

## Highlights and principal recommendations of the GFMD Civil Society Programme 2016

### *Time for Action: Doing rights-based governance of migration and development; in our communities and across borders*

#### Highlights

Following and bringing together a solid year of activities, civil society satellite meetings and consultations worldwide in follow-up to the 2015 GFMD in Turkey, the 2016 GFMD Civil Society Days took place 8 and 9 December in Bangladesh, leading into the Common Space with governments on 10 December and the GFMD Government Days on 11 and 12 December.

This GFMD marked the end of an exceptional year for global migration governance. On 19 September, a UN General Assembly High-level Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants was held – the first time a Summit on migration was convened at the General Assembly. The resulting New York Declaration and its two Annexes<sup>1</sup> launched processes to develop a global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular migration over the next two years, and a Global Compact for refugees. 2016 also saw the International Organization for Migration (IOM) formally enter the UN system as a related agency, after 65 years outside the UN, as well as numerous high-level meetings convened to improve responses to human mobility.

There was much to discuss during the GFMD on the intersections of migration and development, and important commitments that states and civil society have made to date. 2016 saw the completion of year 1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the SDGs) and year 3 of civil society's "5-year 8-point plan of action"<sup>2</sup>, which civil society launched at the UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013 for collaboration with governments in migration and development. A global UN-led 'Together' Campaign<sup>3</sup> was also launched in late 2016, to combat xenophobia and encourage better social inclusion of migrants.

As with each GFMD since 2011, the 2016 GFMD civil society activities were organized by the Civil Society Coordinating Office, under the auspices of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), working closely with an International Steering Committee (ISC) of 32 civil society organizations and networks active worldwide in migration, migrant rights and development.

The 2016 GFMD Civil Society Days gathered 342 participants, a small increase over 2015. 200 were civil society delegates, The 200 delegate were leaders, practitioners and advocates, chosen from a pool of over 800 applications and with the help of the ISC and civil society networks active in migration and development. About half were migrants or diaspora themselves. Working at grass roots, national, regional and international levels across every region of the world, delegates

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1)

<sup>2</sup> [http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/PDF/2013\\_5year\\_8point\\_Plan%20of%20Action.pdf](http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/PDF/2013_5year_8point_Plan%20of%20Action.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://together.un.org/>

represented a diversity of human rights and development NGOs, migrant and diaspora associations, faith-based and workers organizations, academics and the private sector. More than one out of three led or made presentations in plenary, working and special sessions of the programme. Another 41 civil society participants also joined from the People’s Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights, which had convened in Dhaka just before the GFMD. 101 representatives of government, media and other guests and observers also participated. *See figure 1 below for a snapshot of participation and programme highlights.*

Under the overarching title **“Time for Action: Doing rights-based governance of migration and development; in our communities and across borders”**, the GFMD 2016 Civil Society Days programme<sup>4</sup> was built around the acknowledgement that today’s principal challenge is not to *discover* principles, rights and practices but to *implement* them. With themes, format and session actors chosen by civil society itself, the programme presented a mix of plenary, break-out and special sessions that, as in GFMDs in Sweden in 2014 and Turkey in 2015 were built to take forward civil society’s “5-year 8-point Plan of Action”. As a starting point, participants looked at progress that has been made on implementing recommendations from the GFMD 2015<sup>5</sup>. In virtually every session this year, the Civil Society Days programme and participants paid particular attention to the unanimous commitment that 193 UN member states at the Summit in September made to develop a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular migration beginning in early 2017.

## Principal recommendations

2016 GFMD Civil Society Chair Mr. Colin Rajah, a civil society leader and himself a refugee and active member of the migrant diaspora, presented the report of the 2016 GFMD Civil Society Days at the Opening Ceremony of the Government Days on 10 December. Speaking to 461 government delegates from 124 countries, together with the civil society delegates and high-level representatives from UN and international agencies, Mr. Rajah, emphasised that the “Time for Action is indeed upon us”, spoke of how civil society, governments, the private sector and all stakeholders need to work together to implement people-centered, needs-first and rights-based policies in migration and human development. Applauding the New York Declaration for containing strong language for the protection of *all* migrants, regardless of migration status, he stressed that this must translate into “practical effects on the ground, improving the lives, opportunities, and respect for the human rights of all migrants”.

Drawing upon that report, as well as the reports by the civil society rapporteurs of the working and special sessions, and those of special trackers and rapporteurs on the SDGs, on women and on children, here are the **10 main civil society recommendations** from GFMD 2016. With just 6 months before the GFMD 2017 in June in Germany, and with the two-year process to develop the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration getting underway in early 2017, these recommendations offer Global Compact-specific recommendations for governments and actions for civil society.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/English-GFMD%202016%20CSD%20%20programme-06.12.2016.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/background-documents/GFMD-2015-Recommendations-booklet-EN-1.pdf>

1. **On recruitment and employment:** To accelerate, concretize and *implement* reforms in migrant labour recruitment and employment policies and practices, in order to protect and empower migrant workers at every stage of the labour cycle
2. **On crises, in transit and at borders:** To organize, and where possible, consolidate existing rights, frameworks, practical tools and partnerships to much more consistently *implement* needs-first, human-rights-based and human-development-driven protection and solutions for migrants of all kinds and in all crises, in transit, and at borders. Rights must be the starting point, foundation and connecting logic of the new Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
3. **On forced migration:** To ensure human-development-driven, immediate emergency responses and long-term sustainable solutions for forced migrants
4. **On xenophobia and social inclusion:** To change policies as not just perceptions in order to combat xenophobia and ensure the social inclusion of migrants and diaspora in societies
5. **On migrant action for development:** To more actively recognize and facilitate diaspora and migrant leadership for development through job creation, social entrepreneurship and public policy advocacy
6. **On the UN 2030 Agenda:** To *implement and monitor* migration-related aspects of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including development of the new global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (taking forward 10.7 of the SDGs, among others) and with constructive engagement of the GFMD
7. **On children:** To protect and also to empower children in all migration contexts (including within the GFMD and other processes that treat policy and practice), and to address their specific vulnerabilities and needs in order that their development and human rights are respected
8. **On women:** To promote and protect the human rights and human development of women in all migration contexts, fully respecting women as agents of change and advocates for their rights
9. **On governance:** To ensure the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a multilateral, rights-based framework that, rather than simply re-stating existing rights or principles, more mechanically focuses on tools, cooperation and systems that implement those rights and principles. As in the SDGs, the Compact should consider a structure of clear goals, targets and indicators on a graduated timeline that fosters policy coherence, real achievement and genuine accountability.
10. **On Return:** To build and strengthen civil society focus and expression of red-lines on return, nationally and trans-nationally and towards the two new Global Compacts

Figure 1: *Snapshot of GFMD Civil Society Days 2016*

#### Civil society delegates and other participants

- **342** participants in total, **200** civil society delegates:
  - o More than **60** of them speakers and moderators in the CSD programme
  - o **166** female, **176** male
- Of the 200 civil society delegates:
  - o **75** migrants and **85** representing organizations led by migrants or diaspora
  - o **75%** migrant/diaspora NGOs, human rights organizations, or development groups, with **25%** from academia, labour organizations and private sector
  - o **78** from the Asia-Pacific region, **40** from Europe; **35** from Africa; **35** from the Americas, and **12** from the Middle East;
- **41** additional civil society participants from the People’s Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (PGA) meeting in Dhaka over preceding days
- **54** observers from regional and international organizations and other guests
- **7** media representatives
- **40** government representatives of 12 countries and the European Union

#### Programme highlights and special features

- **Opening Plenary:** *From momentum to real governance: next steps after the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the role of the GFMD*, featuring personal testimonies, poetry, and ways forward from migrants, civil society the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Organization for Migration
- **Concluding debate:** *Commitments: what between now and the GFMD in Germany, June 2017?*
- **Parallel working sessions and Action Papers on:**
  - o Promoting rights in recruitment processes throughout the labour supply chain
  - o Protecting and empowering migrant workers in all global supply chains
  - o Protecting migrants in all crises, in transit and at borders
  - o Development solutions for forced displacement, including by conflict, disaster and climate
  - o Creating welcoming societies and ensuring the social inclusion of diaspora and migrants
  - o Migrant and diaspora action for job creation, social entrepreneurship and public policy
  - o Multilateral cooperation and governance of migration and development: institutions and legal frameworks
  - o Implementing and monitoring migration-related aspects of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the role of the GFMD
- **Four special sessions** on strategizing after the **New York Declaration:**
  - o Making migration governance work - key considerations for a Global Compact for safe, regular and orderly migration
  - o Guiding principles and voluntary guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations – building on existing guidelines and recommendations on vulnerability
  - o Creating welcoming societies – how we can connect civil society campaigns in order to change policies as well as perceptions.
  - o Points of no Return – a “first” conversation on return and readmission; what is happening, and where are the lines?
- **Rapporteurs** for **women** and **children** report back from the different sessions on issues relevant to women and to children in the context of migration, with recommendations
- **Direct interaction with governments** during small, 90-minute issue-specific “**Lunch and Tea Tables**”, **bilateral meetings** of civil society delegates with their government delegations, and **Common Space**.