





Thematic Workshop "Diaspora Engagement in the Promotion of Investment and Sustainable Development"

 *International Diplomatic Academy of Tunisia*

Hybrid Format

 *May 6, 2025*

1.1. General Context

As part of the Year of Multilateralism, which symbolizes a renewed commitment to strengthening cooperation and partnerships with United Nations agencies and the multilateral system, and in line with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), Tunisia will host a thematic workshop on May 6, 2025, focused on diaspora engagement in promoting investment and sustainable development.

Organized jointly by the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Tunisia, this event is integrated into the broader GFMD framework. It closely aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), both of which emphasize the importance of migration and the diaspora as key drivers of inclusive growth and social cohesion. Drawing inspiration from the international momentum initiated by the Global Diaspora Summit (GDS), the Dublin Declaration and the Global Diaspora Policy Alliance (GDPA), the workshop aims to highlight the strategic potential of diasporas — including remittances, productive investments, skills transfers, and innovative partnerships. These dimensions are essential for stimulating job creation, supporting innovation, and strengthening economic and social resilience.

Ahead of the Colombia summit, this thematic workshop represents a strategic opportunity to enhance Tunisia's visibility on the international stage, showcase its national initiatives for diaspora engagement, and consolidate government actions toward good migration governance. It will also provide a platform to share global best practices, foster collaboration with other countries, and chart an ambitious roadmap to maximize the diaspora's contribution to sustainable development.

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1.2. Objective of the Thematic Workshop

The objectives of this thematic workshop are to:

1. **Highlight and Promote Good Practices and National and International Strategies for Diaspora Engagement**
 - Showcase successful initiatives from different countries and encourage the sharing of expertise, in order to strengthen and enrich national policies in this area.
2. **Explore Innovative Mechanisms to Optimize Investment and Remittances Flows**
 - Identify financial, technological and institutional mechanisms that facilitate and secure capital flows, while responding to the specific challenges of the Tunisian diaspora.
3. **Examine Emerging Sectors with High Potential for Diaspora Investment**
 - Pay particular attention to the green economy, the digital transition and infrastructure, highlighting their potential for growth and impact on sustainable development.
4. **Strengthening International Cooperation and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships**
 - Mobilize public institutions, international organizations and the private sector, in order to catalyze joint initiatives and develop synergies around diaspora engagement.
5. **Formulate Concrete Recommendations to Maximize the Diaspora's Impact**
 - Based on exchanges, feedback, and experiences, propose strategic orientations and operational solutions to support sustainable development, in Tunisia and at the global level.
6. **Fully Engage All Stakeholders**
 - Encourage the participation and collaboration of civil society, the private sector, cities, local authorities and youth to build an inclusive and sustainable approach to diaspora engagement.

Through these exchanges, this thematic workshop aspires to formulate concrete recommendations and identify courses of action to maximize the impact of the diaspora on sustainable development, both in Tunisia and globally.

1.3. The Strategic Importance of the Diaspora

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Diasporas play a critical role in the global economy, particularly through remittances, which reached \$669 billion in 2023¹ for low- and middle-income countries, often surpassing official development assistance. These financial flows are vital for the economic resilience of countries of origin and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by facilitating the movement of human, social, cultural and financial capital.

Tunisia benefits from a significant diaspora, representing 15.4% of its population in 2022,² the majority of whom reside in Europe. This community actively participates in national development through remittances, investments and skills transfer. In 2023, remittances reached TND 7,515 million (USD 2.4 billion),³ or 5.6% of GDP,⁴ reflecting a constant financial commitment. In North Africa, remittances remain a major source of funding, reaching \$38 billion in 2022,⁵ with countries such as Morocco and Egypt leading the way.

Beyond remittances, a growing dynamic of productive investment is emerging, particularly in start-ups and export sectors. In 2021, diaspora investments in Tunisia totaled TND 163 million, or 4% of declared investments.⁶ Between 2008 and 2018, nearly 20,000 projects were carried out by Tunisians living abroad,

¹ World Bank (2023). *The growth of migrant remittances continues but slows in 2023*. Available at: <https://www.banquemonde.org/fr/news/press-release/2023/12/18/remittance-flows-grow-2023-slower-pace-migration-development-brief#:~:text=Les%20envois%20de%20fonds%20vers,dans%20leur%20pays%20d'origine>

² Jelassi, K. (2023). *Tunisiens résidant à l'étranger : Un poumon essentiel pour l'économie*. *The Press*. Available at: <https://lapresse.tn/2023/07/08/tunisiens-residant-a-letranger-un-poumon-essentiel-pour-leconomie/>

³ Ecofin Agency (2024). *Tunisia: Remittances from the diaspora increased by 2% in 2023, to \$2.4 billion*. Available at: [https://www.agenceecofin.com/actualites/0901-115061-tunisie-les-transferts-de-fonds-de-la-diaspora-ont-augmente-de-2-en-2023-a-2-4-milliards#:~:text=Actualit%C3%A9s-,Tunisie%20%3A%20les%20transferts%20de%20fonds%20de%20la%20diaspora%20ont%20augment%C3%A9,%2C%20%20C3%A0%20%2C4%20milliards%20%24&text=\(Agency%20Ecofin\)%20%2D%20Les%20envois,from%20la%20R%C3%A9volution%20de%202011](https://www.agenceecofin.com/actualites/0901-115061-tunisie-les-transferts-de-fonds-de-la-diaspora-ont-augmente-de-2-en-2023-a-2-4-milliards#:~:text=Actualit%C3%A9s-,Tunisie%20%3A%20les%20transferts%20de%20fonds%20de%20la%20diaspora%20ont%20augment%C3%A9,%2C%20%20C3%A0%20%2C4%20milliards%20%24&text=(Agency%20Ecofin)%20%2D%20Les%20envois,from%20la%20R%C3%A9volution%20de%202011)

⁴ World Bank (2024). *Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Tunisia*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?emplacements=TN>

⁵ World Bank (2023). *The growth of migrant remittances continues but slows in 2023*. Available at: <https://www.banquemonde.org/fr/news/press-release/2023/12/18/remittance-flows-grow-2023-slower-pace-migration-development-brief#:~:text=Les%20envois%20de%20fonds%20vers,dans%20leur%20pays%20d'origine>

⁶ Saidi M. (2024). *Tunisian diaspora: An important pillar of financing the economy*. Available at: <https://lapresse.tn/2024/04/08/diaspora-tunisienne-un-important-pilier-du-financement-de-leconomie/#:~:text=En%202021%2C%20les%20investissements%20d%C3%A9clar%C3%A9s,Tunisie%20pour%20ce%20ann%C3%A9e%20D%C3%A0>



mainly in services, industry and agriculture. The Tunisian diaspora in France is the main source of investments.

The State's engagement aims to optimize the impact of the diaspora by further integrating it into the country's development. Its impact extends even beyond remittances. In addition to monetary remittances, the diaspora contributes significantly through:

- The transfer of skills and technologies, facilitating the emergence of innovative sectors.
- Investment in key projects, particularly in infrastructure, services, and entrepreneurship.
- Influence on trade exchanges and international cooperation, strengthening ties between countries of origin and host countries.

However, challenges remain, such as high unemployment (16.2% in 2024) and limited financing access for SMEs. To maximize the diaspora's impact, policies should focus on improving financing access and fostering co-development between Tunisia and host countries.

The structured engagement of the diaspora is a strategic lever for sustainable development and economic prosperity. By strengthening synergies with the national economy, Tunisia can leverage its human and financial capital internationally to enhance resilience and boost development.

1.4. Optimizing the Engagement of the Tunisian Diaspora for National and International Development

Aware of the crucial role its diaspora can play in national development, the country of origin could intensify efforts to structure this engagement in a more systematic way. While some progress has been made, it remains vital to strengthen the interconnection between various economic, social, and territorial actors to maximize the diaspora's impact. Collaboration between the private sector, civil society, youth, and cities emerges as a strategic lever to transform diaspora resources into an active contribution to the country's development.

Beyond financial transfers, the diaspora can offer valuable expertise, an international network, and entrepreneurial dynamism. To fully harness these contributions, it is essential to strengthen synergies with local economic structures and encourage innovative initiatives that allow diaspora talents to integrate into high-value projects. This is not just about financial transfers but also the sharing of skills,

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knowledge exchange, and networking. Civil society could play a key role in facilitating these exchanges and creating bridges between the diaspora and local economic initiatives.

Cities, as entities close to local realities, have a key role to play in fostering environments that are conducive to innovation. By supporting diaspora-led projects and developing local initiatives with high potential, they would help strengthen economic and social ties between the country of origin and its citizens abroad. These cities can be catalysts of opportunity by facilitating the circulation of knowledge, expertise and investment opportunities, beyond simple financial transfers.

Youth, both in the country of origin and abroad, are central to this dynamic. Their engagement in entrepreneurship, the creation of new opportunities, and collaboration with international actors should be encouraged to open new paths for development. Diaspora youth, in particular, could play a catalytic role in future sectors. To facilitate this momentum, a simplified regulatory framework, adapted funding mechanisms, and strengthened entrepreneurial support would be essential.

Finally, the digitalization of administrative services could be a significant asset in facilitating interactions between the diaspora and the country of origin. Simplifying administrative procedures and enhancing transparency would not only attract investments but also create a favorable environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.

By better structuring these mechanisms and promoting coordination, the country of origin could maximize its diaspora's contributions for a more inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

1.5. Global Insights and Potential for Tunisia

Across continents, several initiatives highlight the immense potential of the diaspora in national development. In India, the India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) channels expatriates' financial contributions towards impactful projects in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), through its MIDA program, initially implemented in Somalia in 2008, mobilizes African diasporas' skills to strengthen institutional capacities and contribute to local development plans. In the Philippines, the online platform BaLinkBayan, run by the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), provides a one-stop service for overseas Filipinos to invest, support philanthropic initiatives, participate in medical missions, and engage in educational exchanges.



Cape Verde has introduced a dedicated program to stimulate diasporic entrepreneurship, fostering the creation of local businesses and supporting project leaders. Finally, the "Colombia Nos Une" platform works to maintain strong ties between Colombia and its citizens abroad, offering administrative, social, and economic support while facilitating their potential return. In Tunisia, Mobi-TRE structures and directs the investment of Tunisians residing abroad towards strategic sectors (such as technological innovation) while providing mentorship and tailored funding mechanisms.

Despite the diversity of these contexts, these programs share a common goal: to harness the potential of the diaspora by channeling its resources, skills, and commitment towards the growth and well-being of the country of origin.

1.6. Expected Participants

To ensure a multisectoral and inclusive approach, the thematic workshop will bring together:

- **Tunisian Government:**
 - Ministries (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy and Planning, etc.)
 - Government agencies such as ANETI, ATCT, Office of Tunisians Abroad (OTE)
 - Central Bank of Tunisia
- **International Organizations:**
 - International Organization for Migration (IOM)
 - African Development Bank (AfDB)
 - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
 - World Bank
- **Financial Institutions:**
 - Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
 - International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

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- **Private Sector:** Chambers of commerce, professional federations, investors and entrepreneurs.
- **Tunisian Diaspora:** Associations, entrepreneurs, experts and investors based abroad.
- **Partner Countries,** such as Cape Verde for its best practices in diaspora engagement, as well as other countries with exemplary diaspora engagement experiences, such as Somalia, Colombia, the Philippines, and Italy.

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Agenda

Note: The thematic workshop will take place in a hybrid format, combining in-person and online participation.

Master of Ceremonies:

- Mr. Karim Ben Amor, Interviewing journalist in Tunisia

Time (GMT +1)	Sessions/Speakers
May 6, 2025	
8.30 – 9.00	Reception and registration of participants
9 :30 – 10 :00	<p>Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ali Nafti, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad • Ms. Amy E. Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM) • Mr. Fethi Zouheir Nouri, Governor of Tunisia Central Bank (TBC) • H.E. Mr Gustavo Adolfo Gallón Giraldo, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations in Geneva
10 :00 – 10 :30	Coffee Break
10 :30 – 11 :45	<p>Session 1: Engaging the Next Generation Diaspora for Sustainable Development</p> <p>This session will explore strategies to enhance the involvement of second- and third-generation diaspora in their countries of origin, with a focus on innovative sectors. It will identify key opportunities, challenges, and actionable solutions to strengthen their investment and engagement. Discussions will focus on overcoming barriers, leveraging existing mechanisms, and fostering long-term partnerships to channel their potential into sustainable development initiatives.</p> <p>Moderator:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Cécile Riallant, Deputy Chief of Mission, IOM Tunisia <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Martin Russell, Founder of Global Diaspora Insights and Advisor at the Networking Institute, Ireland • Ms. Stella Opoku-Owusu, Director of African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), UK • Ms. Violina Donu, Head Diaspora Relations Bureau within the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova • Mr. Ahmed El Fadhel, President of the Tunisian Space Association (TUNSA) et Co-Founder & CTO of Climate Innov
11 :45 – 13 :00	<p>Session 2: Leveraging Diaspora Experiences for Economic and Social Development</p> <p>This session will showcase impactful diaspora-led initiatives that drive economic and social development in countries of origin. Featuring insights from the Tunisian diaspora and global success stories, the discussion will highlight effective engagement strategies and explore how governments and institutions can collaborate with their diaspora to sustain impact. The session aims to identify international best practices and explore their applicability to the Tunisian contexts, foster synergies between local and global efforts, and promote diaspora contributions to sustainable development.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Daniele Panzeri, Senior Programme Support and Liaison – Migration and Development (M&D) Unit Coordinator, IOM Italy <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Ouejdane Mejri, Director of the Migration for Development Unit at Pontes, a Tunisian-Italian association, Italy • Ms. Fridah Ntarangwi, Managing Director, ZidiCircle, Netherlands • Mr. Loksan Harley, Executive Director of Homelands Advisory, UK • Mr. Helmi Tlili, Director General of the Office of Tunisians Abroad, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia
13 :00 – 14 :00	Lunch



<p>14 :00 – 15 :15</p>	<p>Session 3: Catalyzing Diaspora Investment in Emerging and Innovative Sectors</p> <p>This session will focus on identifying high-potential sectors for diaspora investment, including finance, technology, and research. The discussion will explore the policies and strategies required to stimulate investment, with a particular emphasis on public incentive mechanisms. Additionally, it will address ways to facilitate remittances and encourage diaspora engagement in strategic sectors and public projects, aiming to strengthen the connection between financial flows and sustainable development.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Leon Isaacs, Chief Executive Officer, DMA Global, United Kingdom <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Roberto Cancel, Senior Regional Labor Mobility Specialist, IOM Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean • Ms. Ronit Avni, Founder and CEO at Localized • Mr. Mauro Martini, Senior Technical Specialist - Remittances, Migration and Development at the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (TBC) • Mr. Mohamed Amine Rekik, Deputy Director General of Foreign Exchange Operations Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT)
<p>15 :15 – 15 :30</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p>
<p>15 :30 – 16 :45</p>	<p>Session 4: Diasporas as Partners and Actors of Development</p> <p>This session will examine how to advance diaspora initiatives towards structured, long-term engagement strategies. It will explore mechanisms for Tunisia in how to blend diaspora contributions with institutional frameworks in a way that maximizes their impact on sustainable development. The discussion will highlight best practices in governance, coordination between stakeholders, and the role of public-private partnerships in creating an enabling environment for diaspora-led initiatives. Additionally, the session will synthesize insights from previous discussions, identifying cross-cutting challenges and opportunities while proposing pathways to scale and sustain diaspora engagement beyond individual projects.</p>



	<p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ali Belhaj, Tunisian academic at Institut National du Travail et des Etudes Sociales de Tunis, Tunisia <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Angela Naa Afoley Odai, Acting Head, Diaspora Division, Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union • Ms. Laura Arango Blanco, Counsellor Permanent Mission of Colombia to the UN • Mr. George Tabatadze, Director of the Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
16 :45 – 17 :15	<p>Closing Session</p> <p>Led by Mr. Mohamed Ben Ayed, Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), represented by Mr. Othman Belbeisi, Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, and H.E. Mr Gustavo Adolfo Gallón Giraldo, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations in Geneva (TBC)</p>