



## **Recommendations from the regional consultations on human development and diaspora action**

Mr. Oscar Chacon, Executive Director, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)

Action theme 3: Human development, diaspora action

### General Concerns:

Although much has been said about the links between migration, migrant-sent remittances and development, little to nothing has been said about what kind of development we are proposing to advance. From the perspective of those of us who have become migrants in the last few decades, there is one reality in our country of origin, as well as our adopted homelands that concerns us greatly: The growing patterns of income and wealth inequality. This pattern seems to be embedded in the dominant economic policy model of the past few decades, including the schemes known as Free Trade Agreements. From the point of view of those of us who have been behind the much-celebrated flow of remittances, we believe that measuring the ability to steadily reverse the current trend towards greater income and wealth inequality, among nations and within nations, should be a central criteria to know if we are moving forward in bringing about greater economic opportunity, decent employment, sustainability and an overall more satisfactory way of life in our home countries, as well as in our adopted homelands.

Again, from the perspective of organized migrant communities and Diasporas, we view with great concern the rise over the last few decades of negative attitudes towards migrants. This trend has led to an increasing pattern of criminalization of migrant persons who find themselves in a condition of irregularity or lack of immigration status. It also takes the form of harsher and disproportional punishment for migrant persons than those faced by native born individuals when minor violations to the law are committed. In our view, national governments and multilateral political and economic institutions such as the United Nations must do a lot more to counteract, forcefully and unequivocally, the rise in racist and xenophobic attacks against migrant communities, and more specifically, this pernicious criminalization trend. Not to do so would contradict the often stated commitment to support and enable migrant communities and Diasporas as partners in the efforts to maximize the benefits of migration. A more forceful response against racism and xenophobia must include a firm opposition to the use of hateful and derogatory adjectives such as “illegal immigrants” to refer to migrant persons who may lack the proper immigration authorization.

We also want to highlight the fact that despite the ample evidence of the generous contributions made by immigrants, irrespective to their immigration status, to their newly adopted homelands as well as to their countries of origin, forceful repatriations or deportations continue to be a daily occurrence. What is even

more concerning is the lack of serious and systematic public policy responses to this challenge. When migrant persons are forcefully returned to their country of origin, particularly when such a return takes place after many years of residence in a foreign nation, they are coming back to a country in which their social networks no longer exist. Therefore, their ability to fully and successfully reintegrate becomes extremely difficult. National governments in the nations conducting deportations, as well as national governments in the receiving countries must provide effective and long lasting responses to the challenge of enabling former migrants to once again become active contributors to wealth generation and the overall wellbeing in their societies.

### Recommendations:

- In exploring the links of migration and development, and in particular the role of immigrant communities or Diasporas, governments must address the root causes of migration (inequality between and within the countries).
- Migration must be considered both as a cross-cutting topic (based on the principle of no discrimination) and as a specific component in the post-2015 development agenda.
- Policy response coherence must become a practical matter, as opposed to just a declaration of intentions. Issues such as migration, forced migration, climate change, persecution and violence, and others must be conceived and articulated in harmony with one another.
- Educational attainment at all levels, as well as practical knowledge and know-how resulted from job experience must be recognized and made applicable to both countries of destination and origin.
- Governments must do better and produce concrete results in adapting their national legislations, including laws related to political rights of individuals in order to ensure that every right available in-country be fully extended to the nationals residing abroad. Conversely, foreign national residing in a given nation should be extended every possible right in order to ensure a level play-field for all immigrants.
- Governments must articulate and effectively applied policy responses to the case of involuntarily returned former migrants. The goal must be to achieve a prompt and optimum reintegration of these individuals so that they can be again contributors to wealth generation and to the overall well-being of societies.