.

Building trust



The government must show support for the Sudanese diaspora in non-monetary ways, as it is vital to both engage diasporas in the country's development and support them. The government's increased interest is inspiring, but contributions must go both ways. After the revolution, diaspora members tried to contribute more to Sudan's development, and government and civil engagement worked hard to absorb these efforts. Currently, the government has limited capacity to absorb diaspora engagement through its current systems.

However, there is still need for more communication and engagement initiatives. Relationships built on trust would allow the diaspora to contribute vital knowledge, experience, and time. Effective consultation with the diaspora will therefore be crucial to building trust.

Scaling up capacities to develop and deliver effective diaspora engagement policy

Translating promise into reality is more easily said than done. Current ad-hoc engagement with the diaspora means resources, knowledge will dissipate quickly. To address this gap, the government needs to move from acknowledging the importance of diaspora engagement and seek to scale up its capacity to design and implement an effective cross-governmental policy.

Donors who are keen to support the Government of Sudan to engage its diaspora effectively should commit to funding their efforts as fully as possible to address these gaps.

Framing a diaspora policy around key national, international, and regional policies



Any diaspora policy needs to be integrated and part of key national, international and regional policies. Below are key policies the Government of Sudan can pursue.

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (2018)

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)⁵ includes 28 countries as of 2018, and was created by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement between 54 of the 55 African Union nations. The free trade area is the largest globally in terms of the number of participating countries since the formation of the World Trade Organization. The agreement initially requires members to remove tariffs from 90 percent of goods, allowing free access to commodities, goods, and services across the continent.



Global
Compact for
Migration
(GCM)
(2018)

Of the GCM's 23 objectives, two are explicitly focused on diaspora:

Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.

Objective 19 is important because it emphasises that 'migrants and diasporas' can be enabled to participate in bringing about sustainable development. However, this objective's heart is hidden in paragraph 35 (h), which calls on governments to establish constructive participation to achieve the SDGs 'by facilitating flexible modalities'.

Objective 20: Promote the faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster migrants' financial inclusion.

Objective 20 is critical to reducing the cost of and obstacles to financial remittances. In the case of Sudan, sanctions and being listed as a state sponsors of terrorism have made sending and receiving remittances challenging.

<p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015)</p>	<p>The SDGs recognise migration’s critical contribution to achieving sustainable development and, consequently, migration has appeared in mainstream global development policy for the first time. Thus, the multi-disciplinary and cross-cutting nature of the SDGs provides a useful framework to assess and promote migration and development. The SDGs also facilitate high-level buy-in from global institutions and UN member states, meaning the migration and development agenda has greater scope for international traction and implementation.</p>
<p>AU Agenda 2063 (2013)</p>	<p>The vision for diaspora engagement is realised in the AU’s 2063 Agenda, including a call for all Member States to have a dual citizen’s programme for and facilitate the diaspora’s contribution in strengthening the international partnership of the African Union. This commitment is realised in the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO), which is responsible for implementing AU engagement with non-state actors through the involvement of diaspora and civil society.</p>
<p>Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan (2007)</p>	<p>The Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan, adopted in Lisbon in 2007, recognises the diaspora’s special position in both receiving and origin countries in terms of sending considerable funds and as a development partner at the national and regional levels. It expresses its wish that the diaspora might act as a source of information tailored to respond to the real needs of the people, addressing the dangers linked to irregular migration and the challenges linked to integration in host countries.</p>

Recommendations

Diasporas can be resourceful conduits to, governments in origin countries. Thus, policymakers in Sudan, settlement countries, and other actors need to look beyond short-term gains. Policies and programmatic interventions should not reduce the diaspora to a single, homogenous group but instead disaggregate the needs of different generations, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. In addition, governments need to have larger visions, ambitions, and pursue longer-term planning for diaspora engagement in order to safeguard future investments.

While each context differs, there are still a few essential elements that policymakers should take into account when considering diaspora engagement.

Recommendations for specific stakeholders

Stakeholder	Recommendation	Priority (short, medium or long-term)
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<p>Government of Sudan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop a comprehensive diaspora policy and action plan▪ Establish a comprehensive cross-governmental diaspora policy and action plan as a priority.▪ Conduct a needs assessment of existing structures that engage with the diaspora to support adequate resourcing in order to deliver on any subsequent policy and action plan.▪ Review current policies to ensure it aligns with relevant national, regional and international frameworks, such as SDGs and African Union Agenda 2063.▪ There is a need for an integrated model, with a technical group representing different stakeholders in Sudan, particularly the executive Council.	<p>Short-term</p>
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<p>Government of Sudan</p>	<p>Scaling up centralised multilingual communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Some countries communicate with the diaspora mainly through an interactive, multilingual website linked to various national institutes, such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs. Thus, the diaspora can communicate while abroad. In another example, countries provide support to the diaspora via a single agency, such as the Ministry of Finance. Indeed, Sudan’s Ministry of Social Development and others have initiated a diaspora office abroad, like in Tunisia.▪ Additionally, enhance direct coordination with communities and increase synergies and partnerships with relevant stakeholders. This includes provide timely, culturally appropriate, accessible information.	<p>Short-term</p>
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<p>Government of Sudan</p>	<p>Establish a ‘one-stop shop’ for the delivery of services to the diaspora</p> <p>A central unit under the Prime Minister's Office is essential because this will provide leadership, direction, and (hopefully) efficient coordination between different stakeholders, which could compensate for bureaucracy and other various challenges. It is important that all relevant ministries are engaged and there is transparency about the activities of each and how they are interlinked. Once again, coordination is key to the success of diaspora engagement.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
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<p>Government of Sudan</p>	<p>Review of current structure for diaspora engagement</p> <p>There is a need for capacity building and skills upgrading within various ministries and the SSWA to get the most out of diaspora engagement. Needs include data collection, statistical analysis, data sharing, research, and study. For example, the Secretariate for Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA) needs to undergo a needs assessment and review the governance structure to build trust in the body and expand its main engagement beyond Sudanese migrants in the Gulf. Also, build its research capacity. Therefore, a one-stop shop that provides a holistic service, a hub, is important.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation, and learning should be integral for diaspora engagement. For example, an independent unit or council could be established to monitor the performance of any centralised body for diaspora engagement, with a feedback facility (through a website, application and such). Furthermore, equipment and digital facilities are required to improve communication between the diaspora and country of origin. This needs to also extend to diplomatic missions, including evaluation. needs assessment exercises.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
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<p>Government of Sudan</p>	<p>Look beyond a financial focus Remittances and how they can be ‘captured’ appears to be many origin countries’ ultimate goal, but this is only short-term thinking. Governments must think bigger, as remittances are sent primarily by first-generation diaspora and drop significantly among the second and subsequent generations.</p>	<p>Medium and long-term</p>
<p>Government of Sudan Sudanese diaspora organisations International and regional organisations</p>	<p>Ensure intergenerational engagement Policymakers need to think intergenerationally about diaspora engagement – something missing in the numerous activities and plans currently underway. How does the first generation engage with the second and subsequent generations? Can engagement extend beyond being framed as a ‘duty’? What can policymakers offer the diaspora in return?</p>	<p>Medium and long-term</p>



<p>Government of Sudan</p> <p>Sudanese diaspora organisations</p> <p>International and regional organisations</p>	<p>Recognise the diversity of diasporas</p> <p>It is critical to conduct regular, direct outreach to migrants – including workers and self-employed – regarding economic and employment support measures. Also, ensure protection is extended to irregular migrants in accessing health and other services.</p> <p>Thus far, the focus has been on first-generation diaspora from the riverain regions of Sudan, often males with tertiary education. But what about those who do not fit this profile, who are from the peripheries, without tertiary education, or are second and subsequent-generation diaspora associated with broader ideas and identities? For example, there is a growing migration trend among women globally. Why are we limiting our knowledge and experiences by not using more disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data? Policymakers need to ensure that policies and programmes address the needs and nuances of diverse diaspora individuals and communities.</p>	<p>Medium and long-term</p>
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<p>Sudanese diaspora organisations</p> <p>Settlement countries governments</p>	<p>Establish a countrywide or regional umbrella group for Sudanese migrant/diaspora organisations and groups that brings members and broader networks together to contribute to responses when a joint approach is required.</p> <p>Establish strong leadership and multi-sectoral coordination, preparedness, and response to crises in all relevant areas – including health, education, and housing – as well as national and local government service connectivity to reach communities across settlement countries, taking into consideration gender, age, and disability.</p>	<p>Short and medium term</p>
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<p>Government of Sudan</p> <p>International and regional organisations</p>	<p>Evidence-based engagement and improved data collection</p> <p>The lack of data poses a significant challenge to diaspora engagement. Information on the diaspora’s distribution, demographic background, interests, expertise, and skills is critical to establishing the parameters for a diaspora policy and action plan. There is also a lack of data on the networks active around diaspora engagement. While specific diaspora groups have conducted a few mapping activities, such activities have not been inclusive or reflective of the diversity of Sudanese communities.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
<p>International and regional organisations</p>	<p>Value diaspora communities’ and their lived experience as critical stakeholders and equitable partners in the delivery of services.</p> <p>Remove barriers, signpost, and engage diaspora communities in the decision making of steering committees and policy implementation.</p> <p>Provide flexible funding streams for Sudanese organisations and groups to develop and sustain humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery initiatives, such as responses to COVID-19 and climate change.</p>	<p>Short and medium term</p>



<p>Governments in settlement countries</p> <p>Regional and international organisations</p>	<p>Looking beyond the dichotomy of origin and settlement countries</p> <p>We have already seen that identities transcend the origin/settlement country dichotomy. Moreover, the idea of the nation state is not the only source of identity as, generationally, people associate with broader identities. Thus, diaspora engagement can be initiated from beyond these two sites. For example, regional institutions such as ASEAN and the African Union can develop blueprints for member states to establish policies supporting diaspora engagement across borders.</p>	<p>Medium to long-term</p>
<p>Governments in settlement countries</p>	<p>‘Governments can create “triple wins” for migrants, countries of origin, destination countries.’</p> <p>Diaspora engagement is not only for the benefit of origin countries, but also settlement countries. Promoting growth and development in origin countries can increase youth employment opportunities, for example. Also, having a population that brings different perspectives and circulates knowledge creates the space for more innovative ideas and solutions.</p>	<p>Long-term</p>

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Background to Shabaka

Established in 2014, Shabaka is a diaspora-led, values-driven consulting and research organisation focused on diaspora humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery. Borne of a desire to help fight the injustices that disadvantage entire communities, excluding them from socio-economic and political progress, Shabaka's vision is prosperity and security for all people.

This is clearly seen in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic; 'business as usual' is now, more than ever, not good enough. We cannot waste any more time bringing about equitable change. We must use the strong networks of professionals engaged in international development and humanitarian action that diasporas, including second and subsequent generations, have built.

Comprised of both academics and practitioners, the Shabaka team brings diverse skills, networks, languages, and first-hand experience working with migrant and diaspora communities in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

Project team members

Sara Abdelgalil (Project Manager), Sara Badri, Leila Monteiro, Deniz Demirag, Paul Asquith and Bashair Ahmed.

Previous work by Shabaka related to Sudan and diaspora engagement

Research:

Mapping Study on the Role and Faces of African Diaspora Humanitarianism during COVID-19. <https://shabaka.org/mapping-study-on-the-role-and-faces-of-african-diaspora-humanitarianism-during-covid-19/>

Roundtable Series:

A series of both closed and public roundtables discussing and sharing experiences on diaspora humanitarianism. This is the first in the series. Sudan in focus and the pathway beyond COVID-19: <https://shabaka.org/diaspora-humanitarianism-series-sudan-in-focus-and-the-pathway-beyond-covid-19/>

Diaspora engagement in times of crisis:

Research on patterns of diaspora humanitarian response in Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Sudan, Ukraine, and Zambia. A partnership project with the EU

Global Diaspora Facility. https://diasporaforddevelopment.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Diaspora-Case-Study-Crisis_EN-v.3.pdf

Impact of COVID-19 on Sudanese communities in the UK:

Policy brief identifying and outlining the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sudanese communities in the UK, in their day-to-day lives and connections with Sudan, and provides evidence of the need for better support and coordination between Sudanese communities. <https://shabaka.org/impact-of-covid-19-on-sudanese-communities-in-the-uk/>

Sudanese Diaspora Expert group

Shabaka formed this task force group in June 2021 to achieve an initial skeletal structure for the Sudan Diaspora Policy by Sudanese experts to guide further talks with other stakeholders

The 12-member task force team met three times between June and July 2021 and discussed current pathways for diaspora engagement in Sudan, highlighting challenges and opportunities and the priorities for diaspora engagement in Sudan.

They include:

Nada Abdelmagid, Mohamed Elshabik, Dr. Amira Ahmed, Dr. Hatim Mohammed Almahti Yagoub, Prof. Munzoul Assal, Mubarak Maman, Nazar Hamour and Nada M. Ali, PhD

For more details about their profile, please visit our website at www.shabaka.org



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