



Terms of Reference

Ad Hoc GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration

Context and history

Public attitudes towards migration and migrants have become deeply polarized on an international scale, fuelled in part through the spread of misinformation. The dissemination of inaccurate narratives in this respect can hold negative implications for migrants and host communities alike. States, local governments, civil society and the private sector have an opportunity to respond by working to promote a balanced and evidence-based public narrative on migration, recognizing the broader impact this narrative can have on social cohesion, support for diversity, economic growth and innovation.

Accurate communication about migration can lay the groundwork for the meaningful inclusion and integration of migrants within their host communities by building trust, belonging and social cohesion, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to leave no one behind. Contributions to a balanced and evidence-based discourse can support efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 by promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for all, and similarly align with the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants'](#) call for a global campaign to counter xenophobia (para 14). Finally, promoting balanced narratives can contribute to the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration's](#) (GCM) commitment by UN Member States to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote an open and evidence-based public discourse on migration and migrants in partnership with all parts of society (Objective 17).

Communication about migration has also been explored through multiple GFMD initiatives in recent years:

- In April 2015, GFMD Chair Turkey organized a dedicated thematic meeting on [*"The role of communications in promoting widespread recognition of the benefits of migration, improving public perceptions of migrants, combatting discrimination and promoting integration."*](#)
- In 2019, Ecuador selected *"Migration narratives and communication: What role, responsibility and resources do governments have?"* as one of three thematic priorities for its GFMD chairmanship year. Under this chairmanship theme, Ecuador co-organized with Morocco a thematic workshop on [*"Narratives on Migration" Toward an Evidence-Based Communication*](#) in July 2019.
- At the 12th GFMD Summit in Quito, Ecuador in January 2020, Canada and Morocco further advanced international dialogue on this topic through a roundtable session focused on [*"Shaping the Public Narrative on Migration and Migrants,"*](#) which resulted in the creation of a [*Guide to Promoting a Balanced Narrative on Migration.*](#)

- Effective communication was also the focal point of a separate roundtable in 2020 co-chaired by The Gambia, Philippines and United Arab Emirates focused on [“Communicating effectively with migrants.”](#)

Discussions with GFMD Friends of the Forum in the lead-up to the 12th GFMD Summit and during roundtable sessions in Quito underscored the widespread global relevance of efforts to communicate effectively about migration and migrants. They also demonstrated that a wealth of practice already exists in this field from which the international community can learn. These conversations similarly indicated a strong international interest in establishing a regular, multi-stakeholder dialogue and platform to facilitate partnership-building related to public narratives on migration. Member States also acknowledged the role of the GFMD in facilitating an informal exchange around issues of common interest and exploring innovative ways of deepening cooperation between all concerned actors, including with an eye to the implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the GCM.

In light of the above considerations, the creation of an Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration was proposed to and subsequently endorsed by the GFMD Steering Group on February 12th, 2020. The co-chairs and conveners of the working group recognize that the time is right to move from dialogue to action at a global scale, and to promote active collaboration amongst diverse actors in support of balanced and evidence-based discourse on migration. As a truly multi-stakeholder forum, the GFMD is uniquely placed to facilitate this timely work by contributing to the creation of concrete partnerships and tangible outcomes.

A. Scope of work

This working group brings together a multi-stakeholder community of states, local governments, businesses and civil society groups to work on sharing experiences and lessons learned, and to identify concrete ways to balance public narratives on migration. Its diverse composition will aim to promote cross-fertilization and cross learning to enable concrete initiatives and partnerships.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration will support the GFMD by:

- i. Discussing and defining effective ways in which to advance the international dialogue about public narratives on migration, building onto previous work of the GFMD and advancing the implementation and review of Agenda 2030 and the GCM.*
- ii. Facilitating the sharing of information on past and current initiatives with the objectives of identifying lessons learned, avoiding duplication of efforts and identifying opportunities for international collaboration.*
- iii. Exploring the creation of a broader GFMD platform for the collection and sharing of information on best practices in communication about migration.*
- iv. Promoting the establishment of concrete partnerships between diverse actors working to balance the public narrative on migration.*

B. Outputs

The following outputs are envisaged:

1. Creation of an action-oriented strategy and work plan that will guide the working group's efforts to contribute to a balanced and evidence-based narrative on migration.
2. Sharing of best practices and creation of new partnerships between practitioners from different sectors.
3. Fostering concrete joint initiatives to be presented at the GFMD Summits.
4. Establishment of an online GFMD Hub on Migration Narratives to be hosted by the GFMD Support Unit in coordination with the GFMD Chair and working group Co-Chairs, which will include a repository of programs and policies on balancing public narratives on migration. The repository will benefit from inputs of participating Member States, civil society, business, mayors/local authorities, as well as think tanks and relevant media.
5. Provision of recommendations on the topic of migration narratives for the GFMD contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on the HLPF thematic review, and to the review process of the GCM implementation.

C. Composition of the Ad Hoc Working Group

Membership is voluntary and open to GFMD participating Member States. The working group may be comprised of 20-25 members who contribute actively and strategically to the work and resources of the GFMD and participate regularly in the working group's meetings. The working group members are expected to champion and advance the work of the group in their respective networks. Members are expected to participate - in person or online - in the ad hoc working group meetings and other deliberations. Members that are not able to meet this expectation are invited to consider relinquishing their seats on the working group to allow other member states to join.

To uphold the multi-stakeholder nature of the GFMD process, designated representatives of the other mechanisms (for civil society and mayors / businesses / local authorities) may also join as members.

A limited number of organizations may be invited to join as ex officio members by virtue of their relevant policy and technical expertise. Other members of the UN Migration Network on Migration, international, regional or local organizations or other select experts may also be invited to attend meetings on an ongoing or as-needed basis.

The working group is co-chaired by two Member States and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism. Co-chairs are committed to providing sustained leadership and technical support to achieve the objectives of the working group. Rotation of co-chairs can be considered upon review of the two-year period.

D. Duration of work

The working group will operate for a period of two years (2020-2022), following which the GFMD Steering Group will conduct a review to consider an extension of the working group's mandate, as well as its leadership and membership.

E. Work plan

The working group will develop an annual work plan with activities that will build on GFMD meetings and events in order to promote further discussion and partnership building on the topic of public narratives on migration.

The working group's meetings will be convened by the Co-Chairs and will take place virtually or in-person, in Geneva or on the margins of other GFMD meetings. The working group will remain engaged between official meetings through written consultations and virtual meetings.

The ad hoc WG will provide interim reports to the GFMD Troika and Steering Group, and will report to participating Member States at the Future of the Forum session at the GFMD Summit Meeting to outline progress that has been achieved in 2020 in advancing the issue of public narratives on migration.

F. Funding

The provision of funding for the working group's activities will be determined on an annual basis through consultation between the GFMD Support Unit, GFMD Chair and working group Co-Chairs.

G. Review

These TORs will be reviewed every two years, or at any time as may be deemed necessary by the Steering Group or the working group chairs, in order to ensure that the working group lives up to its mandate and remains relevant and responsive to emerging developments.