

“Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development”

Operationalizing Mainstreaming of Migration in Development Policy and Integrating Migration in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

Geneva 22 May 2013

Summary report

On 22 May 2013, the Government of Sweden, current GFMD 2013-2014 Chair-in-Office, joined by the Governments of Switzerland and Bangladesh, convened a thematic meeting on “*Operationalizing Mainstreaming of Migration in Development Policy and Integrating Migration in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda.*” Around 140 policy-makers, government officials and representatives from international organizations and civil society met in Geneva to explore modalities for the inclusion of migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and share national experiences and lessons learned in operationalizing the mainstreaming of migration in key development analysis and planning.

In her opening remarks, **Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje**, GFMD 2013-2014 Chair, explained that the preparatory thematic meeting supports the GFMD 2013-2014 work on policy coherence for development, which underpins Roundtable 1 of the Swedish concept paper on “Integrating migration in global, regional and national development agendas.” She reiterated the Swedish Chair’s perspective that migration can be integrated in future development agenda in two ways – i.e., by highlighting **migration as an enabler** and outlining **migration-related partnerships** for development, in relation to other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as *decent work and economic sector development, social protection, health, education including skills development* as well as *gender and women’s empowerment*.

Mr. Peter Sutherland, UNSG Special Representative for Migration and Development, likened the issue of migration and development as a story of Mars and Venus – migration stakeholders living in one planet and development actors in another. He challenged the GFMD to bring them together by deploying evidence, vision, and persuasive argument to convince development practitioners that migration should not be looked at as a problem to be solved, but as a solution to the problem. Migration is one of the most powerful strategies for reducing poverty and has contributed meaningfully to progress on the original MDGs. He urged the GFMD to look at migration not only as an enabler for other MDGs, but as a goal on its own – as a narrative that could tie together internal/external migration into a “human mobility” goal; or could address them separately—for instance, with an international migration goal focused on lowering the economic and social costs.

After the opening, the thematic meeting proceeded to have two panel discussions. At Panel I were representatives of the two co-convenor Governments, Switzerland and Bangladesh. **Mr Michel Mordasini**, Assistant Director-General, Director, Global Cooperation Directorate of the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC), shared the positive experience of Switzerland in promoting and implementing policy coherence in migration and development. He cited among other key elements for coherent policy-making a whole of government approach supported at the highest level, a well-defined and efficient inter-ministerial mechanism, and evidence-based policy-making. For his part, **H.E. Ambassador Abdul Hannan**, related how Bangladesh has mainstreamed migration into their national development planning. Remittances are the largest single source of external financial inflows for Bangladesh, thus prompting the government to declare migration as a major thrust sector and initiate major actions on migration governance at the legislative, policy, and institutional areas.

Panel II comprised of two parts: the first set the global context of the discussions on migration in the Post-2015 development agenda, and the contribution of migration to specific development goals. Mr Olav Kjørven, Assistant-Secretary General, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Ms Jill Helke, Director, International Cooperation and Partnerships, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) led the discussions with their respective presentations focusing on migration as an enabler for development and enjoining the international community to galvanize efforts and create partnerships in order to reap migration dividends.

The second part of Panel II featured national examples from Ghana (**Mary Mpereh**, Principal Planning Analyst, National Development Planning Commission), Thailand (**Dr Chanvit Tharathep**, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health) and the Philippines (**Mr. Jesus Yabes**, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs) on how to draw on migration for development outcomes in specific goal-areas. Ms Mpereh affirmed the importance of a sectoral approach in mainstreaming migration into development; however, a holistic framework emphasizing sectoral priorities is needed. Dr. Tharathep illustrated the social and environmental benefits for the host country of providing health programs for migrant workers and their families. Mr Yabes discussed the comprehensive social protection mechanisms for migrants that the Philippines has set up at every stage of the migration cycle, involving all concerned sectors and ministries of the government. A lively and interactive debate ensued after the presentations.

In closing the thematic meeting, **Amb. Åkerman Börje** thanked the Governments of Switzerland and Bangladesh for co-chairing the panels, as well as all the participants for their valuable contributions. She was very pleased to hear national experiences shared by both origin and destination countries on the successes and challenges of promoting policy coherence and mainstreaming migration into development policy-making. She noted that these experiences will feed into the work of the government teams for roundtable 1.1 (Operationalizing mainstreaming and coherence in migration and development policies) and 1.2 (Framing migration for the MDGs and the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda). She believed that the meeting provided another important building block for the narrative of the Post-2015 development agenda, while drawing attention to some policy gaps such as on data management and impact measurement and evaluation. She urged the participants to take advantage of the unique opportunities presented by the High Level Dialogue and the Post-2015 Development process to call on the United Nations system and drum up support for the inclusion of migration in future development agenda.

Prepared by:

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