

GFMD 2011 Concluding Debate, Geneva, 1-2 December 2011

Cluster II Rapporteur's Report

Working Session on: *Addressing irregular migration through coherent migration and development strategies*

The co-chairs opened the session with a review of outcomes of the thematic discussions in Istanbul and San Salvador. EU Director General for Home Affairs Stefano Manservigi made a brief presentation on the EU's new Global Approach to Migration

The discussion that followed this introduction was both complex and wide-ranging.

The following key themes and outcomes emerged from the session:

1. It is important to develop common understandings of the linkages between irregular migration and development. Delegates felt these linkages, until now, have been inadequately explored and need further examination.
2. For example, several delegations noted that irregular migrants - like regular migrants - contribute to development both of their countries of origin and countries of destination. However, since the costs of irregular migration fall disproportionately on the migrant him/herself, (who is often least able to bear them), it is still important for countries to make efforts to discourage and reduce irregular migration.
3. There was broad consensus that GFMD members need to continue to examine and to clarify what we mean by development since the term has multiple meanings that encompass both economic and political factors, many of which have different interlinkages with migration. GFMD member states need to define more clearly which relationships they want to explore at any one time.
4. All delegates agreed that in addressing the challenge of irregular migration, states need to remember that migrants are human beings with human rights who should be treated with dignity and respect throughout the migration cycle, regardless of immigration status. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge the mixed character of many irregular movements, which may include persons in need of international protection.
5. One delegate urged GFMD members to seek to shift the perception of irregular migration as solely negative.

6. An African delegate urged the GFMD to further examine the phenomenon of South-South migration observing that there is often less respect for the human rights of migrants in such circumstances.
7. All delegates agreed on the importance of "practical, results-oriented" partnerships, shared responsibility, and mutual cooperation between countries of origin and countries of destination. Some delegates reminded participants that the views of transit countries also need to be included in any debate on irregular migration.
8. Several countries noted the importance of regional approaches to the specific regional dynamics of irregular migration flows. Such regional approaches can include initiatives such as joint public information campaigns to alert potential migrants of the risks inherent in irregular movement, or enhanced cooperation between migration authorities. Other delegates noted the important role of consular officers in identifying and assisting migrants in vulnerable situations.
9. Several delegates emphasized that enforcement and protection objectives can be mutually reinforcing. Efforts to strengthen enforcement or improve border management should not be viewed as "anti-migrant." As an example, one delegate noted that special enforcement approaches such as temporary protection status (TPS) can enhance protection responses and have, in some cases, been successful in preventing an uncontrolled mass migration scenario. An observer delegation, while agreeing that TPS can be an effective tool in responding to potential irregular migration following natural disasters, also noted that TPS should not be used to prevent people from leaving their countries or origin who are in need of international protection.
10. Delegates also noted that effective responses to irregular migration will need to include measures to address the demand for irregular labor in countries of destination.
11. One delegate suggested cooperative approaches to increase opportunities for regular migration should include joint efforts to improve migrant skills and programs to promote the mutual recognition of professional credentials. A number of delegates called for expanded regularization strategies to be considered to help increase the development contributions of migrants
12. Several delegate called for the GFMD to give increased attention to the issue of "brain drain." Other delegate, however, including delegations from traditional countries of origin, noted that "brain drain" can, in certain circumstances, lead to "brain gain" and enhance human development if, for example, remittances and other contributions from diaspora communities help to improve educational opportunities in the migrants communities or origin.

13. Several delegations noted the importance of re-integration programs to help reestablish returnees in their home communities and to prevent "re-migration."
14. Finally, all delegations expressed strong support for continuing to include the topic of irregular migration in future GFMD meetings.