

Director General António Vitorino
GFMD Opening Remarks

The GFMD is a unique, Inter-State consultation mechanism for dialogue and cooperation in the field of migration and development – and the only currently active one at global level. Its uniqueness lies not only in its thematic focus – so central to international and national policy debates nowadays - but also in its multi-stakeholder dimension, which allows a broad range of significant actors to debate and engage. The GFMD as a global consultative mechanism with broadest constituency has demonstrated to have the potential to influence global policies and support implementation of international commitments in the area of migration and development. IOM remains committed to the GFMD and will continue to be available to support this state-led process.

The Forum has grown much since its inception, enlarging its constituency beyond central governments - the protagonists of the GFMD process - including first civil society, then the business sector and finally cities and local governments. The establishment of the Mayors Mechanism in 2018 brings a crucial stakeholder to the table, recognising the key role of cities as first responders to migration and as a source of extensive knowledge on the real challenges and opportunities that migration presents to communities. IOM works closely with cities and local governments to improve migration governance and we see that interventions are effective when national and local authorities are linked. This is why supporting the presence of cities in the GFMD is so important. The fact that the Mayoral Forum is integrated in the GFMD program this year allows to foster a mix of perspectives that provide a genuinely unique opportunity to explore new ground.

The current GFMD architecture, including as it does these 3 complementary pillars – civil society, business and mayors - sets in place the conditions for innovative and promising partnerships to face some of the key challenges of our times and transform them into opportunities for a better future. The GFMD has also played an important role to pave the way for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a landmark document that maps out a 360-degree vision of international migration and a framework for comprehensive cooperation. The GFMD has been asked to use its vantage point to support the implementation of the GCM and its review and I can only encourage this. I commend the Ecuador GFMD Chair for having engaged proactively in supporting the implementation of the Global Compact through a dedicated workshop in March 2019 and by hosting an additional space for the Voluntary Dialogue on GCM here in Quito on Friday, after the closure of the Summit.

There may be questions about the development of GFMD side by side with GCM implementation process. The GFMD has been a constant in the international firmament over the past thirteen years, and one welcomed by governments. The advent of the Global Compact does not displace this role, but rather enriches it, offering us more opportunities to discuss and exchange than ever before. Indeed, as implementation of the GCM becomes a priority for many states across the globe, inter-state consultation will continue to underpin migration governance. New forms of consultation and exchange will inevitably spring up in the next years, as states prepare to contribute to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022. This should not be seen as competition or threat. Rather, international cooperation is one of the global compact's guiding principles. Most of the actionable commitments foresee cooperation and partnerships especially those at the regional and global levels.

Indeed, there is strong potential for the GFMD and the Compact processes to be mutually reinforcing. While GFMD can play an important role in supporting the implementation of GCM, GFMD can also take advantage of its annual high-level meeting to advance the discussion of issues emerging in GCM implementation review process which are of its interest. Furthermore, as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration, I recognize that migration is not meant to be addressed by one single actor or initiative but requires our collective commitment to make migration work for all. This year, the Network will focus on supporting Member States in their implementation of the GCM, working closely with stakeholders and others, seeking ways in which to build on the knowledge and trust created by the GFMD.

The overarching theme chosen by the GFMD Chair for this Summit places at centre stage the importance of upholding rights, the centrality of States' agency and the need to develop partnerships and collective action to achieve results. It is a strong and positive vision that deserves to be not only debated, but also carried forward. The GFMD, bringing together as it does a broad range of diverse stakeholders that are vital to the migration discussion, is an important building block for fostering partnerships and for contributing significantly to collective action. I want to acknowledge the efforts of the current Ecuadorian Chair for bringing all four GFMD constituencies together, under the same roof, for the first time in the history of the GFMD and for the significance of the themes of this year's summit. Coordinating responses to provide safe and regular pathways to people escaping crisis is not an option, it is a necessity. Fostering the social and economic inclusion of migrants in host communities is not an act of generosity, it is a sound way to keep societies healthy, cohesive and prosperous.

The centrality of narratives in shaping the public imagery on migration, and the need to keep those narratives balanced and based on reality, is not an intellectual luxury, it is a duty and an ethical imperative for anyone contributing to the debate. Finally, addressing human mobility systematically while designing urban and rural development strategies is not *one* possible way of looking ahead, it is *the only reasonable way* to plan for the future of our fragile planet. I also want to commend the current Chair for opening the door of the GFMD to youth representatives from all over the world, hosting the Youth Forum in Quito in the past two days and promoting the presence of youth representatives throughout the GFMD sessions. It has taken us time to acknowledge the voice of youth. Now that we have, let's give them space to engage with the topics that shape our future and to help us gain a fresh perspective from their point of view.

I want to highlight Ecuador's leading role to address Venezuelan migrant and refugee flows in the region. IOM recognizes that the situation is surpassing the capacity of individual countries and recalls the importance of the Quito process to continue to articulate and harmonize responses to the outflow of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the region. The international community has an important role in supporting the countries of the region.

I thank the GFMD Ecuador Chair for his warm hospitality and wish the incoming UAE Chair all the best for the start of its mandate. IOM looks forward to working closely with the incoming Chair in the year ahead.