

**AD Hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants,
Migration and Development**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

April 2020

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant economic, social and health-related disruption at a global level, leading to the closure of borders, the shutting-down of normal commercial activity, the layoff of millions of workers, including migrant workers, alongside many thousands of deaths and unprecedented strain on health systems worldwide, equally striking all GFMD stakeholders. Few communities have been unaffected by the impact of the virus, and the outbreak is likely to reshape global dynamics well into the future.

Migrants face, and will continue to face, unique challenges as a result of these changes. In the current crisis, the pandemic can impact all communities, including migrants and refugees, and it is therefore in the interests of all countries to ensure that migrants are able to access, where necessary, all available preventive, testing and treatment services. Moreover, the loss of economic activity, which will lead surviving businesses to rethink global mobility, will have an impact on many migrants, in particular given the limited access to state-led financial assistance, and over-representation in low-paid work and the gig and grey economies. This, in turn, will have acute implications for developing countries, with the World Bank forecasting that remittances may decline by as much as USD \$100 billion over the course of 2020, affecting not only migrants and their families, but the communities and economies from which they originate and the societies into which they integrate.

Migrants will also play a key role in the aftermath of the pandemic. In many developed economies, migrant workers make up a significant proportion of the workforce in a variety of industries essential to the recovery. Their role in saving lives and contributing to local economies may reshape the narrative around the role of migrants in society, as they and other migrants in frontline roles are recognised as essential workers. States that take a human-centric approach to the formulation and implementation of national responses towards migrants during the crisis, and that strengthen legal pathways for employment where needed, are likely to benefit in the aftermath.

Migration governance frameworks will evolve in recognition of these, and other, trends. As the only informal, state-led and multi-stakeholder inclusive forum on migration and development, the GFMD can play a vital role in fostering dialogue and building trust between governments, civil society, business, and local administrations, creating a platform for showcasing best practices, encouraging other stakeholders to replicate those best practices, for analysing the impact of migration policies to new realities and adapt them accordingly, and helping to drive forward local, national, regional and global responses.

To that end, the 2020 Chair (the UAE), in cooperation with the 2020 Troika members (Morocco and Ecuador), proposed the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development. Given the gravity of the situation, this proposal was adopted by the GFMD Steering Group by silent procedure on 22 April 2020.

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 with regards to the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development. Its diverse composition will aim to promote cross-fertilization and cross-learning to enable and facilitate concrete initiatives and partnerships.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development will support the GFMD by:

- Discussing and proposing effective ways in which to advance multi-stakeholder dialogue about the impact of COVID-19, building on previous work of the GFMD relating to migrants in crisis, and advancing the implementation and review of Agenda 2030.
- Suggest ways to facilitate 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 in a changing migration landscape.
- Exploring the creation of a broader GFMD platform for the collection and sharing of information on best practices.
- Develop processes to promote the establishment of concrete partnerships between diverse actors working to address the impact of pandemics on migration and development.

Outputs

The following outputs are envisaged:

1. Draft action-oriented strategy and work plan, to be endorsed by the GFMD community that will guide the Forum's efforts to contribute to better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development.
2. Mechanisms to share best practices and proposals to trigger the creation of new partnerships between practitioners from different sectors.
3. Incubator for concrete joint initiatives to be presented at the GFMD Summits.
4. Suggestions for events on aspects of COVID-19 and migration under the auspices of the GFMD.
5. Online GFMD hub on COVID-19, integrated in the GFMD website, which will include a repository of programs and policies. The repository will benefit from inputs of participating Member States, civil society, business, mayors / local authorities, as well as international organizations other observers and relevant media.
6. Recommendations on the topic of COVID-19 impacts for the GFMD Summit in Dubai, 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.

Composition of the Ad Hoc Working Group

Membership in the Ad Hoc Working Group is voluntary. The Group will comprise a minimum of six Member States in addition to the three GFMD Mechanisms; members of the Steering Group who are not members of the Working Group may join as ex-officio observers.

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.

A limited number of organizations that hold GFMD observer status may be invited to join as ex officio observers 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. Co-chairs are committed to providing sustained leadership and political support to achieve the objectives of the Working Group.

Duration of Work

The Working Group will operate for a period of one year (2020-2021), 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.

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 the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development.

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 Working Group 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 the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development.

Funding

The provision of funding for the Working Group's activities will be determined on an annual basis through consultation between the GFMD Chair and Working Group Co-Chairs.

Review

These TORs will be reviewed every year, or at any time as may be deemed necessary by the Steering Group or the Working Group co-Chairs, in order to ensure that the Working Group lives up to its mandate and remains relevant and responsive to emerging developments.