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Opening of the 10th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)
Berlin, Germany, 28 June 2017

Tumaini & Tatendrang:

Act now to make a New Deal for refugees, migrants and societies a reality

Opening statement by Wies Maas, Chair Civil Society Days 2017

Honorable Ministers, excellencies, partners,

First: congratulations on the 10th Anniversary of the GFMD. This Forum is getting close to adolescence now, but in reality the GFMD has had to grow up fast - and is now regaining purpose with the Global Compacts for refugees and for migration under way.

Could there be a more symbolic place to commemorate this Anniversary than the city of Berlin? The city that was home to one of the most notorious Walls ever built. A Wall that for nearly three decades divided a people with concrete, barbed wire, soldiers and the threat of death for those trying to cross without papers. Notorious too, because the Wall came down; led by ordinary people —literally breaking it down with their own hands – rebuilding unity in its place. Hard as it may seem to imagine sometimes, walls do come down. It is no surprise then that Berlin is also known as the “city of new beginnings”.

This year for the first time, the Civil Society Days start after your Summit. We are kicking off this evening at the Brandenburg Gate at 6 PM, with a commemoration of the Breaking Down of Walls - you are all invited. Tomorrow 350 civil society leaders from around the world will gather; more than half of us are migrants, refugees or diaspora ourselves. Our programme will focus on “*Safe, Orderly, Regular Migration Now: Mechanics of a Compact Worth Agreeing to*”.

Unlike previous years, I cannot yet convey this year’s messages from civil society. But what I can do, is speak to more than 10 years of civil society organizing and movement building within and beyond the GFMD. This has involved thousands of migrant and diaspora associations, NGOs, workers organizations, academia, and, yes, even some businesses.

Ahead of the Summit last year, more than 100 civil society groups presented a proposal for *A New Deal for Refugees, Migrants, and Societies*, and the *Act Now* document. Many of our priorities are reflected in your GFMD agenda, good, but, are you – are we – really moving on these issues on the ground?

A 10th Anniversary is a time for celebration and contemplation. We live in a radically different world compared to 2006. Financial crises, rising inequality, spiraling conflict and violent extremism, further natural disasters and climate change have all posed extreme challenges to the global community over the past decade.

As a result, the number of forcibly displaced is at an all-time high. More and more migrants and refugees are dying *en route*, families are separated, and borders are closing, even to those forced to flee. Children are held in detention for lack of required documents, migrant workers' rights are being violated in myriad ways, racism and xenophobia are on the rise, and many in society feel anxious, threatened and left behind.

We need bold solutions. The Sutherland Report is filled with solutions, and so is the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants.

Indeed, the past decade also celebrated global achievements, which *if* commitments are really followed through, offer solutions that last. The Domestic Workers Convention, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Accord, and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants – all offer such commitments to migrants, and to societies. They add to and bring to life existing human and labour rights – which – let us not forget that - apply to all migrants too.

Together these commitments, on paper, offer a Social Contract – as this year's government programme so rightly calls it. But, to borrow the words of a prior Civil Society Co-Chair, "*we are over principled and underperforming. It is time for the era of implementation*" (Gibril Faal). The Global Compact for Migration will thus need to operationalize this "Social Contract" for fair, decent, and organized movement of people. This needs to include updating rights-based global institutions; and it needs "mechanics": labour & skills matching across borders, one-stop migrant welcome centres, protection shelters, vocational training partnerships, ombudsmen, firewalls, regularization, guardians for unaccompanied migrant children, and so on. Mechanics are out there.

But, implementation cannot wait. Families must be reunited, *urgently*; children need to be taken out of detention, *now*; the hard labour and clear rights of migrant workers must be respected, *today*; solidarity funding is needed *without delay*. What we need -is, to use a great German word, a sense of *Tatendrang*: a zest for action.

Tatendrang is what we see more and more of at local levels, where communities are stepping up, displaying remarkable solidarity and mobilization to welcome refugees and migrants. Governments need to support and amplify such initiatives.

Last week I met a group of young Congolese refugees living in Uganda, who taught me the word *Tumaini*; it means “*hope*” and “*confidence*” in Swahili. Many had arrived with close to nothing, except for heaps of energy to study, work and make something of their lives. They started to self-organize together with Ugandan youth, church-leaders and volunteers, providing English classes, ICT lessons, women empowerment and job placement training for locals and migrants alike. They have helped hundreds of young people make a head start. Their programme is called *Tumaini*. “Hope and confidence.” *Tatendrang* in action.

Tatendrang and *Tumaini* is also what we saw back here in Berlin two weeks ago, when 350 representatives of civil society, the business sector, some states and UN agencies worked out proposals to include rights for children on the move in both Compacts; with goals and timelines for implementation.

Taking inspiration from this, we will be working further — with you — on the building blocks for Compacts *worth agreeing to*. In this work together, may all of us share that spirit of *Tatendrang* & *Tumaini*, asking ourselves: how will our work change the realities on the ground faced by refugees, migrants and societies? And what will I do when I go home after Berlin, this city of new beginnings?

On behalf of our Civil Society Co-Chair Berenice Valdez and all of us in the Civil Society Days, I wish you all a stirring GFMD. Happy 10th Anniversary!