

THE DIASPORA AND DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM

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GENERAL CONCLUSION

“diaspora in modern societies: myth of homeland and return” William Safran

The diaspora describes a community of people who live outside their country of origin or ancestral land but keep on maintaining strong ties with it.

The term diaspora carries a sense of displacement of a population from their ancestral land. These people are for whatever reasons separated from their original territory. These people in most cases hope or at least have the desire to return to their homeland at some point.

Prior to the triangular slave trade which was either transatlantic or trans-sahara, hundreds of thousands of Africans have moved and settled as merchants in different parts of Europe, America and Asia

Sub sahara Africa constitutes the largest Diaspora in the world in the 18th and 19th century. Today, the movement of people are sponsored by political and economic reasons. For example: the search of political asylum or the search for greener pastures in a context marked by an increasing unemployment and poverty in Africa and developing countries.

There is a growing evidence that the diaspora plays an important role in the development of their countries of origin. Thus justifying the need for this assert is to be harnessed.

This was the reason for the 2017 3rd international conference held in Cameroon, organized with the motto “ Act together for the development of the nation” during the conference,

The Cameroonian diaspora was encouraged by the government to invest in the country reasons being that the Diaspora has been recognized in other countries like Senegal, Mali, as an important asset for development.

However, some governments are very careful in the way they interact with their respective diasporas because this segment of people are sometimes accused of criticizing their home governments on media and social networks and also for organizing manifestations especially when the POR or an important member of the government is travelling to their country of residence.

However, despite the problems that the government may face in managing or interacting with the diaspora, it has an important impact on economic development(I) though some difficulties may come along the way (II)

I- IMPACT OF DIASPORA IN DEVELOPMENT

An emphasis will be placed at this level on the Economic impact(A) and the Socio-cultural impacts(B) of the diaspora on development.

A- Economic Impact

- The diaspora send remittances to their country of origin

The main economic contribution of the diaspora has been the provision of a sustainable financial assistance to their families or relatives in the country of origin through remittances. According to the world bank, such private transfer reduces poverty, increases investment and consequently improves the living conditions and growth in the recipient country.

- **Increase investment**

Beyond remittances, the diaspora contributes to the development of their country of origin through investment. This investment can go a long way to support entrepreneurship, start-ups and small enterprises in the country thereby reducing unemployment.

The diaspora is more likely to invest in their home countries than other foreign investors. This investment may be guided by the future desire to

- **Improved trade**

Diaspora has catalyzed the demand and supply of goods. Most financial remittances in the country of origin usually ensure the purchase of local groceries and other household equipment. This goes a long way to boost trade locally and internationally given that these goods demanded at the local level are imported from the country of settlement of the diaspora. The goods include: Machines, Cars, Electronics, etc... this has the effect of stimulating trade.

B- Socio-Cultural Impacts

- **Transfer of knowledge and savoir faire**

The transfer of acquired knowledge being one of the constructive contributions of the diaspora in the country of origin goes a long way to guarantee development.

Diaspora is a great source of transfer of technical knowledge and skills in the form of brain gain. Diaspora members can act as important medium of transfer of

technology between their country of residence and their country of origin.

- **Diaspora advocacy**

The diaspora organizations and sometimes individuals are seen to be getting increasingly vocal and influential in their country of origin and settlement. They increasingly seek to influence government, corporate media sector and other prominent groups thereby speaking up a range of issues affecting the homeland given the fact that they always feel deeply concerned by events taking place over there.

- **Diaspora philanthropy and tourism**

One of the most important ways through which diaspora contributes to their countries of origin is through philanthropic engagements. For instance, the Samuel Eto'o foundation has been helping the underprivileged ones.

The diaspora equally make it a habit for visiting their homeland yearly for leisure. They also visit touristic sites thus contributing to a growth in the tourist industry of the homeland at the local level. The peak period is usually in December before the year runs to an end.

II- **OBSTACLES THAT HINDERS THE DIASPORA'S COMPLETE ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATION.**

A- Infrastructural Deficiencies

- **Inadequate Government coordination**

Government actions to attract diaspora investment are relatively small and have had uncertain results. This is due to the lack of adequate incentives to encourage diaspora especially in the field of foreign direct investment. Also, there is lack of effective initiative aimed at stimulating diaspora collaboration with small and medium enterprises.

- **Structural deficiencies**

Lack of sound legislation and ministry to manage diaspora activities in some countries contribute to limit its role in boosting development. This is true when we look at some countries like Senegal and Cote D'Ivoire where a whole ministry has been reserved for the diaspora. This ministry has facilitated the integration of the diaspora. Thus this justifies its importance in the Economy of these countries. In most countries, the law is not in favor of the diaspora. This has as effect to limit their contributions to development. In Cameroon, the present nationality code governed by law No 68/LF/03 of 11th June 1968 is not in favor of the diaspora given that it doesn't give room for duo or double nationality in its Article 30(1)

This has the effect of discouraging Cameroonians who have acquired foreign nationality to re-establish themselves and occupy some post of responsibility back in Cameroon so as to share their skills.

- **Risk of conflict**

Some partisans of the opposition, radicals and other political opponents all living abroad often engage on denigration campaigns against the regime in power. This is done in most cases on social media and through manifestations or protestations in front of the Embassies and other symbolic places. For example the recent manifestations and destructions of the Cameroonian Embassies in France and Germany by some members of the Cameroon diaspora in January 2019 and manifestation of the Chadian Embassy in France in March 2019

Some members of the Cameroon diaspora in Canada hoisted down the Cameroonian flag and burnt it, then replaced it with that of a virtual republic. Such actions are not good for the country's image both nationally and internationally.

B- Recommendations

- There's need to identify goals mapping diaspora location and skills
- Fostering a relationship of trust with the diaspora
- Clearing obstacles and creating opportunities for diaspora investments

- The law governing nationality should be revised so as to enable Cameroonians to have duo-nationality. This will increase their sense of belonging to the nation thereby motivating them to contribute to the country's development in an effective and efficient manner.
- Government should consider providing technological assistance and logistic support to build and strengthen diaspora network that have a strong development potential such support for networking should be confined to the economic sphere, but should extend to peace building and reconciliation networks.
- Government offices can also serve as means of communication between the diaspora and the potential partners in the country of origin. Like linking diaspora investors with entrepreneur with good business opportunities there, given its importance such that government offices should not only be temporal but a permanent ministry to manage diaspora activities should be established.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

ASSSIGNMENT

TOPIC:

**THE CAMEROON DIASPORA; AN OPORTUNITY OR
A THREAD ?**

Reference: ENAM 2020 FD CYCLE B