

Leveraging the Links between Migration and Development: US Government Policy, Practice, and Potential

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Abstract

International migration generates massive development resources for countries of migrant origin. US development policies and programs still have not incorporated the insights of more than a decade of research and observation on the development gains to be derived from the bridges that migrants build between countries of origin and destination. This paper reviews the positions and activities of the US government that have linked international migration with social, political and, above all, economic development in migrants' countries of origin, through 2016. It specifies major opportunities for the government to do more for its overseas development policy goals by shaping the terms on which migration occurs, including in times of restricted immigration.

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Foreword

There is a gaping hole in the United States policy apparatus for international development. This is the missed opportunity to *shape* international migration in ways that do even more for development, at less cost, than some things the US seeks to accomplish with aid. This opportunity is present both in times of highly restricted immigration and in times of less restricted migration. It has less to do with how much migration occurs than with the terms on which it occurs.

When the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was created in 1961, foreign aid was by far the most important flow of resources to developing countries. Today, aid is a relative sideshow. International migrants send roughly four times more money home to developing countries (close to \$500 billion per year) than all donors disburse in global aid (roughly \$130 billion per year). Remittances sent from the United States to Latin America and the Caribbean (\$32 billion per year) are more than five times the combined US economic and military assistance to the same countries (less than \$6 billion per year). Individuals earn much more in the United States than in their home countries, and they develop valuable skills through migration, often transmitting useful ideas and technologies back to their home countries.

But US policies and institutions have not kept up with these trends. The US government employs thousands of people to shape foreign aid policy for development, but there currently exists no office, bureau, or agency with the responsibility of creating policy, designing projects, or executing programs related to migration and development. Paying attention to the development effects of migration should be a part of any sensible economic policy and a key part of any development agenda. Among other things it is one smart way to do the most for US development policy goals while minimizing the use of taxpayer dollars.

So what efforts would a migration and development bureau coordinate and implement, where would it be housed, and how would it interact with other departments and agencies? To begin to answer these big questions, we need to disentangle the current complexity of the US immigration policy and programmatic space.

Kathleen Newland's paper "Leveraging the Links between Migration and Development: US Government Policy, Practices, and Potential," is a needed contribution to this effort. This paper examines the history of US policies and programs in the migration and development nexus in three categories: direct, indirect, and inadvertent. It will help readers hone in on the idea that much of the government's past actions to leverage the huge opportunities in this area have been either inadvertent or ineffective. We hope it will spark further discussion on practical policy solutions to address this huge—and unacceptable—gap in the current US approach to international development policy.

Michael A. Clemens

1. Introduction

International migration generates massive development resources for countries of migrant origin. These go beyond financial resources, and include less tangible assets such as technology transfer, market development, trade and investment relationships, and political advocacy, as well as new knowledge, attitudes and cultural influence. To give just one example of the potential of migration to affect development, preliminary estimates of migrant's remittances from the United States in 2016 were \$67 billion, according to World Bank estimates, compared to net development assistance that year of \$34 billion.² In other words, US remittances are almost twice as large as US aid flows, although this comparison is not to imply that the two revenue streams have the same functions.

The impact of migration on development emerged as a major theme in international development policy forums in the first decade of this century. But the US government was a latecomer to that discussion. US governmental activities explicitly focused on migration and development date only from about 2010, with a few earlier efforts located in the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The Presidential Policy Directive on U.S. Global Development Policy (PPD-6) of 2010 placed development alongside diplomacy and defense as a core pillar of US foreign policy. It called on development actors to rethink traditional approaches to development, including by leveraging “the private sector, philanthropic, and nongovernmental organizations, and diaspora communities.”³ Apart from this reference to diasporas, there is no mention of migration or its effects in PPD-6. In 2011, the Secretary of State convened a Global Diaspora Forum, recognizing that immigrants and their descendants in the United States could be a “force multiplier” for governmental development programs—but it was short-lived and had minimal lasting impact on programs and policies.

By 2017, US development policies and programs still have not incorporated the insights of more than a decade of research and observation on the development gains to be derived from the bridges that migrants build between countries of origin and destination. *However, a major conclusion of this paper is that the impact of explicit migration-and-development policies and programs of the US government are dwarfed by the development impact of immigration-related policies that are not deliberately designed to promote development in countries of migrant origin.* That they do so, on a large scale, is an inadvertent product of other, mostly domestic, policy goals. The magnitude of the scattered, almost accidental, effects on development of US migration-related action implies that a more coordinated and intentional approach could have important synergies among policy areas.

² World Bank, Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016, Country Tables-United State, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/migration-and-remittances>; OECD Data Lab, Official Development Assistance 2016, <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/datalab/oda2012.htm>

³ Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-6. The White House, September 22, 2010. <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/ppd/ppd-6.pdf>

This paper reviews the positions and activities of the US government that have linked international migration with social, political and, above all, economic development in migrants' countries of origin, through 2016. It addresses three questions:

1. What US Government policies and actions attempted to leverage the linkages between migration and development?
2. How can US policies related to migration and development have greater impact?
3. Should the US Government do more in this policy field and, if so, what and how?

These questions are consequential, because the United States is the most important immigrant-receiving country in the world, by volume. In absolute numbers, it grants more people permanent residence on an annual basis than any other country, while also accepting large streams of temporary migrants for work, study, protection, or educational and cultural exchange. It is also home to a large, though declining, population of approximately 11 million unauthorized migrants.⁴ Migrants in all of these categories are important to the economies of many of their countries of origin— especially low-income countries of origin—from the household to the national level.⁵ In most countries, migrants also have profound social and cultural impacts, which are also significant factors in development.

The bulk of this paper is devoted to the first question above, and gives a representative, although by no means exhaustive, account of US government programs and policies that bear on the relationship between immigration to the United States and the development of countries of migrant origin. It is difficult to assess their effectiveness, as hardly any programs have been evaluated for their actual development impact. The programs and practices that can be confidently assumed to have operational impact on the ground, are divided into three categories, described as direct, indirect, and inadvertent.

2. Direct programs

Direct programs work with mechanisms that link migration to development, particularly through remittance flows, knowledge networks and diaspora engagement. Only a few government programs have the primary purpose of forging or strengthening these direct links. Several government agencies have programs designed to benefit immigrants; as a secondary effect, these programs often contribute to development in immigrants' countries of origin.

Many direct programs seek to leverage US government financial resources through public-private partnerships, in which a non-governmental partner is required to match US government financing, in cash or in kind. The policy stretches the resources available for projects, but rules out many potential partners who cannot put up the capital required for

⁴ "Profile of the Unauthorized Population: United States." Migration Policy Institute Data Hub.

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/US>

⁵ For an introduction to the impact of migration on development, see Kathleen Newland, What We Know about Migration and Development, MPI Policy Brief, October, 2013, and the eight associated policy briefs.

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/what-we-know-about-migration-and-development>.

participation; it tends to favor large, established, often for-profit institutional partners at the expense of smaller, less well-endowed organizations which may have more direct experience and insight of migration-and-development linkages— such as diaspora organizations. In fact, like most grass roots organizations, few migrant organizations have the scale and experience to qualify as development funding partners.

It is often difficult to tell from publicly available information how far some of the initiatives announced by government agencies have progressed. Long lead times between conception and implementation are common and real-time monitoring is rare. Some of the posted descriptions of programs should be taken with a grain of salt, absent the availability of rigorous evaluations.

2.1. Remittances

Remittances are the most obvious link between migration and development, but designing programs to enhance the development impact of remittances has proved challenging. The US government has few direct programs on remittances in which development is a primary objective. Two that can be identified are:

- **State Department.** The Building Remittance Investment for Development, Growth and Entrepreneurship (BRIDGE) program is based on Memoranda of Understanding signed by then-Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton with the governments of El Salvador and Honduras. Led by the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and implemented in partnership with USAID and the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB), BRIDGE is designed to provide credit enhancements and partial guarantees to financial institutions in the two countries so that they can capture the asset value created by remittance transactions, and thereby secure a sustainable source of development finance.
- **USAID.** The Leveraging Effective Action for Direct Investments (LEAD) initiative of USAID aims to increase the development impact of remittances to Haiti by opening channels for members of the Haitian diaspora to invest part of their remittance transfers into viable small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and philanthropic ventures. The SMEs were to be identified through business plan competitions and the investment of remittances encouraged through a matching grant mechanism.

Initiatives undertaken by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Consumer Financial Protection Agency did not have boosting the development impact of remittances as a primary purpose, but their impact on the personal finances of migrants and their families may have had greater (if indirect) development impact than the kind of programs described above.

- **FDIC.** In 2003 the Chicago office of the FDIC, noting the huge volume and high cost of remittances moving from the United States to Latin American countries, and noting that many Latino immigrants in the United States did not have bank

accounts, launched the New Alliance Task Force in partnership with the Consul General of Mexico in Chicago. In addition to these two institutions, the Alliance eventually comprised 34 banks as well as federal bank regulators and other government agencies, secondary market and private mortgage insurance companies, and community-based organizations. The Alliance educated both financial institutions (about the need to develop low-cost remittance products as a way of reaching potential customers among “unbanked” immigrants), and immigrants (about credit, banking services, mortgages, the benefits of holding accounts, and asset-building strategies).

- **Federal Reserve.** In 2004, then-Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke gave a speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago in which he also addressed the high cost of migrant remittance transfers:

The Federal Reserve is attempting to support banks' efforts to better serve immigrant populations, with remittances and other money transfers being a key area of interest.... in February 2004 the Reserve Banks expanded their international ACH services to Mexico, in cooperation with the Central Bank of Mexico. The service potentially connects any bank account holder in the United States with any bank account holder in Mexico, uses an exchange rate guaranteed to be within 1 percent of the Central Bank of Mexico's wholesale rate, and costs the banks less than \$1 per transaction... These Federal Reserve initiatives will support US banks' ability to serve immigrants by allowing remittances to be sent to foreign banks at low cost.⁶

- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.** A third piece of the puzzle of lowering remittance costs for migrants came in 2013, when a final rule regulating the transfer of money abroad came into effect. It required providers of remittance services, whether banks or money transfer companies, to disclose the taxes, fees, and exchange rates associated with sending remittances. Competition among providers could drive down costs only if consumers of remittance services could compare costs among them. (Prior to the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act in 2010, no such transparency was required, as international money transfers were not covered by consumer protection regulations.)

Lowering the cost of remittances obviously leaves more money in the hands of migrants who send them and/or the households that receive them. The potential development impact is large, as remittances are known to reduce poverty, increase investment in human capital,

⁶ Ben S. Bernanke, Speech at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, “Financial Access for Immigrants: The Case of Remittances,” April 16, 2004.
<http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/speeches/2004/200404162/default.htm>

and create productive assets if appropriate investment opportunities are available to remittance receivers.⁷

2.2. Knowledge networks

Migration, both temporary and permanent, is a powerful force in the creation of networks of knowledge, as people from different parts of the world come together to form the critical nodes of innovation that produce scientific and technological breakthroughs. Scientists, scholars and professionals who move to another country gain exposure to new knowledge and ways of thinking and often form lasting collaborative relationships between among colleagues in the origin and destination countries.⁸ Concern about the brain drain from developing countries has softened in the face of evidence that origin as well as destination countries benefit from the increase in human capital, particularly if members of the highly trained diaspora remain engaged with country-of- origin colleagues and institutions, or return on a temporary, part-time or permanent basis. Knowledge-network programs tend to be focused either on high-quality learning and training for temporary migrants, or on maintenance of diaspora networks.

- **State Department.** The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs administers the oldest and largest US knowledge network: the Fulbright Program, founded in 1946, awards 8,000 scholarships per year to students and scholars, more than half of which go to non-US beneficiaries from as many as 155 countries. Each year, 900 faculty and professionals come to the United States to participate in advanced research and university lecturing, along with 4000 foreign students. Fulbright scholars are normally required to return to their home countries at the end of their award period. The purpose of the program is to build international understanding and cooperation, but the human capital gains of the scholarship holders are undoubtedly a development bonus for the countries of origin.
- The Office of the Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary of State, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the National Academy of Engineering created the Network of Diasporas in Engineering and Science (NODES) to support scientific diasporas. NODES includes diaspora students, scientists, science policy experts and officials, innovators and entrepreneurs who are interested in leveraging their connections in the United States and their countries of origin (or ancestry) to strengthen scientific collaboration across borders. Launched at the 2012 Global Diaspora Forum, NODES is operated by the Center for Science Diplomacy at AAAS. It helps to connect diaspora scientists and engineers with existing networks

⁷ See Dilip Ratha, *The Impact of Remittances on Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*, MPI Policy Brief (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, September, 2013).

⁸ Xueying Han, Galen Stocking, Matthew A. Gebbie and Richard P. Appelbaum, "Will they Stay or Will They Go? International Graduate students and Their Decisions to Stay or Leave the U.S. upon Graduation," PLOS, March 11, 2015. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0118183.

and activities from which they and their countries of origin might benefit. The annual AAAS meetings provide the occasion for members of the network to meet regularly.

- **USAID.** *Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER)* is a joint program of USAID and the National Science Foundation. It focuses on collaborations between US-based diaspora scientists and scientists in their countries or regions of origin who share an interest in an area of research that addresses a development challenge specific to the region of origin or, in some cases, a global challenge. Former Under-Secretary of State William J. Burns, in an article for the AAAS, described some of the “transformational partnerships across diaspora networks” made possible by PEER:

Sachchida Nand Tripathi from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has been working with the University of Minnesota’s Anu Ramaswami to develop low-carbon cities in India. Julio Eduardo Cañón from the University of Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia, and Francina Dominguez at the University of Arizona in Tucson are addressing the impacts of climate change on tropical wetlands in Colombia. Victor Cantillo from the Universidad del Norte in Colombia and José Holguin-Veras from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute formed a team to work on integrated humanitarian logistics systems to help developing countries design effective emergency management systems for post-disaster relief operations.⁹

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH).** The Fogarty International Center at NIH runs a small but effective program to strengthen the capacity of low and middle-income countries to engage in high-quality HIV/AIDS-related research. The program brings African researchers to the United States on fellowships, and then continues to work with them upon their return to their countries of origin. The program helps to develop the health infrastructure in the countries of origin, provides research support to the scientists there, and occasionally brings the fellows back to the United States for scientific conferences and additional short-term training.¹⁰

2.3. Diaspora engagement

US government migration-and-development policy and program development have been most active in the arena of diaspora engagement.

⁹ William J. Burns, “The Potential of Science Diasporas,” in *Science and Diplomacy*, AAAS, December 9, 2013. <http://www.sciencediplomacy.org/perspective/2013/potential-science-diasporas>

¹⁰ Dovelyn Agunias and Kathleen Newland, *Circular Migration and Development: Trends, Policy Routes and Ways Forward*, MPI Insight (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2007).

- **State Department.** The State Department opened a formal dialogue with US-based diasporas in 2011, with the first *Global Diaspora Forum* (GDF). The GDF was also convened in 2012 and 2013. It was conceived as a public-private partnership among the Department of State, USAID, and several partners in the private and non-profit sectors. The GDFs drew 400-500 participants from US-based diaspora communities and related organizations for networking and exchange of ideas, information, and inspiration. It provided for the first time an opportunity for US diaspora groups from different countries of origin with diverse interests and levels of experience to interact and build a community of practice—and to connect with US government agencies interested in working with diaspora groups. In 2013, three other events were held under the umbrella of the GDF and loosely affiliated with it—two in California and one in Dublin, Ireland. In 2014, the GDF gave way to the *Global Diaspora Week*, which featured approximately 65 events organized in many different venues around the United States and in other countries by different organizations. The change gave rise to some concern that the impact would be diluted and coherence lost amid a plethora of only loosely related events.
- During her tenure at the State Department, Secretary Hillary Clinton used her convening power and power of persuasion to help create two influential diaspora organizations. In 2010, she convened a task force of prominent Mexican-American leaders, which became the Mexican-American Leadership Initiative (MALI), under the auspices of the US Mexico Foundation. She also encouraged Pakistani-Americans to organize themselves, in an effort that gave rise to the American Pakistan Foundation. Both organizations work to mobilize members of the diaspora to contribute to development efforts in their respective countries of origin, and to improve relations between these countries and the United States at the level of civil society.
- The first Global Diaspora Forum gave rise to the *International diaspora Engagement Alliance* (IdEA), created at the behest of Secretary Clinton, housed in the Secretary’s Office of Global Partnerships, and operating in partnership with USAID and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). (The Calvert Foundation succeeded MPI as managing partner of IdEA from 2014-2016, at which time it was reabsorbed into the State Department.) IdEA had three “pillars” for its work: investment and entrepreneurship, philanthropy and volunteerism, and innovation. Of these, the area of investment and entrepreneurship saw by far the most activity. IdEA initiated and co-sponsored two diaspora business plan competitions: the *Caribbean Idea Marketplace* and the *Latin American Idea Partnership (La Idea)*, both modeled on the African Diaspora Marketplace launched by USAID and Western Union in 2009.¹¹ In 2014-15, La Idea collaborated with a business incubation program in the South Pacific. In 2014, the Special Representative for Global Partnerships led a five-month

¹¹ The closeness of the models and the notion of IdEA as a partner in the African Diaspora Marketplace likely arises from the fact that the USAID official who originated the idea of the ADM subsequently moved to the Global Partnerships Office in the State Department, where he had oversight of IdEA.

“Diaspora Tour” to various college campuses to promote IdEA and the State Department’s program of diaspora engagement. IdEA described its role as connecting, mobilizing, capacity-building, and project implementation—but its implementation capability was minimal. By 2016, however, IdEA had become largely moribund, the victim of lack of investment or attention, although some of its partners continued their work independently.

- **USAID.** USAID was the first (and still perhaps the only) federal agency to attempt to formulate a coherent policy framework for diaspora engagement. Labeled the “Diaspora Networks Alliance,” or DNA, the framework identified 6 channels for diaspora engagement: philanthropy, volunteerism, entrepreneurship, capital market investment, tourism and “nostalgia” trade, and advocacy and diplomacy. In 2010, the agency commissioned the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)¹² to do a major research project elaborating the connection between migration and development in each of the DNA areas. The project also produced a “road map” for governments wishing to engage diasporas more productively. The road map and six studies were co-published by USAID and MPI in the volume *Diasporas: New Partners in Global Development Policy*.¹³ The DNA framework has subsequently guided USAID’s migration and development project development.
- USAID, Western Union, and the Western Union Foundation launched the *African Diaspora Marketplace* in 2009 as a business plan competition built upon partnerships between African entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs in the African diaspora based in the United States. Entrepreneurs who committed themselves to invest in launching or expanding a business in one of the 29 designated African countries went through three rounds of competition; the 17 winners were awarded grants of up to \$75,000 to match their investments. In a model of good practice, the ADM was the subject of an external evaluation,¹⁴ so that a second round (ADM II) launched in 2011 incorporated lessons learned from the first round to improve the ADM process and outcomes. Small-business investment funds participated in ADM II, and a larger number of partner organizations offered a more comprehensive suite of business services to the competitors. In addition, the competition was more focused in the second round, with the emphasis placed on grants to businesses in high-priority sectors such as agriculture, renewable energy and information technology. ADM subsequently provided seed capital, technical assistance, market linkages, and access to finance. In its first two rounds, the partnership assisted 34 diaspora ventures with \$2.25 million in seed capital, and attracted more than \$2 million in additional equity capital.¹⁵ The third and final round of the ADM brought in additional partners such

¹² MPI is the present author’s home institution.

¹³ The volume is available for free download at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

¹⁴ Manuel Orozco and Mariellen Jewers, “Assessment and lessons learned from African Diaspora Marketplace,” USAID, November 4, 2011. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact256.pdf

¹⁵ US Department of State Global Partnerships Initiative. <http://www.state.gov/s/partnerships/releases/fs/2014/231226.htm>

as venture capital firms and the US Minority Business Development Agency, and focused on the long-term sustainability of the competition winners, several of whom went on to secure start-up support from other entities.

- An extension of the second ADM, the *Libya Diaspora Marketplace* (LDM), was initiated in mid-2012 as an element of US efforts to stabilize Libya and help it to recover from the effects of a devastating civil war. Despite the continuing political turmoil in Libya, the LDM succeeded in identifying three winning companies, which received seed funding in the form of matching grants as well as technical assistance.
- USAID is also a co-sponsor of the Caribbean Idea Marketplace and La Idea within IdEA (described above).
- The *Diasporas for Development Initiative* (DfD) is a partnership of USAID, Accenture, MentorCloud and Cuso International, which was announced at the 2012 GDF. DfD enlisted US-based diaspora members who were US citizens or legal permanent residents to volunteer with organizations in their countries of origin or ancestry. The aim of the program was to support these organizations to foster entrepreneurial skills and increase employability. Funded at a level of approximately \$1 million, DfD aimed to deploy 40 skilled professionals as volunteers to Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kenya, Peru and the Philippines. The project also included a virtual-volunteering platform, created by MentorCloud, which could add another 60 diaspora volunteers connecting remotely with partner organizations in the target countries.¹⁶ DfD is an example of USAID's preferred model for public-private partnerships, one of some 1,500 "Global Development Alliances" (GDAs) formed to promote social and economic development and, by leveraging private-sector resources, expand USAID's reach, effectiveness and development impact.¹⁷
- **Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).**¹⁸ As with remittance programs, some diaspora policies and projects have migration and development as a primary focus; for others it is an unintended, although welcome, side-effect. OPIC is an example of an agency that incorporates members of various US-based diasporas into programs that are not explicitly designed to engage diasporas. In 2011, then-Executive Vice President of OPIC Mimi Alemayehou told a World Bank conference on the African diaspora that "OPIC is increasingly doing business with members of the African diaspora and the African diaspora are becoming a very important partner for us." She gave several examples of OPIC-supported diaspora

¹⁶ <http://www.cusointernational.org/programs/projects/project/diasporas-for-development>

¹⁷ <http://www.usaid.gov/gda>

¹⁸ According to its website, "OPIC mobilizes private capital to help solve critical development challenges and in doing so, advances U.S. foreign policy. Because OPIC works with the U.S. private sector, it helps U.S. businesses gain footholds in emerging markets, catalyzing revenues, jobs and growth opportunities both at home and abroad. OPIC achieves its mission by providing investors with financing, guarantees, political risk insurance, and support for private equity investment funds." <http://www.opic.gov>

investments, such as provision of \$250 million in political risk insurance to Belstar, a company established by a member of the Ghanaian diaspora that provides medical equipment, services and infrastructure to about 100 hospitals in all 10 administrative regions of Ghana, and investment financing to an Ethiopian-American who moved back to Ethiopia and opened a pharmaceutical plant.¹⁹ OPIC explicitly included diaspora entrepreneurs in its target groups for OPIC-supported foreign direct investment funds in the Middle East and Haiti. (Permanent residents as well as citizens are considered “US,” for OPIC purposes. This allows more of the diaspora to tap into OPIC tools in support of their investments.) The agency has also tried to draw diaspora groups into its outreach efforts aimed at educating small businesses about the benefits of expanding into developing markets, and the ways OPIC can support them, such as through loans, loan guarantees and political risk insurance. OPIC’s series of *Expanding Horizons* events has reached thousands of small and medium-sized business owners across the United States, including many from diaspora communities. Other speakers at these events have included representatives from the US Trade and Development Agency, the Minority Business Development Agency, the Small Business Administration, the Export-Import Bank of the US, and the US Department of Commerce.

- **Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), US Department of Commerce.** Like OPIC, MBDA does not directly target diaspora communities, but as it services minority businesses, much of the client base includes diasporas. In particular, they work with Asian-American, African-American and Hispanic businesses to help with business advocacy, financing, contracts, and the like. MBDA programming is directed towards individual businesses and not particular communities, but has seen interest among diaspora business owners in initiatives such as “Power Africa” and “Look South” (which aims to encourage US entrepreneurs to do business with US Free Trade Agreement partners in Latin America). The MBDA recognizes that “minority business enterprises have great opportunities in looking south for their next customer, since MBEs are more likely than non-minority-owned firms to export, five times more likely to conduct business in languages other than English, and typically possess cultural knowledge and business acumen that enables breaking into the global market more efficiently and effectively.”²⁰
- **US Institute for Peace (USIP).** In recent years, USIP has convened a number of trainings, seminars and workshops aimed at engaging key members of diaspora communities in conflict resolution, peacemaking and advocacy. The following represents only a selected sample of such initiatives from the 2009-2016 period: a workshop for 20 South Sudanese diaspora leaders at USIP; the Trans-Atlantic DRC Diaspora Dialogue; the Darfur Diaspora Consultation; the US-Liberia Partnership

¹⁹ <http://www.opic.gov/blog/opic-in-action/alemaychou-why-diaspora-are-an-increasingly-important-part-of-opics-client-base>

²⁰ <http://www.mbd.gov/node/2487>

Dialogue; “Justice and Security” dialogues in four Iraqi provinces which helped develop crisis management plans; and “The Day After” project which, over six months in 2012, brought together 45 members of the Syrian opposition to participate in an independent transition planning process.²¹ USIP has also organized programs with diasporas from Haiti, Russia, the Palestinian territories and Kyrgyzstan.

- **Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).** Part of the National Endowment for Democracy, CIPE has worked with entrepreneurs in the Syrian diaspora to organize themselves (as Syrian Entrepreneurs Worldwide and the Syrian Economic Forum) to help entrepreneurs driven out of Syria by civil war and repression to establish or re-establish their businesses in exile. These efforts are intended both to build resilience and self-sufficiency in refugee communities, and to preserve the skills and assets of entrepreneurs who hope to return to Syria one day and help to rebuild the economy and society.
- **Executive Office of the President.** The Obama Administration reached out to diaspora organizations in several different contexts. For example, after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the USG Haiti Strategy included a call for the direct engagement of diaspora through consultative processes, “a recruiting program for Diaspora executives and technicians to join the civil service,” and a “Haitian Government Fellows Program to attract new talent, particularly from the diaspora, to the Haitian public sector.”²² It also held consultations with diaspora members from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan to inform policy-making on these strategically important countries.

3. Indirect programs and policy debates

Indirect programs are carried out by international institutions and processes funded by the US government, not necessarily with their migration-and-development activities as a primary focus. However, migration generally and migration-and-development specifically are receiving more and more attention from multilateral institutions and processes. The United States, as a major funder of international institutions and a member of the governing bodies of most of them, has significant influence on the policy directions of these institutions. To the extent that these institutions are involved in migration-and-development activities, the United States can take some of the credit, even in cases where it is not providing extra-budgetary support for such activities.

Migration and development is a relatively new field of multilateral policy discussion and, as noted earlier, the US government was a latecomer to this fast-developing arena. Only since about 2010 has it begun to participate actively in international forums devoted to the topic, such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the UN High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD). These efforts are led by the State

²¹ <http://www.usip.org/events/2010-youth-diaspora-conference>; <http://www.usip.org/the-day-after-project>

²² <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/156448.pdf>

Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). Although officials from the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Labor, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) have served on the US delegations to these international meetings, their substantive involvement and follow-up has been minimal. This is one signal of the lack of policy coherence on migration and development within the US government, and it is far from clear that even this level of engagement will continue in 2017 and beyond.

The global trends in migration-and-development policies and programs is influenced, over time, by the discussions in these multilateral forums such as the HLD (which has met twice as a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, in 2006 and 2013), the GFMD, which is a state-led, informal process that has met annually since 2007 (except in 2013 when the HLD pre-empted it); and, at the regional level, in *Regional Consultation Processes* (RCPs). The RCPs include thematic as well as geographical groupings, such as the Puebla Process (formally the Regional Consultation on Migration, or RCM) for Central America, North America and the Caribbean; the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) for the Transatlantic region plus Australia and New Zealand; and the Bali Process which is concerned with people smuggling and trafficking in persons.

US engagement in international debates about migration and development is important for the signals it sends and the discussions it stimulates. Increasingly, although on a small scale, it also generates follow-up action on the part of federal agencies. For example, a theme that has come up repeatedly in the GFMD is the gap in protection for migrants who are in a country when a crisis, natural or manmade, strikes. This has happened repeatedly—after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, after the Asian tsunami, after the Fukushima nuclear crisis in Japan, and after the turmoil surrounding the overthrow of the Qaddafi regime in Libya. Each time the needs of migrants affected by the crisis were handled *ad hoc*. At the HLD in 2014, PRM agreed that the United States would co-chair, with the Philippines, an initiative on Migrants in Countries in Crisis. The initiative was launched at the GFMD in 2014, and has produced a set of guidelines designed to assist in advance planning and response to crises in which migrants find themselves stranded.²³

Having been a passive observer at the 2006 HLD, in 2013 the US government delegation published 13 policy positions, four of which tabled recommendations pertaining to migration and development:

- Narrow the focus of migration and development policy discussions;
- Enhance the development impact of remittances;
- Empower diaspora members to engage with their country of origin;

²³ Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative, Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic_guidelines_english_web_13_09_2016.pdf

- Support the Global Forum on Migration and Development and Regional Consultative Processes as excellent multilateral forums for migration-related discussions.²⁴

PRM is also the major US government interface with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), two of the most important international organizations that address migration issues. The United States is the largest funder of both IOM and UNCHR, as well as the International Labor Office. It is also the largest shareholder in most of the multilateral development banks.²⁵ These institutions are leaders in operational activities (including activities designed to increase the evidence base for migration-and-development policy, such as the World Bank’s KNOMAD project). The United States has also contributed to some special funds to support programs that aim to reduce the costs of migration or increase its benefits, such as IOM’s International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) and an IOM project to work with the Universal Postal Union to expand remittance services and lower their costs in some under-served regions. It also supports the office of the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for International Migration, which has been instrumental in promoting the migration-and-development agenda in multilateral settings.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the migration-and-development work of the international organizations. Eighteen international organizations are member of the Global Migration Group (GMG), a grouping that is meant to coordinate the migration-related activities of the organizations, under a rotating chair that changes every year. Among the members, IOM, the World Bank and, increasingly, and the ILO are the most active. They provide technical assistance, research and policy development, project funding, policy advice and operational support to governments on a wide range of aspects of migration and development. In addition, UNHCR finds itself dealing with forced migration and development issues more and more intensively as the number of displaced people has grown to its highest level since World War II and the old “care and maintenance” model of humanitarian assistance has proven unsustainable. In all of these organizations, and throughout the United Nations system, the United States is an extremely influential stakeholder, with the capacity to influence the direction of their work.

4. Inadvertent policies and programs

In migration and development, the most important effects of US policies and programs are unintended consequences from policy arenas in which development impacts on migrants’ countries of origin are not on the agenda. Most importantly, US immigration policies hardly ever take into account their impact on immigrants’ countries of origin, with the exception of humanitarian admissions and a few educational or cultural exchange programs. Immigration

²⁴ Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, “Promoting Positive Outcomes on Migration and Development: U.S. Positions for the High Level Dialogue,” September 27, 2013. Available at <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/releases/2013/215034.htm>.

²⁵ <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS20792.pdf>

policies have almost never included development considerations in their design or implementation.

While US immigration policies have not been expected to serve development goals, trade and development policies have often been expected to serve US immigration policy. The partnership has not been a happy one in most cases. As Aaron Terrazas observed:

During the 1980s immigration policymakers looked to foreign aid as the solution to illegal immigration from Haiti and during the 1990s they looked to trade liberalization as the solution to illegal immigration from Mexico. In retrospect, these experiences are regarded as naïve at best (Mexico) and costly failures at worst (Haiti). As a result, the country's international development policymakers are wary of subordinating development policy to the political objective of reducing illegal immigration and understand the limits of foreign assistance.²⁶

Many US government policies and programs do not target the relationship between migration and development but nonetheless have an impact on it. They include very specific and relatively small-bore measures such as the African Growth and Opportunity (AGOA) Act, which was meant to encourage US investment in Sub-Saharan Africa and has provided a platform for the diaspora—both African Americans and recent African immigrants—to invest in and export to Africa.

Trade more generally embodies a relationship between migration and development, with a substantial body of research showing a strong correlation between a diaspora residing in a particular country and trade ties between that country and the diaspora's country of origin or ancestry.²⁷

At the other end of the spectrum, US immigration policies, including admissions, access to legal status, and enforcement have huge, often foundational impacts on the development of immigrants' countries of origin.

US visa policy governs legal entry on a permanent or temporary basis (although some programs of temporary admission permit adjustment to permanent status). The categories that may seem to have the most obvious impact on development are employment-based and student visas. However, visas based on family ties provide entry to nearly two-thirds of people who obtain legal permanent residence (green cards) in the United States.²⁸ These immigrants—approximately 640,000 in 2015—by their sheer numbers, are likely to have a

²⁶ Aaron Terrazas, *Migration and Development: Policy Perspectives from the United States* (Washington, D.C., 2011, Migration Policy Institute).

²⁷ Kathleen Newland and Sonia Plaza, *What We Know about Diasporas and Economic Development*, Migration Policy Institute Policy Brief No. 5, September 2013, www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/pulications/Diasporas-EconomicDevelopment.pdf

²⁸ Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, *Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, March 8, 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Permanent>

significant impact on development, through their remittances, networks, investments and cultural influences.

Green cards based on employer sponsorship are a surprisingly small part of the US immigration stream—about 14 percent of those granted LPR status in 2015.²⁹ Other forms of economic migration—for investors, exceptionally talented individuals such as high achievers in sports, science or the arts—do not require employer sponsorship but are small in numbers. The larger streams of economic migration are, in the first instance at least, temporary. Excluding short-term visitors, in 2015 about 45 percent of the resident temporary visa holders were temporary workers or trainees and their families, and about 40 percent were foreign students and their families.³⁰ The H-1B program for skilled workers, for example, admits 85,000 immigrants per year for a three-year period, extendable for another three years. The H-1B program does permit adjustment to permanent status, and about half of H-1B holders become legal permanent residents (LPRs). Employers, especially in the technology industries, have lobbied strongly for increases in the H-1B cap, but protectionist impulses in the US Congress have insured that increases have been temporary.³¹ The governments of countries of migrant origin, particularly India, have also lobbied for the H-1B visa to be maintained or increased.

Temporary programs for workers without formal qualifications, such as the H-2A program for agricultural workers and the H-2B program for non-agricultural workers are cumbersome to use, and the visas for non-agricultural workers are capped at 66,000 annually, far below the demand.³² Moreover, only 63 countries are eligible to participate in the H2 programs, and the maximum stay is for three years. Most of the demand for low-waged labor is therefore met by unauthorized workers. Tougher border enforcement and inconsistent interior enforcement has converted many of these workers from temporary or circular migrants to permanent immigrants, as crossing the border without a visa has become more difficult, dangerous and expensive.

A uniquely American visa program is the diversity visa, which provides 50,000 visas per year to people from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States in recent decades. The only prerequisites are a high school education and a clean security record. Qualifying applicants are chosen by lottery. Originally conceived as a route to immigration for Europeans (particularly the Irish), the plurality of diversity visas (38 percent) now go to Africans.

In 2013-14, 886,000 international students studied at US colleges and universities, according to the International Institute for Education.³³ The intake of foreign students has a number of purposes: to strengthen US relations with the next-generation of leaders in other countries, a security concern and an important expression of US “soft power;” to increase

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ In 2001-2003, for example, the cap was raised to 195,000 per year.

³² http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2013.pdf

³³ <http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students>

the availability of foreign talent to US companies and research institutions, especially in the STEM fields; and to shore up the finances of US higher education. Development of the foreign students' countries of origin is well down the list, although it is an important effect of the human-capital building consequences of study in US institutions. In addition to the economic development benefits, research demonstrates that foreign students who are educated in democratic countries promote democracy in their countries of origin.³⁴

As an example of the unintended economic-development consequences of US policy, the refugee resettlement program began its current incarnation with the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Today, the Vietnamese diaspora is the largest refugee diaspora in the United States today, and sends billions of dollars in remittances to Vietnam each year. (In 2016, remittances from the United States to Vietnam amounted to \$6.7 billion, and made up 3.3 percent of the country's GDP.)³⁵ The Vietnamese diaspora, particularly the second generation, also led the way in re-establishing robust trade and investment relations between the two countries. Yet Vietnamese resettlement was in no way motivated by development concerns. In the last few years, US refugee resettlement numbers have fluctuated, from about 70,000 in fiscal years 2014 and 2015, to nearly 85,000 in FY 2016 to about 52,000 in FY 2017. In addition, green cards are issued to thousands of successful asylum seekers each year, who come to the United States under their own power and are granted permission to remain after their cases are adjudicated positively; after one year they may apply permanent residence.³⁶ In 2013, 42,235 asylees adjusted to legal permanent residence, while in 2015 the number was 33,564.³⁷

Approximately 320,000 immigrants have Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the United States. TPS is a program that allows people who are in the United States at the time a natural or man-made disaster strikes their countries to remain and work in the United States for the duration of the crisis. TPS beneficiaries cannot, however, adjust to permanent status or bring family members to join them. In late 2017, 10 countries are designated for TPS: El Salvador, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria. In a few of these cases, temporary status has lasted for more than a decade, raising questions about the temporary nature of the stay. Rather than embracing the end of a crisis period, the governments of countries of origin have in many cases lobbied for repeated extensions of TPS, as the remittances sent home by TPS holders are important for the home-country economy, and those economies would have difficulty absorbing returnees productively. In these cases, TPS has become a privately funded aid program.

The development impact of US immigration policies goes far beyond the remittances that make the United States the number one source of remittances in the world—although the

³⁴ Spilimbergo, Antonio. 2009. "Democracy and Foreign Education." *American Economic Review*, 99(1): 528-43.

³⁵ World Bank, *Bilateral Remittances Matrix 2016*, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>; World Bank data, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/vietnam>

³⁶ http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_lpr_fr_2013.pdf.

³⁷ https://dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Lawful_Permanent_Residents_2015.pdf

development impact of remittances should not be underestimated.³⁸ Immigrants connect their countries of origin to networks of knowledge, business, technology, and trade; in many cases they also convey new social and economic attitudes and practices that have profound effects on development—ranging from education to gender relations to health practices and beyond.

5. Policy directions

US government policies and programs, especially immigration policies, have enormous and varied effects on the development of immigrants' countries of origin. For example, a change in visa policy to admit more immigrants from a poor country to the United States is likely to have a greater development impact than development assistance programs per se, as Michael Clements of the Center for Global Development has pointed out with respect to Haiti.³⁹ As we have seen, however, deliberate US policies in this area cover only a tiny portion of the actual impact. Intentional policies, such as that supporting a program to make it possible for remittances to be used directly for educational purposes,⁴⁰ are often overwhelmed by the impact of inadvertent policy outcomes—such as the post-September 11 Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing (AML-ATF) regulations which make it more difficult and expensive for migrants to send remittances.

5.1 Policy disconnects

A number of fundamental disconnects account for the lack of coherence between migration and development policies within the US government. The disconnects are geographical, substantive, and bureaucratic.

Geography: Development policymakers are focused on “the bottom billion” in the least developed countries, particularly the fragile and conflict-affected states of Sub-Saharan Africa and West Asia, which are not major sources of immigrants to the United States. Immigration policymakers, naturally, think about the countries that are major sources of immigrants to the United States, which means a special focus on the neighborhood. Mexico alone is the source of 28 percent of the foreign-born residing in the United States. The largest US aid programs, by contrast, are for Afghanistan and Pakistan, which account for 0.2 percent and 0.7 percent of US immigration, respectively.

Substance: The fundamentals of development policy are in areas such as disaster relief, food security, public health, basic infrastructure, livelihoods (including entrepreneurship and private-sector development) and, increasingly, adaptation to environmental change.

³⁸ Ratha, *The Impact of Remittances*.

³⁹ <http://www.cgdev.org/blog/why-i%E2%80%99m-thrilled-united-states-has-stopped-excluding-haitians-temporary-work-visas>

⁴⁰ EduPay is a pilot platform for money supported by USAID's Development Innovations Ventures that allows migrants to send remittances directly to educational institutions without using an intermediary. <http://www.usaid.gov/div/portfolio/remittances>

Immigration policy deals with admissions, in which family reunification plays a major role, accounting for about two-thirds of US legal permanent immigration. Humanitarian response and the needs of the US labor market play secondary but important roles. Enforcement of immigration laws and regulations, both at US borders and—to a lesser and variable extent—in the interior, is another major part of the substance of immigration policy. The Border Patrol is now the largest federal law enforcement agency.

Bureaucracy: Development policy is the responsibility chiefly of the US Department of State, primarily through USAID. Several State Department bureaus, such as PRM, International Organizations (IO) and Democracy, Labor and Human Rights also have relevant portfolios. Other actors such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Department of the Treasury, the US Trade and Development Agency, and the Commerce Department have development-related responsibilities. Immigration policy, with heavy Congressional oversight, is the primary responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security.

One department of government is unlikely to know what others are doing that will affect the interaction between migration and development. As a result, potential synergies among federal policies are not exploited, and US government development goals are not advanced to the extent they could be if programs were coordinated and policies were more transparent and intentional. Greater coordination among agencies, more outreach to immigrant/diaspora communities, and greater transparency concerning the impact of immigration policies on development could help to make US government programs more effective in unlocking the synergies of existing programs and policies on migration and development.

6. What more should the US Government do on migration and development?

Both migration and development are extremely complex policy areas involving multiple stakeholders within and outside of government. Bringing the two together in a coherent way would not be easy, given the different priorities and areas of expertise within different departments and agencies. This kind of issue, with overlapping jurisdictions and sometimes conflicting agendas, lends itself to a task force approach, with all the major interests (and potential contributors) represented.

A common problem in the early stages of a task force, unless it has very strong political leadership from above, however, is that the members are resistant to viewing the problem from outside of their own institutional perspectives. Often, they tend to approach the task defensively, with a view to establishing priority for their own agencies' interests and budgets.

For this reason, a constructive preliminary step to forming such a task force could be to establish an independent working group involving both departmental representatives and independent experts on migration and development. The working group would assemble evidence on the interaction between migration and development in the US context, and present different models and practices drawn both from US experience and the experiences

of other countries.⁴¹ It could investigate what is possible within the framework of US law and identify where small changes in laws or regulations could produce big development pay-offs. Importantly, it would consult diaspora groups, state and local governments,⁴² and governments in countries of origin to identify roadblocks to development found in US migration-related policies that have relatively straightforward remedies. To give just one example, the US Social Security Administration has negotiated 25 bilateral agreements for social security totalization, but none of these are with low-income countries.⁴³ The agreement with middle-income Mexico, the largest source of immigration to the United States, was signed in 2004 but has never been implemented. Bilateral agreements with developing countries to permit migrants to benefit from US pension entitlements if they return home would have many benefits for individual migrant retirees as well as creating multiplier effects in their countries of origin.

The Broader Context

The ability of individuals and communities in Diaspora to combat poverty and contribute to development in their countries of origin is conditioned by their integration in the country of settlement. Contributions to development are limited from communities in which many members have no secure legal status, are not incorporated in the formal labor market, do not get an education of quality—all conditions which make it likely that their resources will be meager and largely absorbed by their own daily survival needs. Donor governments that are serious about transnationalism as an engine of development will strive for policy coherence across departments of government. This means an immigration policy that creates opportunities for legal residence and fosters integration. Fears that integration may lead to a gradual decline of remittances and other connections with countries of origin are eroding in the face of evidence of increasingly durable transnational communities. The vigor of such communities can also be assisted by visa policies that make it easier for members of Diasporas to come and go among country of origin, country of settlement, and other countries with Diaspora communities of the same origin.

A possible model would be for a Task Force on Migration and Development to be managed by an independent office. Rather than a new agency or a lead agency, which may find it difficult to motivate collaboration from others, an overarching authority is more likely to succeed. To do so, however, it would need to have an independent, substantial budget and bureaucratic authority. Most importantly, it would need to have persuasive leadership able to demonstrate to other stakeholders within and outside of government that collaboration

⁴¹ Other major donor countries, particularly in Europe, are much more active in designing and implementing direct programs on migration and development. Among the pioneers and leaders are the U.K.'s DfID, Germany's GTZ, Switzerland's SDC and France's AFD. A thorough account of their activities is beyond the scope of this paper, but they illustrate the range of possibilities for action at the national level.

⁴² For example, the state of Florida established a volunteer agency (FAVACA) to promote development and humanitarian work in Central America and the Caribbean, where substantial migration flows to Florida originate.

⁴³ <http://ssa.gov/international/status>

would advance their own agendas, enhance their effectiveness, and give them access to more resources.

The Task Force on Migration and Development could take the lead on several points from Presidential Policy Directive 6 on Global Development Policy, mentioned in the introduction to this paper. One determination made in PPD-6 was to “forge a deliberate division of labor among key donors. The United States would seek an explicit division of labor by focusing our efforts on select countries and regions.” One criterion for US development policy should be the migration relationship a country has with the United States, on the grounds that there are ties and a degree of familiarity that, if taken advantage of, could result in more effective development initiatives. The European Union has created a framework for such country-specific initiatives in its “Global Approach to Migration and Mobility,” in the form of “Migration partnerships.”

Under “A Modern Architecture” for development, PPD-6 also calls for “creating clear lines of authority and responsibility, and generating greater coherence across the U.S. Government.” To do this, it says that “when other major policies affecting developing countries are being reviewed through existing policy mechanisms (e.g. trade policy through the U. S. Trade Representatives’ Trade Policy Review Group, etc.) an assessment of the development impact of policy changes will be included in the analysis.” This is precisely what needs to be done, but as of late 2017, there is little sign of this policy being implemented in relation to migration-related policies. No new policy statement about development has replaced PPD-6. A new effort is needed, and could have a disproportionate impact on the effectiveness of US policy.