

“Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development”

GFMD 2013-2014 Fifth Meeting of the Friends of the Forum

Tuesday, 11 March 2014
14.30 to 18.15 hrs
La Salle II, ILO Building, Geneva

Summary Report

Welcoming Remarks

1. The final meeting of the GFMD Friends of the Forum¹ was chaired by Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje, GFMD 2013-2014 Chair. The Chair was assisted at the podium by the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Migration and Development (SRSG), Mr. Peter Sutherland, the incoming GFMD 2015 Chair Turkey, represented by Ambassador Amb. Mehmet Samsar, Director General for Consular Affairs of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as representatives of the GFMD 2013-2014 Secretariat and the GFMD Support Unit.
2. The Chair noted that it was the last meeting of the Friends of the Forum under the Swedish Chairmanship. She introduced new members of the Swedish GFMD 2013-2014 Secretariat. She then announced that the first agenda item to be discussed was the “GFMD and Engagement with the Private Sector.” Also, she would like to add budget updates under “Any Other Business” agenda item.

The GFMD and Engagement with the Private Sector

3. Building on the recommendations of the 2012 Assessment Report, the Swedish Chair has reached out to the private sector and states in an effort to identify productive ways to engage with business on international migration. A key objective was to identify a format for a sustainable, consultative process with the private sector that could be used as a roadmap for incoming GFMD Chair Turkey and for the GFMD going forward. The consultation process has been wide, cross-sectorial and global, taking into account the need for flexibility to allow for GFMD’s relationship with business to evolve into a process that suits both the GFMD and the private sector.
4. Ms. Marielle Sander Lindström, Senior Policy Adviser of the Swedish GFMD Chair, reported on the progress of the Chair’s varied initiatives in engaging the private sector. To learn from previous chairs and also to have a consultative process with states, firstly a voluntary government roundtable team for private sector was set up. The roundtable team served as a sounding board and provided ideas and support for the Chair’s activities. In lieu of talking about migration policy in general, the team saw the need to begin the discussion on issues concrete enough for businesses to be willing to engage in, that were also of importance to states. Desk research identified *access to skills* as a main point of convergence for both states and businesses. To test this assumption, the Chair commissioned a mapping study to identify the role of migration policies in business, and also engage in direct outreach to key sectors through a series of business roundtables.
5. Two business roundtables – in New York (October 2013) and Brussels (February 2014) - confirmed that skills shortages negatively impact the growth potential for business and states, that mobility of skilled migrants can help to sustain jobs and growth and that there are migration policy models that businesses are willing to work with. Furthermore, the Brussels RT showed that there was a lot of concern about negative public perceptions of migration which made it difficult for governments to introduce more flexibility into migration policies. A further four business roundtables were organized as part of the Thematic Meeting on Private Sector Engagement and would take place the following day (12 March), where the result of the mapping study would also be presented.

¹ Over 120 delegates from 70 Governments and 16 Observers attended the meeting.

6. Ms. Lindstrom explained that the results of the mapping study and the business roundtables are intended to inform the recommendations for continued private sector engagement to be presented at the GFMD's Future of the Forum meeting in Stockholm in May. These recommendations will also take into account consultations with the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Migration (WEF-GAC Migration), the Council on Global Immigration, The Hague Process on Migration and Refugees (THP) and the International Organization of Employers (IOE). Ms. Lindstrom said that aside from a shared interest in promoting access to skills, both governments and businesses see the toxicity of the migration debate and recognize the value of working together. However, she added, there is need to build trust between governments and businesses. Engagement of the private sector as a distinct and separate stakeholder needs time, consistent effort and investment. It was anticipated that the final recommendations will include holding regular, informal roundtable discussions between businesses and states; creating more opportunities and spaces for a flexible business-state dialogue at a global level; and establishing a reporting mechanism whereby updates on the business roundtable discussions are shared with the Steering Group and/or Friends of the Forum.

7. The presentation elicited positive remarks from the floor. The need to raise the voice of the public sector as a vital partner in the migration process was emphasized. The importance of follow-up in dialogues and discussions was stressed. Bearing in mind the different context and priorities of the governments and private sector when it comes to migration issues, continued sharing of public-private partnership initiatives was suggested. Another suggestion was to be mindful that business will want quick and specific results in order to remain engaged. Meanwhile, a note of caution was raised about using access to skills as a key factor for migration policy-making, noting that some countries only want to select high-skilled migrants.

Enhancing the working methods of the GFMD Steering Group

8. The Chair informed the Friends of the Forum that this agenda item was lengthily discussed with the Steering Group² earlier in the day. The Steering Group has deliberated on the issue three times already, in an attempt to implement a key recommendation of the GFMD assessment report to "ensure an appropriate regional balance and manageable size of the Steering Group" and to find a system that would allow new states to join the SG without keeping on expanding its size. The latest draft proposed Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Steering Group was circulated to all Friends of the Forum ahead of the 11 March meeting, as well as draft TORs for the GFMD Troika and the Friends of the Forum.

9. Ms Sofia Ostmark, Senior Policy Adviser at the Swedish GFMD Secretariat, shared the results of discussions of the Steering Group. She explained that the objective is to ensure efficiency, flexibility and transparency in the work of the Steering Group while promoting complementarities between the Troika, the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. The proposed TORs for the Steering Group are built around the following principles: i) aim to limit the size of the Steering Group; ii) clarify expectations of SG members; iii) further define the roles and responsibilities of SG members; iv) define a clear process on how other governments can indicate their interest in becoming members of the SG; and v) explore the possibility of a rotating membership.

10. As a first step, the Chair requested the Steering Group Members in March 2013 to reconfirm their interest to remain members and to provide inputs for enhancing the working methods. Of the 37 Members, 29 countries have expressly communicated to the Chair their wish to remain in the Steering Group while 2 offered to step down. The Chair emphasized that the SG is mandated to provide overall strategic direction to the GFMD process, consider and advise on policy issues, provide advice, as required, to the Chair-in-Office, and periodically assess the activities of the Forum. The SG members are expected to demonstrate their sustained commitment and active engagement which implies both intellectual/substantial input and, to the extent possible, also financial contributions.

11. The draft ToR for the Steering Group also includes a proposal for a possible rotational system that takes into account regional balance and countries with different migration perspectives in the SG. The proposed informal rotational system is flexible and a) allows for new countries to join the SG; b) is based on confirmation from countries of their willingness to remain members of the SG; c) offers the possibility once a year for rotation

² See http://gfmd.org/docs/?f0=im_field_gfmd_meeting%3A58&f1=im_field_category%3A390 for the complete report of the 5th Steering Group meeting.

during pledging meetings; and d) calls on the Troika to decide on requests for membership. The Chair emphasized that countries that are unable to remain in the SG can still contribute to the process by participating actively in the Friends of the Forum.

12. Some comments and suggestions were made during the ensuing discussions. The delegate from Guatemala announced that they would like to join the GFMD Steering Group to increase the contribution of Latin America to the process. An Observer suggested adding countries from Central America and sub-Saharan Africa. A question was asked about the modalities for rotation and how to ensure regional distribution. A suggestion was made to have 1/3 fixed membership and 2/3 rotating membership. The need to ensure a voluntary rotation system was underlined. Another government reiterated its position that the Forum needs a smaller Steering Group with new enthusiastic members, and that geographical representation should not be a key factor in determining its membership because of the complexity of migration phenomenon. Instead, it was emphasized that commitment and contribution – financial or in-kind – should be the main factor in deciding on membership issues.

13. The Chair thanked all interveners and invited all Friends of the Forum to submit written comments until March 25. After this date, the draft TORs will be finalized for endorsement at the special session on the Future of the Forum of the GFMD 2014 Forum meeting in May.

Long-term financing framework for the GFMD

14. The Chair called again on Ms Sofia Östmark to make a brief presentation on the proposed Long Term financing framework for the GFMD. The proposal outlines the key elements of the proposed multi-annual funding mechanism and includes two annexes – Annex 1 is a template for a standardized budget, with some indicative figures for the operational costs of the GFMD Support Unit and the organizational costs of preparatory meetings in Geneva, while Annex 2 explains the financial arrangements of the GFMD, including the delineation of tasks between the Chair, the Support Unit and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), host of the GFMD Support Unit.

15. The key objectives of the proposed long-term financing framework are: a) to support a multiannual work plan; b) to enable donors to make multi-year contributions and c) to facilitate carryover of unspent funds from one year to the next. The main features would include a standardized budget, an established pledging mechanism, clear governance and accountability framework, and a proposed review in 2017. The proposal includes a provision of a carryover from one Chairmanship to the next, for a minimum amount of USD 400,000 to start each Chairmanship. This amount is needed to cover the first six-month operations of the GFMD Support Unit and the costs of organizing preparatory activities in Geneva.

16. During the open discussions, a suggestion was made to factor into the standardized budget a 5% inflation rate per annum. A question was asked how much it costs on average to host a GFMD meeting. The Chair replied that it ranges from USD 1.5 to 2 Million, depending on the host government's arrangements for the Forum Meeting. The ICMC, convener of the GFMD civil society process, expressed concern that the proposed standardized budget did not include a provision for the civil society process. The Chair clarified that this matter was discussed in the GFMD Steering Group where it was decided that the civil society should have a separate budget; but that the civil society should be given room at the pledging meeting to present their budget and the Chair would facilitate contributions to the civil society process by governments and other donors. The Chair encouraged all delegates to submit additional written comments before 25 March.

Multiannual work plan for the GFMD

17. The Chair recalled that another key recommendation of the GFMD assessment report was the development of a multi-annual work (MWP) plan. Since May 2013, the Swedish GFMD Chair and the incoming Chair Turkey, in consultation with Mauritius, have worked closely together on preparing a draft MWP with the objective to contribute to the sustainability and consistency across GFMD Chairmanship, as well as increase the transparency and visibility of GFMD outcomes and progress. The latest draft was circulated to the Friends of the Forum on March 4.

18. Mr. Justin MacDermott, Senior Policy Adviser at the Swedish GFMD Secretariat, explained the structure and format of the draft MWP. Each of the three main sections -- a) thematic substance: continuity and progress; b) GFMD process and its sustainability; and c) evidence base, outreach and impact – contains outcome statements and objectives drawn from the recommendations in the GFMD Assessment Report, the priorities of

the Swedish Chairmanship, the ideas for priorities of the incoming Chair Turkey as well as the outcomes of the High-Level Dialogue (HLD) and its implications for the work of the GFMD. An Annex tracks its implementation under each heading, with clear objectives, required action(s), lead, timeframe, and achieved output/results.

19. Incoming GFMD 2014-2015 Chair Turkey shared their initial thoughts about possible themes for their Chairmanship. These include strengthening partnerships to demonstrate the development potential of migrants, capacity building to improve the situation of migrants and ensure their rights in host countries, harnessing the potentials of private sector in international migration as an enabler to development, and migration in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. The new Turkish themes will be reflected in the final document to be circulated before the Forum Meeting.

20. After some remarks from the floor, the Chair concluded that there was general consensus around the draft MWP. It will be further revised for endorsement at the Forum Meeting special session on the Future of the Forum. Written comments will be welcomed until 25 March.

The 7th GFMD Meeting in Stockholm (14-16 May 2014)

21. The Chair reminded the Friends of the Forum that the official invitation to the May Forum meeting was disseminated in February, together with the provisional program and the practical note for participants. The Chair had received encouraging indication from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that he may be able to attend the opening ceremony on May 14. Some PowerPoint slides were then flashed onscreen to give an overview of the different meetings and events during the 3-day Forum meeting. It was underlined that simultaneous interpretation will be made available only during plenary sessions during 14-16 May. All roundtable and special sessions will be conducted only in English. The reasons for this are several. First of all, the Chair would like to maintain and encourage the informality of the discussions in the GFMD. Traditionally, interpretation has sometimes been offered in French and Spanish but not in other UN languages. Requests have been received for interpretation to several other languages; but it was felt that it is not a good case to do the interpretation only in one or two languages. As the GFMD is funded on a voluntary basis and has a very limited budget, it would be too big of a challenge to provide interpretation to all UN languages and it would also imply a cost that would not fit the GFMD budget. However, the Chair assured the participants that there will be resource persons available in each session room that can help with consecutive translation for delegates who would like to make an intervention in a language other than English.

22. Due to the relatively low registration turn-out the Chair decided to extend the registration period until 31 March 2014, to allow as many countries to participate in the Forum Meeting.

23. The Forum Meeting will be preceded by the Civil Society Days on 12-13 May. The Chair has received some requests for side events at the margins of the Forum Meeting. The Chair's Secretariat is exploring feasible schedules for such events, to be confirmed as soon as possible.

Civil Society Days

24. Mr John Bingham of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), convener of the civil society process, provided a final update on the status of preparations of the GFMD Civil Society Days (CSD). According to him, the ICMC has received funding from the European Commission for a multi –annual work programme aimed at enhancing the civil society participation at the national, regional and global levels, including in the GFMD. A new office has commenced work in Brussels, focusing on civil society network-building in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

25. The proposed CSD budget for 2013-2014 is \$ 790,000, the same amount as in 2012. The ICMC has received financial contributions from the EC, Switzerland, Sweden and Australia to date, leaving a gap of around \$ 70,000 to break-even. Additional support from governments and international organizations will be welcomed.

26. Concerning the 2014 CSD programme, the ICMC received 780 applications -- almost 600 applicants from development and rights NGOs, 87 from trade unions, 75 academics and 39 from the private sector. The International Steering Committee, comprised of 35 civil society leaders from every sector and region around the

world, is now conducting a selection process on the basis of representation, commitment, and a diversity of regions, sectors, gender and activity at international, regional, national and grassroots levels.

27. The programme of the Civil Society Days will be structured around the civil society's 5-year 8-point Plan for collaboration with governments, with special focus on migrants and migration in the post-2015 development agenda. For the first time, civil society and governments will share background papers for the respective GFMD sessions on post-2015. Also, a set of small breakfast conversations will be organized by civil society with governments on Wednesday morning, 14 May. The ICMC will post shortly on the CS website the list of CS organizations that have held or participated in preparatory consultations at national, regional and international levels, often with government officials. Finally, three days immediately preceding the CSD, a number of civil society organizations and leaders active in the Global Forum will hold the People's Global Action on Migration Development and Human Rights, also in Stockholm.

28. The ICMC has been working closely with the Chair on logistical matters, as well as the CS programme and longer-term planning, including on new efforts to engage the private sector, post-2015 work, and the Common Space. ICMC extended an invitation to all governments – especially the chairs and rapporteurs of the Government Meeting roundtables -- to join the CSD in Stockholm, particularly the plenary sessions on Tuesday, 13 May. Conversely, ICMC expressed the wish that the chairs and rapporteurs of CSD roundtable sessions will also be invited to the corresponding government roundtables. Moreover, ICMC proposed to the Governments to come out with a joint civil society-government message expressing convergence concerning migrants, migration and the post-2015 development agenda.

The Platform for Partnerships

29. Ms Estrella Lajom, Head of the GFMD Support Unit, made a brief presentation of the enhanced Platform for Partnerships and its new component, the GFMD Policy and Practice Database (PPD) which now gathers more than 400 policies and practices related to migration & development (M&D policies and practices). The PPD online tool will be officially launched at the Forum Meeting in Stockholm. Ms Lajom highlighted the technical changes that have been made, as well as the various sources of the posted M&D policies and practices which have been classified according to thematic areas, tags, and countries. She quickly showed how to navigate around the Policy and Practice Database and pointed out that there are about 167 governments associated with at least one M&D policy or practice. A request was made to all these Governments to review until end March 2014 the PPD entries online and advise the Support Unit if there are any updates to be made and/or if any needs to be delisted. Beginning April, the “hidden” link shared only with the Friends of the Forum will be activated and all entries on the PPD will be made accessible to the general public.

30. Amb Åkerman Börje invited the Friends of the Forum to contribute their ideas for the Platform for Partnerships session in May which will be co-chaired by Turkey and Morocco. At this juncture, the Republic of Moldova asked for the floor to announce their interest to join the GFMD Steering Group and to contribute to the PFP and the PPD.

Any Other Business

31. The Chair mentioned that the financial situation of the GFMD has improved since the last meeting, although a budget gap of USD 800,000 still existed. She thanked all governments that have offered financial support to GFMD 2013-2014 and called on other governments to bridge the funding gap.

Closing Remarks

32. In closing the last meeting of the Friends of the Forum under the Swedish Chairmanship, Amb Åkerman Börje thanked all the delegates for their support of the GFMD process and their engagement throughout the preparatory process. She looked forward to the participation of as many governments and GFMD observers as may be possible in the Forum Meeting.

33. The meeting was adjourned at 18.15 hrs.

This summary report was prepared by the GFMD Support Unit.