

Meeting of the Friends of the Forum
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Agenda items 4, 5 + 7

Report of Civil Society Activities

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*As prepared for delivery;
referenced civil society documents available
at www.gfmdcivilsociety.org*

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, partners:

Since the last Friends of the Forum meeting, we have had three meetings of civil society's International Steering Committee for the GFMD, including one almost entirely devoted to the upcoming High-Level Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants (HLM). Our next meeting is scheduled for this Thursday.

As reported, we have been lucky with long-serving civil society groups wanting to stay involved and an increasing number of new groups asking to join. We have been further glad that we are increasingly migrant-led: a large majority of the ISC are migrants and in migrant or diaspora-led organizations.

Among the new members invited are the Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI), who we highly respect for their smart work with cities and local authorities on migration and development, and the International Organization of Employers, with whom we are fully committed to building a bridge of purposeful cooperation in taking the new GFMD business interaction mechanism forward.

As reported, with our membership now approaching 40, we have subdivided into a GFMD programme committee and a CORE group. The CORE group has taken on the challenge of organizing a set of civil society messages and direct contact with governments ahead of the HLM.

Agenda Item 4: Brief feedback on Chair's Workplan and final Concept Paper

Civil society is happy to actively participate in the GFMD thematic preparatory events—with some top civil society leaders from France, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines and Switzerland doing so on “Connectivity” in Bangkok at the end of March and here tomorrow on “Harmonious societies”.

Civil society was also glad at the several opportunities to provide feedback on the Chair's Concept paper, and appreciates suggestions that were taken up in the final paper. As the government teams

meet the day after tomorrow to begin preparing the different GFMD roundtables, may we quickly underscore just three points:

1. **R/T 2.2, on *protection of rights of migrants in all situations*:** In the very wide scope of this table, we ask for a strong focus on fair working conditions and also on real-world access to public services, including the importance of firewalls that separate essential services from immigration enforcement. We strongly suggest to include the experience of local authorities in this regard, bringing in concrete examples of what works on the ground.
2. **R/T 3.1, *migrants in situations of crisis*.** We welcome the focus on protection of displaced persons and migrants with specific vulnerabilities outside of the 1951 Refugee Convention. There are so many other, widely ratified conventions that enshrine rights to protection for non-refugee migrants. However these are not limited to circumstances of conflict, natural disaster and climate change! Accordingly, civil society asks this roundtable to give structured attention to migrants made vulnerable and needing protection and assistance in all crises. The concept paper correctly refers to “existential threat” to which the migrants currently “have no access to a remedy or resolution”. What we see on the ground, what NGOs, agencies and the media report every day, is that existential threats *characterize* migrant journeys everywhere—evidenced by the thousands dying along the way and countless others battered and in urgent need. Broadened attention of that kind in this roundtable will offer direct value to Pillar 1 of the Secretary-General’s report for the High-level Meeting¹, as well as implementation of 2030 Agenda goal 10.7².
3. **R/T 3.2 on *safe, orderly and regular migration*,** of direct value to achievement of 2030 Agenda goal 10.7 and pillar 3 of the Secretary-General’s report for the HLM. The Concept paper did not refer to civil society among the two pages of actors listed, but there is much to gain if this roundtable recognizes that civil society contributes—significantly—to safe, orderly and regular migration, in many parts of the world. Concrete civil society programmes provide pre-departure information, immigration law counseling and processing (both pre-departure and post-arrival), differentiation and referral, child protection and welfare, family-tracing, anti-trafficking and victim protection, and huge employment and integration services, just to name a few—often in close partnership with national and local authorities.

We also appreciate that all three of these roundtables take forward the Declaration of UN Member States at the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013 (HLD), among others its paragraphs 5, 14, 15, 18, 21 and 23³.

Agenda Item 5: Working Group on 2030 Agenda, and Business Interactive Mechanism

We applaud the new GFMD Ad hoc Working Group on Sustainable Development, especially for its examination of the GFMD’s role in monitoring implementation of migrant and migration-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda. While civil society has not yet participated in this group, several of our development colleagues in civil society have expressed interest and capacity to do so, following the model of civil society’s participation in GFMD Working Groups in earlier years.

We greet with some enthusiasm the new GFMD business interaction mechanism, and, as promised in earlier Friends meetings, we have “started off right” by already beginning to work with organizers.

¹ <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/N1611262.pdf>

² Adopted by 193 UN member states in September 2015, the “[2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)” contains at least 7 explicit references to migrants and migration plus explicit language in the preamble that makes clear that every one of the 17 goals applies to everyone, including migrants, regardless of status.

³ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/L.5

Agenda Item 7: update Civil Society process

Three items: [1] picking up on the prior agenda item on budget, the Civil society budget first; then [2] our own Concept paper, and finally [3] measuring progress.

1. Budget

We thank the Support Unit for circulating to you our final 12 months budget for 2016; *copies of the budget are on the table at the side of the room.*

The total for all civil society organizing this year, leading up to and including the GFMD Civil Society Days in December, comes to USD **\$ 802,450**. This compares to USD \$858,381 actually spent in the 18 months between GFMDs in Sweden and Turkey, and is 5% less than what I projected to you for this year in the last Friends meeting. Permit me to point to just three highlights:

- Once again, we are presenting an “all-costs” budget
- A modest amount is for preparatory activities, which connect regional civil society perspectives and work directly to the GFMD, from Africa, Asia and Latin America in particular. This year for the first time, we will pilot a few “satellite” meetings ahead of the Forum, to connect more civil society actors in the regions to the GFMD.
- A significant cost is support for participation in the GFMD itself of some 70-90 delegates from low-income countries and NGOs—about 1/3rd of the delegates.

With contributions to date from the European Union, Sweden, and Switzerland, we have raised almost 60% of the budget. As we work to cover the remaining 40%—a **gap of USD \$330,000**—may we once again turn to you and your governments for the support you have steadily expressed for civil society in this work together. I welcome your questions and advice.

2. Civil society Concept Paper

The International Steering Committee is currently reviewing our draft Concept paper for the Civil Society Days component of the GFMD.

The **three principal references** for our concept paper are: [1] civil society’s [‘5-year 8-point plan’](#)⁴, that civil society launched at the HLD in 2013, with our work on those points to date, in particular at the most recent GFMD⁵; [2] the SDGs that match those 8 points; and [3] the Concept paper that you have finalized for the GFMD government programme.

This year is suddenly quite special, however, so we are also looking at how best to connect results and commitments, multi-process and multi-year, from the SDGs, the World Humanitarian Summit next week, and the High-Level Meeting that takes place four months from now. In fact, the GFMD in Bangladesh is the first big “gathering” after the HLM, in which the Civil Society Days is the GFMD’s first “moment”—with the next GFMD in Germany little more than 9 months later.

Given all of these processes, and commitments—many of them at the top of civil society’s list of priorities, we are going to center the GFMD Civil Society Days on doing it. In Geneva terms: “implementation”.

As we began preparing our focus, many in civil society around the world said again and again:

- we have Conventions, the rights are there
- we all have evidence to guide us—and many of the solutions and practices; we’re just not sharing and doing them enough

⁴ <http://gfmddcivilsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/The-5-year-Action-Plan-EN.pdf>

⁵ <http://gfmddcivilsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Recommendations-booklet-2.pdf> [*Copies on the table at the side of the room.*]

- what we lack is systems: of cooperation, of governance, of doing decent migration and development, fully and consistently, especially at regional and national levels.

That's what we want to zoom in on, in the High-level Meeting in September and in the GFMDs after.

The **key features** then that the civil society Steering Committee is looking at right now in our draft concept paper for this year's Global Forum are:

- An **overall theme** focussed on connecting and *doing*.
- **4 parallel tracks**, each with two 3 ½ hour Working sessions, emphatically connecting to HLM outcomes and the SDGs:
 - Doing protection of *migrant workers*, with an emphasis on ending recruitment abuse
 - Doing protection of *migrants on the move*, including all migrants in crisis but also development alternatives and solutions to forced migration
 - Doing *inclusion* of migrants and diaspora where they live and work
 - Doing *global governance* better, including implementation and monitoring of the SDGs.
- In this 9th year of the Global Forum, we'll shift our center of gravity a bit. You will see:
 - **More interaction with governments**: a quadrupling of contact, with a full track of the second afternoon of the Civil Society Days organized around small, informal 60-90 minute *breakfast, lunch and tea tables*, for issue- or region- specific conversation between civil society leaders and government representatives
 - **More tracking** of cross-cutting issues, with a special "*SDG tracker*", a *Women Rapporteur* and a *Children Rapporteur* preparing *bridging papers* and driving specific attention to their issues across every Working session
 - **More accountability**, beginning with a two-page "*Scorecard*" measuring progress (or not) on each of the 8 points in our "5-year Plan" as its third year comes to a close, plus short *Action papers* for each Working session again this year. We are also considering something of a *civil society "Commitments"* approach in the closing plenaries on Day 2.

In doing this, we hold ourselves accountable to the commitments that *we* made, as civil society, in our *5-year 8-point Plan*. And we accept to be measured, objectively and publicly, on what we do *and don't do* of those commitments. My colleague Sophie van Haasen, programme coordinator of ICMC's MADE (Migration and Development) Civil Society Network⁶ will take our final 5 minutes and present to you the highlights of independent measuring of civil society's work on our first two years on those commitments.

3. Measuring: presentation of the *Movement* assessment report [Sophie van Haasen]

Since civil society adopted the "5-year 8-point Action Plan" ahead of the HLD in 2013, we have used it as our main strategic planning document for civil society organizing, including towards the GFMD Civil Society Days.

But what good is a "5-year 8-point plan" if no one measures progress on it? In preparation to the GFMD in Turkey, the MADE programme commissioned an evaluation of civil society's own progress on this Plan through its second year, 2015. The assessment went forward in two ways:

⁶ The MADE (Migration and Development) civil society network connects and supports civil society worldwide to promote policies and actions for the well-being and protection of migrants and communities. Coordinated by ICMC with co-funding from the European Union, MADE comprises regional networking in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and global thematic working groups on diaspora and development, labour migration (in particular, reform of migrant worker recruitment) and global governance of migration and development. See www.madenetwork.org.

- First, the Coordinating Office commissioned a global **survey** of civil society action on migration and development both within and beyond the 8 points, in which more than 350 civil society delegates took part.
- Secondly, we asked the Maastricht University Graduate School of Governance to conduct an **independent assessment** to measure the progress (or not) on each of the 8 Points in the Action Plan, based on the survey, additional in-depth interviews and existing literature.

We published their assessment in February this year, in a report entitled “*Movement*”. Copies are on the table here and available on our website: www.madenetwork.org in French, English and Spanish.

Results of the assessment report

The assessment paints a picture of improvement on some issues, but also inertia on others.

Among the key findings:

- There is **general acceptance** of the 5-year 8-point Plan of Action, but a widely identified **omission** is discrimination and xenophobia. So much so that many in civil society say that fighting xenophobia makes our 5-year 8-point plan a “5 year 8 point-plus” plan. We had therefore included the theme in our own Civil Society Days programme last year, and we are happy to see your Concept Paper pick that theme up this year in roundtable 2.1. Like you, civil society will also include the topic in our GFMD programme this year, and already has in its MADE thematic priorities; e.g. with an upcoming open call on the 9th of June – to which you are also invited to participate – called ‘Telling a Different story of Migration’. *[More information and registration through the website www.madenetwork.org.]*
- Through year 2 of the Action Plan, **some of the 8 points have progressed more than others**:
 - the most visible progress has been on Point 1 (migrants and migration in the SDGs), Point 3 (protecting migrants in crisis and transit) and Point 7 (recruitment).
 - Points 5 + 6 (on migration governance at national and global levels) have not attracted the same level of engagement from civil society.
- Civil society needs to further discuss and refine the existing **benchmarks** to measure progress. The system of using scorecards as John mentioned, and the new “SDG trackers” that will fine-tune indicators in parallel to the SDG targets and indicators will aim to contribute to this.

The assessment report also formulates **recommendations to governments**, and I quote one of them: *The initial intention of the Plan of Action was to identify areas in which civil society organisations and governments could work together to improve the lives of migrants and their families (...). To date, efforts to implement the plan by civil society organisations seem to be largely disconnected from government actions.*

This underscores our determination to structure more interaction with governments in this year’s Civil Society Days: with specific breakfast, lunch and tea tables, but also including more governments and local authorities into the full programme.

The “Movement” assessment report is actually a first edition, and from the start such a measurement of progress was meant to be a continuous effort. Therefore, in preparation to the upcoming GFMD, the Coordinating Office will ask the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance to conduct a second edition of this assessment, notably with a new ‘**Scorecard**’ providing a baseline for discussions at the GFMD civil society days.

/Thank you.