

MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES
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Expert Symposium on International Migration and Development
(Organized by the Population Division
of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

New York, 26 February 2019

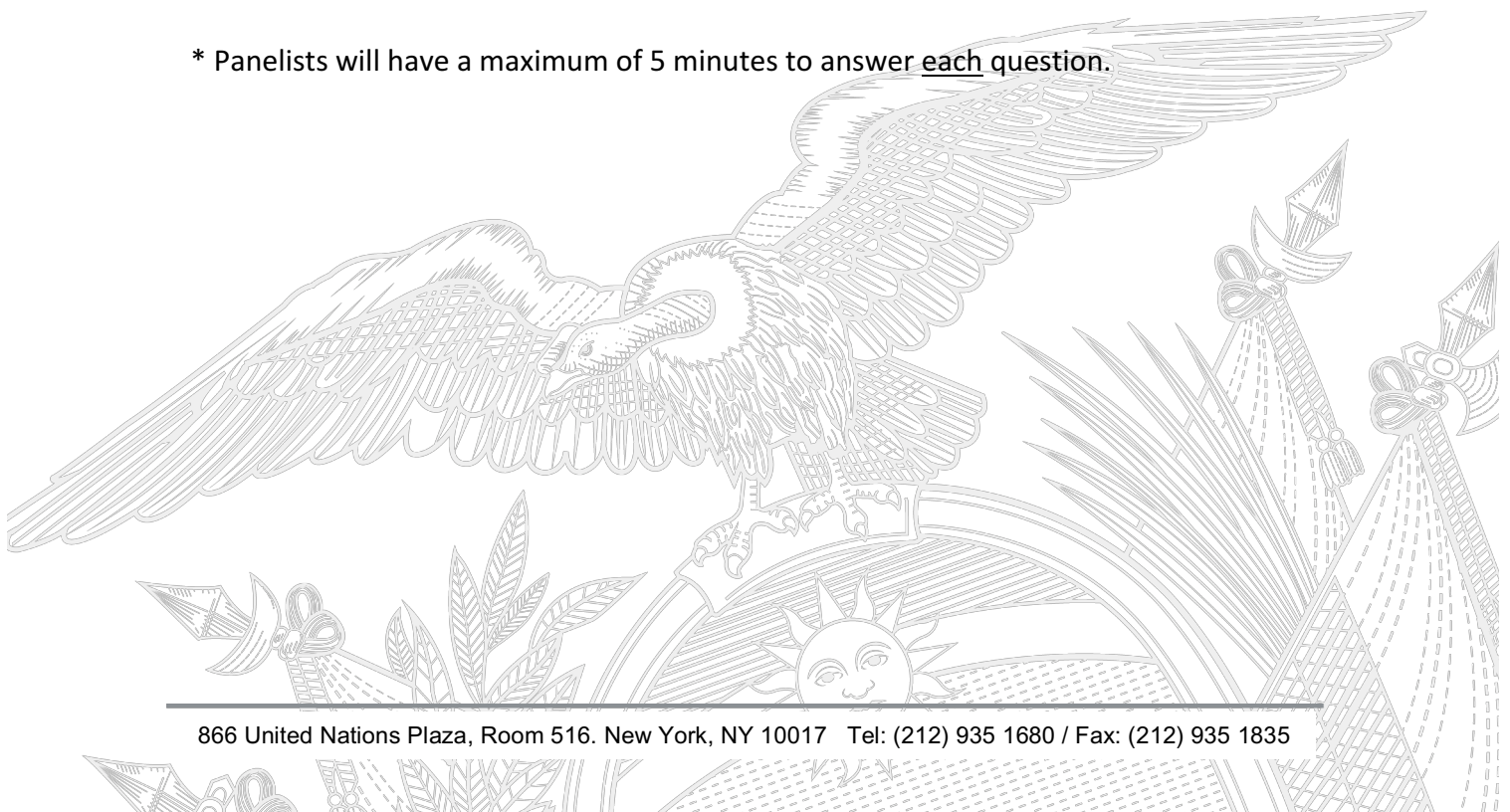
10:00 – 11:30 Interactive panel on “Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Chair: *Alicia Bárcena Ibarra, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

Panelists:

- *Mr. António Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM) (tbc)*
- *Mr. Santiago Javier Chavez Pareja, Vice Minister for Human Mobility of Ecuador, designated Chair of the GFMD 2019*
- *Mr. Felipe González Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants*
- *Mr. Richard Blewitt, Head of Delegation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*

* Panelists will have a maximum of 5 minutes to answer each question.





Talking points

[Question 1: Where do you see the greatest opportunities for leveraging the potential of migration for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda?]

Madame Chair,
Distinguish panelists,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction/scene setting

- Madame Chair, Excellencies, distinguished panelists, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.
- At the outset, allow me to thank the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the organizers of this expert symposium for inviting me to speak today on behalf of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Chairmanship of the Government of Ecuador.

General Context

- As a state-led and multistakeholder process, the GFMD has led global reflections on the mutually reinforcing relationship between migration and sustainable development.
- Since 2013, a number of important initiatives related to sustainable development have been undertaken in the context of the GFMD: from the inclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the substantive agenda of succeeding GFMD Chairmanship and as a thematic focus of various GFMD preparatory meetings, roundtable sessions, side events, thematic workshops and official sessions at Summit Meetings; to the formation of a dedicated state-led GFMD Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration.
- The overarching theme of the GFMD for this year is “Sustainable approaches to human mobility: Upholding rights, strengthening state agency, and advancing development through partnerships and collective action.” This represents the urgency, among other things, to identify concrete policy actions to address human mobility in a sustainable manner and through multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- One of the most significant and recent contributions of the GFMD process to the 2030 Agenda has been its annual thematic input to the High-Level Political Forum

on Sustainable Development (HLPF). For three years in a row, the GFMD has been invited to contribute to the HLPF regarding the implementation of specific SDGs and targets that are closely relevant to the mandate and accumulated expertise of the GFMD.

- The drafting of the third GFMD report for 2019 HLPF is now underway. Today, I am delighted to take stock of the lessons learned, progress and achievements based on the GFMD's three contributions to the HLPF.

Opportunities for leveraging the potential of migration for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda

- We could point to three specific areas in which the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration could reinforce the achievement of the 2030 Agenda:
- **First, promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.**
 - Migrants make positive contributions to both their host and home countries; paying taxes, sending remittances or offering expertise and entrepreneurship that benefit societies.
 - However, it is important to tackle obstacles that avoid migrants for making their maximum possible economic and social contributions due to restrictive or ineffectual labour policies, laws and employment customs.
 - Ecuador guarantees the rights of all migrant, regardless of their migration status, and promotes the institutionalized protection of them.
- **Second, reduce inequality within and among countries.**
 - Migration is an engine of economic growth, innovation and sustainable development. It allows millions of people to seek new opportunities each year, creating and strengthening bonds between countries and societies.
 - The Constitution of our country guarantees effective equality between foreigners and Ecuadorian nationals. This has allowed all people in Ecuador to have access to education, health and other public services, regardless of their migratory status, in line with the application of the principles of universality and progressivity.
- **Third, strengthen implementation and revitalize partnerships.**
 - It is important to recognize the wide range of stakeholders accompanying the migration processes, including national and local authorities, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and others.

- Migration is an expanding global reality that cannot be addressed alone.

[Question 2: What areas still represent major challenges and how could they be addressed?]

- From a substantive point of view, the GFMD has identified the following emerging issues regarding the relationship between migration and development. Addressing these will be vital to ensuring, in the coming years, that no-one is left behind:
- **Firstly, a lack of integration opportunities.** Host communities must provide migrants with opportunities to integrate on a social, economic, cultural and political level. Lack of these opportunities can lead to exclusion and marginalization, and in turn, can lead to social tension in host communities. To address this, it is vital that ***governments need to ensure migrants are not excluded from accessing basic social services.***
- **Secondly, a lack of economic opportunities.** It is important to recall in the context of the SDGs that for many migrants, ***migration is a livelihood strategy***, which helps migrants escape poverty and improve economic conditions. We need to take a holistic approach to account for the multi-dimensional nature of migration and make it a vehicle for sustainable economic growth.
- **Thirdly, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.** Climate change is and will affect migration and development in a number of complex ways. Sudden-onset disasters cause immediate displacement, while at the same time, slow-onset climate change tends to exacerbate socioeconomic vulnerabilities and can play an important role in individuals' decision to migrate. ***We need to recognize migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change***, while also recognizing and addressing the pressure this can add on social services in host communities.
- **Finally, additional pressure on resources through growing numbers of returning migrants.** Return to host countries is generally seen as both a positive solution to migration issues and a potential source of development in migrants' countries of origin, however an emerging issue is the additional pressure placed on resources caused by a growing number of returnees. ***When return takes place in high numbers, if not properly managed, it can put a strain on the community of return.*** On the other hand, well-managed returns, in which country of origin and destination closely collaborate at all stages, can lead to positive development outcomes for both migrants and their home communities.

- ***The GFMD represents a key opportunity to address these challenges.*** As it is a non-binding, voluntary, and informal process, it presents a safe space in which states can discuss sensitive issues and forge consensus. This ongoing dialogue despite divergent state views on migration issues will be vital to making continued progress on migration issues, and the way in which they impact development, in the coming years.
- It is vital in addressing these challenges that we formulate evidence-based policies inspired by existing effective practices. In line with SDG 17 on partnerships, the GFMD is also helping to provide a space for states to inform and learn from each other. The **GFMD's Platform for Partnerships** has been accorded a role in the Global Compact for Migration.
- This year, the GFMD Chair will **reactivate the GFMD Marketplace** as a “matchmaking mechanism” between those facing specific policy and practice issues and those providing targeted solutions. The Chair also aims to mainstream the **Migration Laboratory** approach to support the formation of outcome-oriented partnerships in specific regional, national and local contexts. These initiatives can form two crucial building blocks for the envisaged UN knowledge platform and the connection hub.

Conclusion/summarising

- Since its inception, the GFMD has always recognized the manifold linkages between migration and development. The discussions over the last ten years have highlighted the important role of migrants as actors for development, who are able to bring positive change to their countries of origin, transit, and destination; thereby contributing to the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Thank you very much.