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 the 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 a keys 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

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 the 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.

Grenadian Diaspora makes up a significant part of our country’s human capital. In the many cities across the USA, Canada, 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 for the purpose of 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 that the Diaspora already contributes significantly with remittances to our country. 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 our 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 the government initiatives towards to Diaspora, which recognizes that Grenada has a unique and important relationship with its Diaspora that must be nurtured and developed.

It defines Government’s role to both drive and foster diaspora engagement in a way that:

**Supports**: those who have left Grenada and need or want support;

**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 activity at local, national and international level designed to build on and develop a two-way diaspora engagement;

**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 COMPRISSES THE GRENADA DIASPORA?
Grenada Diaspora means Grenadians and 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, the degree to which immigrants and their descendants retain, to some extent, 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 on the homeland level. 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. The special interest groups will be linked to homeland on the sectoral level. The key sectors are health, education, business, culture, sport, disaster management, projects and energy etc. Specific interest groups include school’s 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:

- A sector wide approach: Diaspora affairs shall be done collaboratively with many stakeholders
- Participatory
- Equity and fairness
- A political approach
- Forward looking and holistic development
- Results focused
- Moral, fortitude, transparency and accountability:

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 resources mobilization approaches for national development
3) Maximize impact through efficient resources 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 mechanism to 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 co-ordination, 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 Information Technology is a priority we must accept and utilize. This will result in utilization of online services and therefore provide our Diaspora and the homeland with the efficient and effective services which can be realized by the use of ICT.

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 in expanding 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 Approx. 11% of our GDP. The high cost of remitting money affects our remittance numbers and we must seek for find new technologies to reduce the cost.

7) **Lack of incentive framework to promote Diaspora participation in national development**

There are weak structures and uncoordinated mechanisms to create awareness to the Grenada Diaspora on investment opportunities available in different sectors of the economy. Furthermore, the country lacks an incentive framework to promote Diaspora investments in the country.

**STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS:**

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

A mechanism to establish monitoring and evaluation among the Diaspora policy implementing offices put in place to the better follow up of the policy implementation. This Framework will highlight key outcomes and outputs and provide a structured approach to report on progress.

**Improving diaspora engagement in Investment, Trade, Health and Tourism**

i. International, regional and investment offices and stakeholders would be encouraged to provide all round services, to support members of the diaspora.

ii. Facilitate the delivery of goods and services provided by diaspora communities through assistance with local co-ordination, customs and tax concessions and other services.

iii. 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.

iv. Provide incentives for the diaspora to initiate economic opportunities

v. Develop a program specific for harnessing the potential of the Diaspora by empowering them to become tourism promotional.

vi. Provide incentives in partnership with the Diaspora which provides small grants and micro financing for youth led renewable energy enterprises;

vii. Support agro-based micro-entrepreneurial endeavours of young people, and invest in farming technologies that boost agricultural production;

viii. Tackle issues like land acquisition, taxation, immigration procedures and networking with Grenadian Embassies.
ix. 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.

x. Continue to strengthen the Foreign Policy framework to make it more responsive to Diaspora related issues.

xi. Look into the necessary structures to continue addressing the high cost of transferring monies with a view to attracting more remittances and lowering cost of transferring monies by the Diaspora back home.

xii. Develop an incentive framework to promote Diaspora participation in national development.

xiii. 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.

xiv. 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.

xv. Develop incentives and tailor-made investment packages to encourage the Grenadian Diaspora to direct their remittances towards productive ventures both at the National and County levels.

Establishing Permanent Information Exchange Forum

i. The Grenada Diplomatic missions can seek to sensitize Grenadians abroad to create awareness on benefits of registration to the centralized Diaspora database and integrated Diaspora Information System.

ii. Create mechanism and measures to promote transfer of knowledge and skills virtually through online support to build local capacity of Grenadian nationals. In this regards information will be made available to Grenadians abroad on skills shortages and corresponding employment opportunities.

iii. Facilitate partnerships between diaspora communities and homeland communities through linkages, co-ordination and active participation

iv. Celebrating Diaspora Day: The National Diaspora day can be celebrated at home; and there can be forums as significant number of Diaspora come home to celebrate cultural and religious holidays.

v. Forums Aboard with Diaspora (Outreach Program)

vi. Build a partnership for development between diaspora communities and homeland through linkages, co-ordination and active participation.

vii. Build material resources from the Diaspora and provide channels and contact points to linked local communities and distribute resources.

viii. Develop a partnership that promotes the role of Information and Communication Technology to offer solutions to our development challenges.
ix. Work out modalities for holding constant briefs with Grenadian Diaspora to disseminate information on investment opportunities in the country.

**Youth Diaspora initiatives**

i. Facilitate rural development, with a focus on youth and their difficulties finding meaningful engagement and employment.

ii. Youth Diaspora who volunteers to come back home and share their knowledge and skills can be encouraged.

iii. Adopt and promote the concept of the diaspora as an agent in development, and encourage Grenadians to undertake community-based initiatives to encourage participation and train unemployed youths;

iv. Fund the expansion of existing or establish new youth led community-based activities through formal and in-formal curricula;

v. Provide opportunities for youth led awareness campaigns through their participation and leadership in training;

vi. 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**

i. 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 so as to provide better policy formulation and solutions to some of the country’s current challenges.

ii. Strengthen and develop platforms of cooperation between the Diaspora and the Government to utilize the skills, resources and experiences of Grenadians in the Diaspora, and to assist in the development of skills training and effective strategies that tackle challenges by providing better policy formulation and the provision of solutions.

iii. Create mechanisms to ensure the Diaspora is involved in the development of eradicating poverty and assistance strategies through forums to allow their perspectives to be heard, relevant to local concerns. This will promote widespread participation in implementation;

**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 in promoting the contribution of the Diaspora to National Development.
Development Partners
Recognize the significance of a collaborative and partnership approach in mobilizing, allocating and utilizing resources for mainstreaming 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 media in publicizing and 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 in highlighting and educating Grenadians on the important role of the Diaspora play in nation building and labor migration issues.

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

STRUCTURE
The Government through its consular services is committed to strengthen and provide capacity to the existing Grenada Diaspora organizations and encourage Grenadians to form these organizations where they do not exist. Government recognizes the significance of these organizations in promoting Diaspora issues through consultations, lobbying and advocacy. This is important for National Development through structured investment. The organizations will supplement Government effort with information on the Diaspora.

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