

Meeting of the Friends of the Forum,
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Report of Civil Society Activities

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As delivered

Ambassador Ackerman Borje, it is a delight to join in the warm welcome to you and to Sweden as you take on the Chairing of the Global Forum. It is exciting also to see the Ambassador of Turkey, the GFMD host in 2015, on the podium here already: what a strong sign of how important collaboration is in this work!

On behalf of NGOs, trade unions, diaspora and migrant associations, academia and private sector actors who have engaged in this process since 2007, from all over the world, thank you Ambassador for your strong affirmation of civil society's collaboration with states in the Global Forum, which is states-led but properly and quite productively, not states-only.

Thank you also for renewing the trust placed in ICMC to coordinate civil society's engagement in these Forum activities. As in past years, we accept this partnership with you together with a large and increasingly close circle of civil society actors and networks worldwide: we do nothing by ourselves. We pledge to you, Chair, and to all stakeholders in this process, our energy and honesty.

May I touch on three areas with both substance and process: [1] to quickly look back to note principal outcomes of civil society's work in the recent GFMD; [2] to look ahead to point to some of the major directions that civil society is indicating for the GFMD and the UN High Level Dialogue (HLD) this year and the post-2015 development agenda; and [3] to briefly describe how we work and will be working together this next year and a half, including on financial sustainability.

1. Principal outcomes of civil society's work in the recent GFMD

On the table at the side of the room for you to consider and share around is [a booklet with the seven civil society recommendations from GFMD 2012, with corresponding benchmarks](#). The comprehensive report of the work of the Civil Society Days in Mauritius will be circulated in the coming weeks; both will be posted on the *civil society* website www.gfmdcivilsociety.org. We have also put out for you an overview of the results of the [Evaluation survey](#) that we conducted among participants in the Civil Society programme of the GFMD last year. In particular, participants offered a number of helpful suggestions with regard to improving the civil society component of the Forum, including the interactions and common space with states—among other things, with national consultations of civil society states for concrete “before and after” action and relationship-building.

On substance, to highlight in one sentence each the top recommendations of civil society at the GFMD 2012:

- Recommendation 1: To better license, regulate and monitor **recruitment**, placement and employment practices

- Recommendation 2: To improve the **matching** of jobs, skills and education
- Recommendation 3: To better engage **migrants and diaspora** as entrepreneurs, social investors and policy advocates in development.
- Recommendation 4: To include migration into **national and global development frameworks**

It is noteworthy—invigorating—that all four of these recommendations correspond *directly* to central focus in the Chair’s draft concept paper for this next Global Forum.

Two other recommendations of Civil Society at the recent Forum in Mauritius which we would like to see included more strongly in the concept paper, perhaps for Common Space:

- Recommendation 5: To ensure laws and mechanisms that protect vulnerable migrant workers, including domestic workers and migrants in irregular status
- Recommendation 6: To create a protection framework for migrants trapped in dire humanitarian situations

And the seventh recommendation from the Civil Society in Mauritius, on which civil society has been working actively:

- Recommendation 7: to ensure a central and integral role for civil society in the HLD.

2. On substance and process:

a. GFMD: Chair’s draft concept paper, first feedback

At the invitation of the Chair, we circulated the draft of the concept paper to civil society partners for input. To date, we received feedback from about 20, broadly positive, with signs of strong convergence already evident. To highlight a few:

- **emphasis on development.** Feedback to date expressed great appreciation for the draft’s lifting of development for greater attention, beginning with the paper’s strong affirmation that what the GFMD has meant by development, since at least 2008, is *human* development: not just economic development but also social and cultural. As the draft puts it, “*human development is the process of enlarging people’s choices and improving human capabilities*” [draft p. 4.] At the same time, feedback also observed that as this Forum turns to greater emphasis on development, balance is important, so that what some may think was a disproportionate emphasis on migration in past years does not now become a disproportionate emphasis on development. Civil society feedback also expressed concern that the Roundtable themes focus too much on the positive development aspects of migration, and not sufficiently on eradicating negative aspects, namely the social and human costs of migration. In this regard, balance is also needed so that, in addition to continuing to look at how *migration affects development*, the Forum also examines *how development can affect migration*—such as offering decent work and other choices as an alternative to forced migration and brain drain.
- **protection broadly, including but also going beyond migrants in distress.** Civil society feedback to date urged integrating a stronger protection and human-rights focus throughout the Roundtable themes and/or to devote a (sub)Roundtable in its own name to protection issues, in particular migrants in distress—including migrant victims of violence or trauma in transit as well as “Libya-type” situations.
- **multi-stakeholder dialogue/private sector.** Sharing wholeheartedly the goal of increasing the involvement of the private sector in this work, some input expressed the concern that the private sector should be brought into discussion through *multi-stakeholder* dialogue, together *with* governments and broader civil society, taking care to avoid the pitfalls of entirely separate and compartmentalized processes.
- **national consultations.** Feedback to date has been strongly positive on the concept paper’s encouragement of national consultations between civil society and their governments. Civil

society has found the small but growing number of such consultations to be key in “before and after” work and partnerships “on the ground” for achieving results from Global Forum activities.

We will be sending further and fuller feedback directly to the Chair on this and subsequent drafts.

a. Intersections and orientations towards the HLD and post-2015 development agenda

Permit me a brief word on civil society organizing towards the HLD. Civil society continues to be very hopeful, with high expectations for the HLD.

Within last year’s GFMD activities, civil society created a global *Working Group on the HLD and Global Governance of Migration*. This Working Group achieved broad agreement during the Civil Society programme in Mauritius (and also at the World Social Forum on Migration in Manila a week later) on an approach to the HLD that centers upon developing, *together with states*, a 5 year commitment to action that the HLD could endorse for collaboration on seven important issues of migration and development. Again, many of the seven are straight from GFMD discussions in states’ meetings as well as in civil society, including the Civil Society recommendations mentioned earlier.

In effect, the proposed 5 year commitment to action is truly intended to be a starting point—hopefully an unblocker in some cases—for civil society-state discussion and refinement on these issues, not confrontation. First circulated to the Second Committee in early December, the proposal is being submitted as an input to the UN Coordination meeting on migration and development next week in New York, will be mailed to you by the end of the month, and be posted on the civil society GFMD website.

I would only note—and believe that many of the actors in civil society worldwide would agree—that among these multiple streams of activity, there is a noticeable increase in the unity of civil society. Indeed, many of the civil society leaders are meeting next week on the HLD and next steps in this 5-year approach.

3. Finally, and briefly, our own “mechanical parts” as we proceed with you this next year-and-a-half together

Quickly, three questions: who are we, what we actually do, and budget.

a. Who are we

- Just two sentences of humble introduction: ICMC is an international NGO working with refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons around the world regardless of faith, race, ethnicity and nationality. We have been active in migration and development processes since the first HLD in 2006.
- Since the first year of the GFMD, the civil society programme has been organized by a Coordinator chosen by the Chair. In 2011, Switzerland asked ICMC to set up a small Coordinating office to organize that year’s GFMD civil society programme, with Mauritius and Sweden renewing that invitation for 2012 and 2013-2014.
- As did all prior Coordinators, ICMC convenes an International Advisory Committee of civil society leaders representing all geographic regions and civil society sectors, to guide and propel the organization of the civil society programme. For just one example, at the IAC’s suggestion, we opened the 2012 Civil Society Days programme in its entirety to government participation. There are currently 28 members of the IAC, representing NGOs, trade unions, migrant and diaspora associations, academia and the private sector, and we meet monthly, mainly by telephone.
- In addition, ICMC established a wider “Consultation circle” of some 130 civil society actors around the world with whom we regularly consult offer input and advice for the civil society programme, such as thematic focuses of the states’ and civil society programmes and participation as experts in various GFMD activities.

- b. What we do.** Working always with the IAC and in cooperation with the Chair, ICMC coordinates communications with civil society actors worldwide, with a dedicated website and a database of 3000 civil society individuals and organizations active in migration and development, wide consultation and global organizing of civil society unity, focus, participation and collaboration among ourselves and with states and other partners. Well before the Civil Society meeting in the GFMD, we coordinate outreach and feedback on the concept papers for both the state and civil society workplans, the outreach, open application process and selection of civil society participants, and a growing list of “before and after” activities, including civil society engagement in a range of preparatory events of states and civil society at national and regional levels, the two civil society Working Groups, and—of utmost importance: fundraising.

As you establish the outline of your (states) workplan, our work immediately ahead is to work with the IAC and broadly with civil society to build a civil society workplan and concept paper with practical relevance to your own.

- c. Budget.** Like the states’ programme, unfortunately there is no formal mechanism for multi-year funding of the civil society component of the GFMD. In the first years of the GFMD, the civil society coordinator each year was actually a private Foundation in the Chair’s country which was not a civil society practitioner in migration and development but was able to raise most of the funds for that year’s civil society programme from its own sources and resources. In Mexico, the civil society budget for the year was US \$1.6 million dollars.

When ICMC was appointed Coordinator in 2011, ICMC sought and gave assurances that first, we would reduce costs significantly with a balance of quality and sustainability in mind; second, the Chair would commit to funding a portion of the civil society programme from the Chair’s budget for the GFMD; and third, ICMC would actively seek to increase and broaden donor support for the programme.

In those directions, the budget for the civil society programme has been cut in half from the earlier period—to USD \$850,000 for the 12 months last year; and the number of donors tripled, with civil society on average raising about half of the budgets these past two years from government and private donors apart from the Chair. We are grateful to Finland, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland for your support to civil society last year.

For the GFMD in 2014, we are holding civil society costs at the level of last year, extrapolated to 18 months, with a total [18 month] budget currently projected at just under US \$1 million dollars.

Of course we are fundraising, as in these past two years, and expect to secure a substantial portion of the budget. But forgive me for really underscoring at this first meeting of the Friends of the Forum on this next Global Forum: on average about half of the funding for the civil society component of the GFMD these past two years has come from and through the Chair’s budget; it is not possible to proceed without it. We have welcomed the conversations we have had with the Chair on prudent possibilities to take this security the next step. Among several options, we believe that setting a flat funding level within the Chair’s GFMD budget for the civil society programme, i.e, 15% of the total, would be reasonable and demonstrates the commitment that states and civil society share in the work of these Global Forum activities.

As you know from my reports to you last year—and indeed, from your own experience of funding the *states’* GFMD programme, achieving full budget and breakeven on costs is a tremendous challenge, which recommences each year. We join you, Madame Chair, our state colleagues and Peter Sutherland in a determination to fix that!

/Thank you.