



GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

Diaspora Policy

for

Consultation and Review

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INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed in recognition of the urgent need to mainstream the Grenada Diaspora into our national development process in line with the aspirations and goals of Government. Enhanced interaction with Grenadian nationals who have migrated, including their descendants, and have maintained strong ties with their homeland (herein referred to as the **Diaspora**) was seen as a key element of the strategy.

A tremendous governance responsibility placed on the Government of Grenada (GOG) following another overwhelming mandate received at the recent national elections, calls for the GOG to explore all avenues and methods, and to develop new strategies to support the national development thrust.

There exists enormous potential in skills, knowledge and expertise by Grenadians abroad, which is not being utilized in the country. This is an indication that the Diaspora has a huge and untapped potential to positively contribute to the growth of our economy.

As a government, we have an obligation to engage and facilitate our citizens not only locally. This policy has, therefore, been developed to facilitate a mutually beneficial relationship between the country and its Diaspora.

Some of the key interventions proposed in this Policy Paper are: curbing the high cost of remittances; improving consular services to address issues of Grenadians abroad; using the Grenadians abroad to promote tourism; tapping into diaspora talents; and designing a dedicated web portal to facilitate collection of data and profiles of Grenadians abroad for proper planning and engagement.

The successful planning, monitoring and evaluation of this policy, proposed programmes and projects, will involve key sectors. The execution of the proposed programmes and projects, therefore, calls for a multi-sectoral and participatory approach from all the stakeholders. The GOG has, therefore, commissioned the elaboration of a diaspora policy and strategy. This document is prepared to constitute the basis for wide ranging consultations among key stakeholders with the view to engender broad agreement on the policy and the modalities of delivery for diaspora engagement.

CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND

The Grenadian Diaspora plays a key and strategic role in national development. The Government of Grenada fully recognizes that the Grenadian Diaspora has huge and untapped potential, which should be harnessed for the development of our nation. To successfully harness this potential, the government is committed to mainstream and integrate the Diaspora in the country's national development agenda. Indeed, the role of the Diaspora in the realization of Grenada's development thrust is recognized especially in driving investments in key sectors of the economy such as Education, Financial services, Health, Housing, ICT enabled services, Manufacturing and Tourism. The policy, therefore, must contain measures aimed at effective deployment and utilization of the expertise, technical knowledge and the entrepreneurial skills of the Grenadian Diaspora.

The Grenadian Diaspora makes up a significant part of our country's human capital. In the many cities across the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe and the Caribbean where they reside, they are making significant contributions, and their work should be acknowledged and strengthened. The Diaspora is recognized as a key participant in the developmental thrusts of many countries. Building and sustaining partnerships with nationals overseas is a crucial strategy to achieving goals that will be beneficial to our country. This paper will stress the need for strong political commitment to finding solutions that operate at the national and local levels.

The essential virtue and the ultimate goal of placing relations between government and the Diaspora on a structured organizational basis is the provision of a flexible and fluid mechanism through which the two sides can maintain dialogue. This dialogue is essential for communicating their respective needs, concerns and interests to each other, and agreeing on a framework for satisfying them. This is a long-term goal, which is capable of benefiting both sides, and in reality, will require a huge and painstaking organizational effort involving close cooperation amongst our leaders.

As we are well aware, the Diaspora already contributes significantly to our country through remittances. Additionally, this paper aims to provide an overview and to outline ways in which the Diaspora could directly contribute and provide options for action, which Government can harness to support its 16th constituency in making further significant contributions.

The Diaspora is an integral constituency in addressing the challenges facing our people and nation. Members can assist with providing fresh ideas when constructing development policies, as promoters of community development, as educators, and financiers in developing social entrepreneurship initiatives. Many of them are waiting for the opportunity to be utilised as assets in uplifting their communities and creating foundations for sustainable growth and prosperity. It must, however, be recognized that to achieve and maintain this goal, we must all work together fruitfully.

WHY A DIASPORA POLICY?

This is the first clear statement of Government's initiatives towards to Diaspora, which recognizes that Grenada has a unique and important relationship with its Diaspora that must be nurtured and developed in the following ways:

Support – those who have left Grenada and need or want support (as it defines Government's role to both drive and foster diaspora engagement);

Connects – in an all-inclusive way with those of all ages around the world, who are Grenadians, of Grenadian descent or have a tangible connection to Grenada, and wish to maintain a connection with Grenada and with each other;

Facilitates – a wide range of activities at the local, national and international levels designed to build on, and develop a two-way diaspora engagement; and

Recognizes – the wide variety of people who make up our diaspora and the important ongoing contribution that they have made, both individually and collectively, in shaping our development and our identity.

WHO COMPRISES THE GRENADA DIASPORA?

Grenada Diaspora means Grenadians and persons of Grenadian origin that live outside of Grenada.

The Grenada Diaspora comprises emigrants from Grenada and their descendants around the world and those with a tangible connection to Grenada. In addition, it also takes into account the degree to which immigrants and their descendants retain the identity of their "home" country Grenada.

OBJECTIVE OF THE POLICY

To effectively mobilize and organize the Grenadian community at home and abroad to maximize national development potential through efficient deployment and use of collective resources for a resilient nation.

VISION

An inclusive and participatory Grenadian society where every Grenadian contributes to national development and shares in the benefits thereof, notwithstanding place of residency.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A Conceptual framework was advanced by Terry Branch in 2015. This framework is attached as an appendix to the document. The framework envisages the creation of various interest groups that are directly linked to specific sectors in Grenada. The key sectors are health, education, business, culture, sport, disaster management, projects and energy. It includes the establishment of a Diaspora Regional Service Center equipped with state-of-the-art communication facilities to

link with other hubs and to the mainland. Specific interest groups include but are not limited to schools, alumni associations, health practitioners, sporting organizations, cultural organizations, development groups, IT groups, etc.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

The policy document has identified major issues relating to the diaspora. It is believed that the partnership of the Grenadian Diaspora within their country will be strengthened by implementing these activities. These principles will be based on commonly shared national and uses Grenada's policy direction as the basis to make it more transparent.

The principles underpinning the policy are as follows:

- Collaborative – sector-wide approach
- Participatory – conducted amongst many stakeholders
- Inclusive – equitable and fair)
- Policy-oriented – political approach
- Forward-looking and holistic
- Results-focused
- Moral – fortitude, transparent and accountable

MAJOR GOALS OF THE POLICY

1. Mobilize, organize and re-energize the diaspora community and establish appropriate linkages with the homebased communities
2. Capitalize on resource mobilization approaches for national development
3. Maximize impact through efficient resource deployment and use
4. Sustain involvement and participation in national development processes
5. Build national capacity towards a more resilient country

CHALLENGES

1. **Lack of a comprehensive and centralized Database** – Sourcing and management of data on Diaspora has been a challenge to the Government. This has hampered effective planning, engagement and support of the Grenada Diaspora.
2. **Untapped Diaspora Skills** – Grenada continues to experience migration of its citizens to other countries, notably to the developed world. The professional Grenadian Diaspora possesses immense intellectual resources even though there is no proper documentation of the same. However, the Government is unable to attract qualified and skilled human resource from the Diaspora community, thus inhibiting reverse transfer of technology. The government lacks a mechanism through which it can tap into this immense intellectual capital.

3. **Lack of centralized institutional framework to coordinate Diaspora issues** – Diaspora issues are multifaceted, complex and involve various actors, thus require effective coordination. Apart from the coordination of the many organizations we face the challenge of coordinating the thousands of our nationals. This disharmony has resulted to poor coordination, duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.
4. **Under-utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-enabled services by the Government and the Diaspora** – The adoption and use of modern ICT is a priority we must accept and utilize. This utilization of online services will provide our Diaspora and the homeland with more efficient and effective services.
5. **Capacity to offer adequate consular services** – The Government accords consular services high priority and is committed to providing comprehensive and effective services to all Grenadian living abroad. However, financial constraints provide challenges to expanding diplomatic missions abroad.
6. **High cost of remitting money** – The Grenada Diaspora continues to play an important role in the development of the country through remittances. Grenadians in the Diaspora contributes approximately 11 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The high cost of remitting money affects our remittance numbers, and therefore, we must seek to find new technologies to reduce the cost.
7. **Lack of incentive framework to promote Diaspora participation in national development** – The structures and mechanisms used to create awareness to the Grenada Diaspora of investment opportunities available in different sectors of the economy are weak and uncoordinated. Furthermore, the country lacks an incentive framework to promote Diaspora investments in the economy.

STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The establishment of a mechanism to monitor and evaluate Diaspora Policy Implementing Offices to better follow up on the policy implementation is crucial. This Framework will highlight key outcomes and outputs and provide a structured approach to reporting progress.

Improving Diaspora Engagement in Investment, Trade, Health and Tourism

1. Encourage international and regional investment offices and stakeholders to provide comprehensive services to support members of the Diaspora.
2. Facilitate the delivery of goods and services provided by diaspora communities through assistance with local coordination, customs and tax concessions, and other services.
3. Ensure sustainable economic development through the encouragement and the facilitation by the Diaspora community of investment in priority economic sectors that will meet the goals of job creation and income generation.
4. Provide incentives for the diaspora to initiate economic opportunities.
5. Develop a program to specifically harnessing the potential of the Diaspora by empowering them to become tourism promoters.
6. Provide incentives in partnership with the Diaspora to secure small grants and micro financing for youth-led renewable energy enterprises.
7. Support agro-based micro-entrepreneurial endeavours of young people and invest in farming technologies that boost agricultural production.
8. Tackle issues such as land acquisition, taxation, immigration procedures and networking with Grenada diplomatic missions abroad.
9. Continue to strengthen the foreign policy framework to make it more responsive to Diaspora related issues.
10. Examine the necessary structures to continue addressing the issue of the high cost of transferring monies, with a view to attracting more remittances and lowering the cost of transferring monies.
11. Develop an incentive framework to promote Diaspora participation in national development.
12. Develop incentives and tailor-made investment packages to encourage the Grenadian Diaspora to direct their remittances towards productive ventures both at the national and local levels.
13. Encourage Diaspora-led teams to interact with local communities as a way of information sharing and using their expertise to create innovative and effective strategies for the prevention of diseases.

Establishing Permanent Information Exchange Forum

1. Utilize the Grenada diplomatic missions to sensitize Grenadians abroad to create awareness on the benefits of registration to the centralized Diaspora database and integrated Diaspora Information System.
2. Create mechanisms and measures to promote transfer of knowledge and skills virtually (through online support) to build local capacity of Grenadian nationals. In this regard, information will be made available to the Diaspora on skills shortages and corresponding employment opportunities.
3. Facilitate partnerships between Diaspora communities and local communities through linkages, coordination and active participation in organized programmes.
4. Commemorate Diaspora Day – A National Diaspora Day can be celebrated at home with a planned agenda of events as a significant number of nationals come home to celebrate cultural and religious holidays.
5. Host forums aboard with the Diaspora as part of an Outreach Program.
6. Coordinate the collection of material resources from the Diaspora and provide channels and contact points to local communities with corresponding needs and facilitate the distribution of resources.
7. Develop a partnership that promotes the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to offer solutions to our development challenges.
8. Establish modalities for holding constant briefs with the Grenadian Diaspora to disseminate information on investment and other opportunities in the country.

Youth Diaspora Initiatives

1. Facilitate rural development with a focus on assisting youth experiencing difficulty finding meaningful engagement and gainful employment.
2. Encourage Youth in the Diaspora to come back home and volunteer to share their knowledge and skills.
3. Adopt and promote the concept of the Diaspora as an agent in development and encourage Grenadians to undertake community-based initiatives to train unemployed youth.
4. Fund the expansion of existing or establish new youth-led community-based activities through formal and informal curricula.
5. Provide opportunities for youth-led awareness campaigns through their participation and leadership in training.
6. Develop, scale-up, or replicate initiatives aimed at building capacity in young people at the national level in promoting sustainable development.

Advancing Diaspora Participation in Good Governance and Democracy

1. Strengthen and develop platforms for cooperation between the Diaspora and Government. These platforms should use the skills, resources and experiences of nationals living abroad for training initiatives and other effective strategies, to provide better policy formulation and solutions to some of the country's current challenges.

2. Create mechanisms to ensure the Diaspora can assist in eradicating poverty through forums that allow their perspectives to be heard, relevant to local concerns. This will promote widespread participation in the implementation of strategies.

EXECUTIVE BODIES OF THE POLICIES

Social Partners – Recognize the significance of the social partners, notably organizations of employers and workers, who have been in the forefront of promoting the significant contribution of the Diaspora to national development.

Development Partners – Recognize the significance of a collaborative partnership approach in mobilizing, allocating and utilizing resources for incorporating the Diaspora in the national development agenda. In this respect, development partners will support and supplement the Government and other stakeholders in their respective roles in terms of financial and technical support within the framework of this Policy.

Media – Recognize the critical role of the media in educating the public. Awareness creation is imperative in showcasing the development contribution of Grenada's Diaspora. In this respect, the Government will collaborate with the media and the Diaspora communities to highlight and educate Grenadians on the important role the Diaspora play in nation building, as well as in labor migration issues.

Other Stakeholders – Commit to building partnerships with stakeholders in involving the Diaspora in the national development agenda. Whereas diverse stakeholders will play different roles in this endeavor, it will be necessary to effectively coordinate their roles along a common strategy. This is essential in enhancing consensus building amongst stakeholders and implementing agencies; thereby avoiding duplication of roles and the resultant conflicts. This will; promote effective policy implementation and exploit existing synergies.

STRUCTURE

The Government through its consular services is committed to strengthen and provide capacity to the existing Grenadian Diaspora organizations and encourage Grenadians to form such organizations where they do not exist. Government recognizes the significance of these organizations in promoting Diaspora issues through consultations, lobbying and advocacy, which is important for national development through structured investment. The organizations will supplement Government's effort with information on the Diaspora.

The Grenada Diaspora will be encouraged to form umbrella organizations and register them with the diplomatic missions abroad to enhance engagement between members of the Diaspora and government. They will also participate in promoting and marketing Grenada, and will also facilitate Grenadian delegations abroad on sports, culture and other missions.