

GFMD Summit - Future of the Forum

Wednesday, 22 January

Speech by Ronnie Goldberg

Ambassador Chavez, Excellencies and Minister Nasser Bin Thani Al Hamli.

Business welcomed the establishment of the Business Mechanism to the GFMD as an important step in formal recognition of the essential and positive role of the private sector in migration policy discussions, and we appreciate the interest that has been shown by the GFMD participating States in Business Mechanism contributions. Successful labour migration and development strategies require the participation of the private sector - to supply the jobs, but also to interface with migration systems on the ground and bring real world experience to the table.

The Business Mechanism is a vehicle for strengthening trust between governments and the private sector, as well as with civil society. To that end, the Business Mechanism strives to operate in a transparent and constructive manner. It brings two added-values to the GFMD: first, the resource of a diverse business community, potentially allowing input from every region of the world, every industry and every size enterprise; and secondly, actual on the ground experience and evidence (data, best practices, problems) that can be brought to the policy debate.

This perspective is not available elsewhere, and whatever shape multilateral discussion of migration takes, business will remain an essential actor. The private sector is a broad and diverse entity, comprising many different groups with different interests: employers, recruiters, employers' federations, multinationals, start-ups, entrepreneurs and small and medium sized enterprises. Not all companies, in all industries, in all regions necessarily agree on every aspect of migration policy, but they do have a common interest in transparent and effective regulatory frameworks.

Companies rely on umbrella organisations - sectoral, employers or business associations - to represent these interests to governments. The strength of the Business Mechanism is that by engaging and involving business' representative organizations around the world, it can articulate areas of consensus, identify matters of concern, and provide access to a diverse

array of experience and technical resource. It therefore is an excellent tool to bridge the worlds of both businesses and policy makers.

The GFMD has been important to both governments and the business community because it has been the sole global platform for intergovernmental dialogue on migration issues; its format allows the exchange of ideas and experience among governments; and it has set an important precedent in opening itself to participation by essential stakeholders, i.e. civil society, mayors, youth, business. We welcome the kind words of Minister Hamli about our contribution and affirm our intention to engage robustly under the UAE chairmanship.

Regardless of the direction the GFMD takes, it is of utmost importance for governments to engage with Employers during the development of migration policies. Business buy-in is crucial in the development and implementation of those policies, and good policies are essential to the prosperity of our enterprises and our economies.

Going forward the GFMD should add value by helping assess implementation of the GCM and sharing effective practices. It should continue to be a space for experience sharing, through spending more time on illuminating best practices and promoting regional schemes. Governments, as well as other stakeholders, could share best practices on specific GCM actions that they have decided to implement.

At the same time, in the GCM implementation phase, we would like to see the GFMD become much more action focused. The Business Mechanism could contribute through bringing together businesses and governments, when actionable innovation can be implemented and presented for the benefits of governments and other stakeholders.

Regarding future activities, the GFMD could focus on regional activities. We acknowledge that the GFMD is a global platform, however migration challenges and businesses needs differ from region to another. We encourage governments to tap into the wealth of expertise that our network can bring to the discussion.

We have heard a lot this evening about the whole of government approach that is required to achieve coherence between migration and development policies. Ministries need to strengthen their communication and collaboration. This also applies to a whole of society approach: Employers' organisations are the main interlocutors of Ministries of Labour. Yet migration and development issues are dealt at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Why shouldn't the GFMD invite Ministries of Labour to participate in the GFMD Summit. It is part of the

daily work national Employers' federations to communicate with their governments (Ministry of Labour) on labour and employment issues. We now need to ensure that either these ministries are informed of the GFMD or that Employers get access to the right interlocutor. At the GFMD level, the engagement of the private sector is well established. This needs to be transposed at national level, for government to enhance their cooperation with employers on migration-related issues.

This is a two-way street. In order to most effectively engage with you at the national and local levels, we plan to up our game i.e. to find the resources to engage in capacity building among Employer Organisations, especially in the developing world. We want the GFMD Business Mechanism to grow and to be sustainable and we look forward to discussing with you our future as well as yours.