

**Global Forum on Migration Development
Friends of the Forum - February 5th, 2018**

Honoring SRSG Peter Sutherland

Remarks by François Fouinat

These images are indeed very moving. They are making us feel even more deeply the great loss we have suffered with Peter's disappearance. It is all the more painful as the stroke that eventually provoked his death had initially deprived him of his faculties. This happened days before the GA Conference on Mass Movements of Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016 -- an event he had fought for -- which produced the New York Declaration, the contents of which are largely based on his recommendations.

Since mid-2015, appalled by the Syrian refugee crisis and the tragedies linked to the large exodus towards Europe, Peter Sutherland had been claiming, notably in this Forum, that responsibility should not be determined by proximity. He was advocating for a global response and a more active engagement of the United Nations. He suggested a two step approach: first, an immediate humanitarian effort to save lives and provide for the resettlement of refugees in precarious situations and, second, a longer term reflection on appropriate international responses. The March 2016 conference on new path ways organized by UNHCR came unfortunately too late to have a real impact. The September 19th event and the New York Declaration opened the way to the two global compacts on which you are presently working. The fact that Peter Sutherland was no longer there to advise and encourage all participants is certainly most regrettable. Nobody like him was able to summon the energies and promote bold ideas that could allow progress to be achieved in the most complex aspects of migration.

You all know the role SRSG Sutherland played in the creation of GFMD and the care he has constantly and tirelessly taken to bring it to the level it is today. You may not know, however, the role he played in launching bold initiatives that today are just considered business as usual. In Manila, as early as 2008, he established long lasting links with the most vocal sectors of Civil Society and managed to bring them into the GFMD mainstream. In 2009, he challenged the Global Migration Group to reflect on and propose solutions to the situation of migrants that we then called "stranded". Years later, this initiative developed into the globally accepted MICIC project, which he hoped could in the future evolve towards a more comprehensive definition of vulnerable migrants. This might notably be a possible outcome of the GCM.

It is not to say that Peter's advocacy was always successful. You will recall his admonitions to governments about the slow progress of adhesions to the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers, which remains one of his unfulfilled objectives.

Not only was he spearheading the most crucial developments in the international debate on migration but he had the good instinct of consigning his views and suggestions in a Report.

The best homage we can render to our departed mentor couldn't it be to look closely at the recommendations he left behind in his Report? There are sixteen of them, all worth considering. I would like simply today to concentrate on the 15th and the 16th. These are the messages he addresses to you as GFMD stakeholders and to the United Nations. As for GFMD, his message is clear: he is inviting the Forum to strengthen itself to develop its capacity as a policy review body, support consensus building on an ambitious global compact on migration and act as platform to acknowledge government efforts to fulfill their SDGs commitments in the migration area.

As for the United Nations, his message calls for a renewed leadership and a reinforcement of its capacities on migration. IOM and UNHCR, as the two UN bodies exclusively dedicated to people on the move, are defined as the natural anchors of the Organization's strategy and organizational architecture on international migration, in all its forms. They should be the centre of gravity around which consultation and coordination are organized.

On this basis, Peter Sutherland sees a strong IOM-UNHCR team as indispensable to steer the UN response to mixed migration flows and large, crisis related movements, and to co-lead the work of the United Nations system on migration issues, with the support of the Global Migration Group.

Assuming that crisis-related movements will be the new "normal", he calls for joint analysis and early intervention by a strong IOM-UNHCR team working together to ensure that the protection needs of migrants and refugees are identified and addressed as early and as close to their country of origin as possible.

The SRSG's disappearance is not only untimely but also particularly cruel as his illness prevented him to introduce and promote his Report, the fruit of eleven years leading the international debate on migration. I would like to appeal to all of you to keep in mind Peter's message and promote his recommendations.

Allow me to illustrate the point I am making with a very recent example. I was visiting two weeks ago Bangladesh and Myanmar to look at the Rohingya crisis. Let's remember that over one million people have recently arrived in Cox's Bazar area, which has the doubtful privilege of hosting the largest refugee population ever in one camp, i.e. 650,000 persons, with the attending difficulties than one can imagine. A huge burden bravely supported by Bangladesh.

Looking at the UN response, I was happy at first to find that both IOM and UNHCR were engaged but I felt disappointed to see that the massive emergency was being separately

handled by the two organizations, on a territorial basis. For good measure, however, a UN Coordinator for the Rohingya Emergency Response had just been appointed. It is too early to assess the impact of this arrangement. It is however permitted to question the validity of a Solomon like decision when it concerns the response to a crisis that should call for an integrated UN response. I sincerely hope that this “distinct, separate and independent “ approach will not obstruct the team-building suggested by Peter Sutherland . In this perspective, it is particularly essential to establish a solid bridge between the two global compacts, as suggested in the recent report of the Secretary-General.

This is precisely the type of situation that Peter Sutherland was foreseeing as “the new normal”. It is most regrettable that the UN itself was not able to provide a response in line with the “One UN” approach which presides over the UN Reform initiated by the Secretary-General, which should translate, in his own words, in eliminating duplicative structures and streamlining emergency deployment.

Let’s hope that this image taken in Balukhali camp could be the symbol of the UN integrated efforts in support of refugees and migrants.

This is just one aspect among many others for which Peter Sutherland’s contribution is utterly relevant. It is very right to celebrate his achievements but it is also highly necessary to uphold his legacy -- that of the visionary person he was.

Governments, international organizations and civil society have his Report and they should make the best use of its contents to address the complex challenges of the 21st century’s migration issues.

Thank you very much.

François Fouinat

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