

Meeting of the Friends of the Forum
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Update on Civil Society Activities

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Check against delivery

Mr. Chair, colleagues and partners in migration and development: it is a pleasure to offer an update on activities of civil society for the GFMD since we last met together in February. This is a report of the 2.5-person team that coordinating global civil society for the Forum: Ms. Wies Maas and Mr. Andres Morales full time and myself 50%.

1. What “continuity” means

First, may we recognize with appreciation the great **value of continuity** that the Mexican, Swiss and now Mauritian chairs hoped for in emphasizing continuity in the coordination of civil society engagement in the Global Forum.

A few days ago we published the **full report of civil society activities** in the GFMD last year. It has been sent to some 1600 who have participated in GFMD civil society activities these past five years, and yesterday to all current GFMD focal points in governments and international organizations. It is already posted on civil society website gfmddcivilsociety.org and the government website gfmdd.org.

A benefit of “continuity” was the incentive for this report of civil society to be issued shortly after the Forum *just completed*—not shortly before the *next* Forum. The report and its recommendations can now serve as an **action plan** for the year rather than a memoire for the files: a driver for concrete follow-up on recommendations and a basis for building coherent *next* steps into civil society’s own concept paper for 2012.

Indeed, the straightforward **spreadsheet of civil society’s recommendations** from 2011, many of which overlap in important areas with the government recommendations, are included as a distinct annex to the report. Also included is the summary of the **results of the formal evaluation** of the GFMD civil society activities in 2011. [Copies of the evaluation report are on the back table.]

One of the most important benefits of the new continuity has been the opportunity to be able for the first time to **respond intelligently to funders who are interested in multi-year planning and possibilities** for the Global Forum: in preparation and follow-up, in strengthening civil society engagement and network building, in constructive partnership and in concrete outcomes achieved by civil society, governments and international organizations working together, over time and not just at a set of meetings a year. Three funders have already responded positively to this continuity with multi-year support; with some confidence we have submitted further proposals for multi-year relationships with several other funders and the European Union.

So we have discovered—and I believe managed with fairly good result so far—both the burden and the blessings of the new continuity.

2. Funding

At the moment however, we continue to struggle very much with the burden carried by civil society organizers of all prior years: the **need to substantially fundraise** each year's budget each year. In that direction Mr. Chair, thank you for targeting the same funding for civil society in the Chair's budget for 2012 as was indicated this time last year—though not an increase, and thank you for your frankness that the Chair is counting on other state contributions for the bulk of that target. We hear you, and as did civil society coordinators in prior years, we earnestly turn to states for modest cost-sharing with us and our own financial contribution. Aiming at a civil society budget of US \$ 860,333 for the Coordinating Office and full Civil Society Days programme—*just half of what was spent for civil society in 2010*—we are currently about 60% short.

3. Elements of the Civil Society programme for 2012

Ladies and gentlemen, here are simply some broad outlines and timelines of the Civil Society programme for 2012.

- **Civil society concept paper:** Very much related to your roundtable themes, but based on strong recommendations received in the evaluations and otherwise from civil society actors to date, the themes of civil society roundtable themes are likely to center upon: [1] labour mobility and labour matching. [2] protection of migrants and their families, and [3] diaspora and development. Moreover, there is a strong possibility that civil society this year will devote not a couple of plenaries but an entire track to organizing for the High Level Dialogue, which I will briefly note in closing.
- **May will be a busy month:**
 - We will circulate the **draft civil society concept paper** broadly for input, beginning with the Consultation Circle of over 100 diverse civil society actors worldwide that we assembled for such purposes last year. This year, we would welcome your review of the draft for civil society and suggestions as well.
 - We will be convening the new **International Advisory Committee**.
 - Next week we will be opening the **application process** for civil society organizations to apply to become delegates to the Civil Society Days in Mauritius. We have prepared a wide communications and outreach strategy: beginning with all civil society participants and applicants in the first five Forum meetings. We welcome any recommendations you might make of your civil society partners and if possible, contributions and cost-sharing for their engagement. We are aiming for 150 delegates (compared to just over 180 last year), indicating clearly that there may not be funding enough this year to again subsidize part costs of even half of the delegates like last year.
 - And of course we will zealously continue **fundraising** efforts in May.
- **Looking toward the Civil Society Days** in Mauritius November 19 and 20, we are grateful to hear of your decision, Chair, to organize the government meetings in the International Convention Center in Pailles, which is not only perfect for civil society also, but beautiful. We have been increasing collaboration with Caritas Mauritius, our longstanding partner and presence on the ground, and with the Mauritius Council on Social Service, which is actively organizing the engagement of national Mauritian civil society organizations in the GFMD this year and beyond.
- **For Common Space**, civil society's evaluations of 2011 were very positive on the shared morning but insistent on a format of greater dialogue. With that in mind, and appreciating

the Chair's enthusiasm for input, we submitted this week a proposal to consider a "dialogues plus plenary" formula for Common Space this year. Using no more and no less time than in prior years, there could, for example, be three group dialogues of 50 participants each from civil society, governments and international organizations, linked to the themes of the three government roundtables, *in parallel* to the main plenary organized for all other participants, as in the first two years, but with more limited thematic focus and more discussion.

- **In addition to the Civil Society Days themselves**, *should funding permit* (including under funding proposals that are pending, directly or by partners) we will incorporate into the civil society programme for 2012 one or more inter-regional preparatory meetings of civil society (with the first priority continental Africa) and three working groups, on labour migration and mobility, on migrants/diaspora and development, and on governance, with rights and protection cross-cutting for all three groups.

4. UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Lastly, civil society doesn't want the High Level Dialogue in 2013 to focus on the GFMD, but rather the GFMD this year to focus in practical ways towards the High Level Dialogue. With that in mind, may I report just three flashes of reflection that is growing among civil society actors, to date in particular among NGOs, trade unions and migrant associations.

1. **The format** of the High Level Dialogue must engage all stakeholders, and civil society much more than at the first HLD on Migration and Development in 2006. That is to say, the interactive civil society hearings in 2006 seemed constructive, but the almost total exclusion of civil society from the roundtables was not.
2. **Outcomes:** unlike 2006, this second HLD must produce more than a "Report of the Chair"!
3. **The focus** should be on two or three outcomes within immediate reach, plus one big question.
 - In its 2011 Global Forum statement, civil society suggested that issues well **within reach** include: measures to improve recruitment and development processes and cooperation on piloting mechanisms for labour and skills matching. Others often pointed to are the development of a comprehensive set of migration indicators, including within Migration Profiles, and ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention.
 - In more recent input, including to the 10th meeting of the UN Coordination Committee on International Migration in February, a range of civil society actors have suggested that the HLD should consider one of the following big questions:
 - rights-based global governance of migration
 - development alternatives to forced migration (not necessarily root causes in themselves)
 - mechanisms for safe and legal labour migration
 - protection of migrants who are stranded or victim of migration-related violence in transit and destination countries
 - moving the GFMD under "a" UN normative framework with structural support and continuity, and greater engagement of civil society.

Close

Updates like this often close with inviting you to visit the website, and we do: gfmdcivilsociety.org. But most sincerely, may we invite you to visit *us*, for a coffee and chat, or shamelessly ask for an invitation to visit *you*, to share thoughts, possibilities and the commitment to make the Forum this year, once again, worth it.