

**Second Meeting of the GFMD 2020 Friends of the Forum**

***1 October 2020***

***09:30 – 13:00 CET***

***Salle 2 CICG Geneva / Virtually via Webex***

**SUMMARY REPORT**

1. The second 2020 meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Friends of the Forum[[1]](#footnote-1) was chaired by H.E. Abdulla Ali Alnuaimi, Undersecretary for Communication & International Relations, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, Representative of the GFMD 2020 Chair United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**I. Opening remarks by the GFMD Chair**

1. The Chair thanked participants for their continuing support in a highly challenging year, and welcomed the first opportunity for the Friends of the Forum to meet partially in person during the UAE Chairmanship. Since the last meeting in July, the Chair has continued its focus on developing partnerships, with a view to launching a handful of partnership ideas at the Summit in January. In cooperation with the Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP), the Chair held a series of small group meetings in September which were participated in by different stakeholders, as well as the first Migration Lab on September 30.

**II. Drafting of background papers for the Summit Roundtables: A progress report**

1. Given the short drafting period this year, the Chair took steps to ensure that the drafting process for the GFMD Roundtables began swiftly, and that the outcomes of the Regional Consultations were substantively incorporated into this process. In late August the Chair established six (6) Practitioners Groups, each consisting of volunteering Member States (Co-Chairs and Members), the Thematic Lead assigned to the Roundtable theme, and the three GFMD Mechanisms. The groups met and produced a first draft of the respective Background Papers which were circulated by the Chair to all Friends of the Forum on 28 September 2020. This signaled the opening of the process of contributing to the Background Papers to all interested members of the Friends of the Forum, including all Member States and GFMD Observers. In this regard, the Chair invited the Friends of the Forum to participate actively in the first Roundtable Preparatory Meetings to be held in the afternoon of October 1.
2. At the request of the Chair, the [Roundtable Co-Chairs](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/composition_of_gfmd_2020_rt_teams.pdf) provided brief updates on the current status of preparations of their respective Roundtables:

* **Roundtable Theme 1** - *The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes –* Together with Egypt, Zimbabwe thanked Ms. Michelle Leighton and her colleagues from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for formulating a zero draft of the Background Paper, which was reviewed and guided by the Practitioners Group for this theme to produce a [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_roundtable_theme_1_-_background_paper_-_draft_280920.docx). The Co-Chairs welcomed input on the further elaboration of this draft in the upcoming Roundtable Preparatory Meetings that afternoon and on December 4.
* **Roundtable Theme 2** *- Skilling Migrants for Employment* – The United Kingdom, with the assistance of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), presented the [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/background_paper_skilling_migrants_for_employment_25_september_2020.docx) of the Background Paper and thanked the Practitioners Group for their inputs. The United Kingdom is seeking a fellow Co-Chair for this Roundtable Theme, and would welcome offers from Member States in this regard.
* **Roundtable Theme 3** *- Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants –* Together with Kenya, the Philippines provided an outline of the [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/draft_background_paper_on_leveraging_new_technologies_to_empower_migrants_-_sep_2020.docx) of the Background Paper, which was penned by Professor Gibril Faal. They committed to producing a final draft by November, for review at the December Roundtable Preparatory Meetings, and invited all members of the Friends of the Forum to contribute.
* **Roundtable Theme 4 -** *Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection –* Together with Mexico, Morocco presented the [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_2020_theme_4_migrant_protection_first_draft.docx) of the Background Paper, produced by Mr. John Bingham. Morocco highlighted particularly the significant and devastating impacts the COVID-19 crisis has had on migrant protection, and the key role migrants can play in solution to the crisis.
* **Roundtable Theme 5 -** *Discussing Approaches to Prevent Irregular Migration* – Speaking also on behalf of Spain, Venezuela thanked Ms. Kathleen Newland and the members of the Theme 5 Practitioners Group for their assistance in constructing the [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/discussion_paper_for_sub-theme_5-irregular_migration.docx) of the background paper. Venezuela drew attention to the polarized debate around this issue, as well as the need for differentiated responses to the different forms of irregular migration.
* **Roundtable 6** *- Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals* –El Salvador reiterated the importance of this topic in responding to migration as a multi-causal issue, highlighting a number of projects that El Salvador is undertaking to build comprehensive mechanisms through partnerships, including the National Council for the Protection and Development of Migrants and their Families (‘COMIGRANTES’). The Gambia likewise welcomed the opportunity to lead on this important theme, which is a key focus of the UAE Chairmanship’s thematic agenda. The Co-Chairs thanked Mr. Dilip Ratha and the members of the Practitioners Group for their input to the [first draft](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/background_paper_theme_6_partnerships.docx) of the background paper, and invited other participants to join the Roundtable Team to further enrich the Paper.

1. The Chair reiterated the need for a second Co-Chair for Roundtable Theme 2, calling for interested Member States to volunteer for this role. He also requested that Roundtable Co-Chairs identify a Rapporteur early in the drafting process and asked for volunteering Member States to convey their interest to act as Rapporteurs through the respective Roundtable Co-Chairs.

**III. Progress reports by Co-Chairs of GFMD Working Groups**

1. Mr. Menno Bart, Adecco Group, representing the GFMD Business Mechanism as Co-Chair of the **GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development**, spoke on behalf of fellow Co-Chairs Indonesia and Switzerland. He informed the Friends of the Forum about the five objectives of the Working Group, namely:
2. Create a space to share best practices, initiatives and call for actions;
3. Develop a GFMD working paper on short- and long-term issues according to the phases of COVID-19 interventions;
4. Support the preparatory work of the Government Roundtables and coordinate closely with the GFMD mechanisms and ad hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. To this end, Mr. Bart informed the FoF that the COVID Working Group had met with counterparts from the Narratives Working Group and identified a number of avenues for collaboration, including joint webinars, joint spotlight publications, and potentially mutual involvement in an international campaign;
5. Identify initiatives that could be catalyst for partnerships; and
6. Reflect regarding possible adjustments in the way the GFMD works based on COVID-19.
7. Mr. Bart announced that the Working Group will launch a survey shortly to gather information from the GFMD community regarding the impacts of COVID-19, their responses to the crisis and the pandemic, potential prevention mechanisms, measures for the recovery from COVID, and suggestions on institutional workings of the GFMD. This survey will inform the working paper and the online space for sharing of policies and practices that have been proposed as activities of the Working Group.
8. Representing the Co-Chairs of the **GFMD Ad Hoc GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration**, Ms. Sophie van Haasen of the GFMD Mayors Mechanism reported that since the last meeting of the Friends of the Forum, Ecuador has joined Canada and the Mayors Mechanism as the third Co-Chair of the Working Group. New members representing cities and business have also been added, ensuring a robust and multi-stakeholder membership. She reminded the Friends of the Forum of the three major objectives of the Working Group according to its Work Plan:
9. To build the capacity of working group members and the broader GFMD community to shape public opinion on migration and migrants and effectively promote more balanced narratives;
10. To foster the creation of concrete partnerships and joint activities that will contribute to shifting the narrative on migration, including by building on sentiments of community solidarity generated in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
11. To provide recommendations on the topic of migration narratives for the GFMD’s contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on the annual HLPF thematic review, and to the review process of the GCM implementation.
12. Three sub-groups have been created to pursue the most immediate activities under these goals. One of the main activities of 2020 will be an international campaign, to be launched on 18 December 2020, which is intended to increase public awareness of migrants’ contributions to and within their communities, including in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery. Canada has earmarked a 25,000 USD contribution to develop this campaign, providing a solid financial foundation for this activity. However, the campaign will require additional resources and for this reason the Working Group has already begun fundraising. Ms. van Haasen called on the GFMD community to join in the effort to contribute to the development and implementation of the campaign.
13. Mr. Harry Miskin, representing the UAE Co-Chair of the **GFMD Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration**, presented the planned changes to the online GFMD [Platform for Partnerships](http://gfmd.org/pfp) which have been set in motion by the Working Group. These changes include a redesign of the Platform’s home page and interface, as well as the creation of more options for exploring the database, including the ability to search by Global Compact on Migration (GCM) objectives.
14. The Chair noted that the Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration is still looking for another Co-Chair to join the UAE, and requested that any interested Member States contact the GFMD Support Unit.

**IV. Reports on activities of GFMD Mechanisms by Mechanism Coordinators**

1. In his presentation on behalf of the **GFMD** **Civil Society Mechanism**, Mr. Stephane Jaquemet, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), emphasized the severe consequences that COVID-19 has had on migrants and workers, as well as the interruptions it has caused to the ability of the international community to work together. He thanked the Chair for adapting quickly to this new reality, especially through the rapid pivot to online Regional Consultations. He noted the potential benefits that online formats may have for the increased engagement of civil society and local authorities. He cautioned however that the online Regional Consultations saw less engagement from Member States; he urged to find ways to keep States in the driver’s seat.
2. The Civil Society Mechanism expressed support for a hybrid format of the Summit. If in-person Summit is not possible, they advised to actively address the challenges of online meetings, such as time zone differences and lack of ‘corridor discussions’, as it is now more important than ever to work together and proactively invest in the GFMD. The Mechanism will again hold Civil Society Days coinciding with the Summit, whether online or in person, which will be preceded by online preparatory sessions for civil society representatives.
3. Finally, Mr. Jaquement thanked the Member States that had contributed to ensuring fair and diverse participation of civil society by extending financial support, namely Canada, Germany, the UAE, and Switzerland.
4. Mr. John Bingham, acting on behalf of Ms. Stephanie Winet, delivered a statement on behalf of the **GFMD Business Mechanism**. From a substantive perspective, Mr. Bingham highlighted the profound impact that the COVID-19 and related economic crises have had on businesses worldwide. These crises have made clear the essentiality of migrant workers for businesses and economies across the full range of skills – a fact that exemplifies the connection between migration and development. Now more than ever, businesses need predictability in migration systems to ensure they have access to migrant workers. In this context, the priorities of the Business Mechanism’s constituents closely match the six themes of the GFMD in 2020, and there is a need for the GFMD to continue to build on the common ground evident across all GFMD stakeholder groups. In this light, Mr. Bingham emphasized the distinct and essential role of the GFMD in this era of crisis.
5. From a procedural perspective, the Chair’s strong thematic focus on partnerships is welcomed greatly by businesses and employers. The Business Mechanism is committed to supporting this path of partnership, which needs to continue to be carried forward beyond the 2020 Migration Labs, and indeed beyond the UAE Chairmanship.
6. Regarding the GFMD Summit, while Business members are determined to participate, the Business Mechanism has determined that only online participation will be possible this year. The Business Mechanism does foresee potential benefits of the online format if well managed, including more targeted and higher level business participation.
7. Ms. Fatima Fernandez, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), reiterated the support of the **GFMD Mayors Mechanism** for a range of GFMD activities, outlining the active engagement of the Mechanism in, *inter alia*, the GFMD ad hoc Working Groups on Narratives and on COVID-19, the GFMD Roundtables, and the LaMP partnership workshops. Ms. Fernandez praised the dedication of the Chair and LaMP to implementing partnerships in a time when COVID-19 has complicated the ability to build interpersonal connections, and offered the Mayors Mechanism’s continuing support in this endeavor.
8. Ms. Fernandez announced that the Mayors Mechanism has made the difficult decision not to send any in-person city delegations to the Summit, due both to the risks of travel and the challenges many local authorities continue to face as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The Mechanism is willing to reassess this decision if conditions change. In any case, the Mechanism is committed to ensuring the online participation of local authorities in the Summit Opening, Closing and Roundtables, and is also considering the organization of a number of smaller discussions on the margins to bring GFMD actors together with cities for in-depth discussions on certain topics. Echoing the comments of the Business Mechanism, Ms. Fernandez noted that the Mayors Mechanism sees some potential opportunities in an online Summit format, including the possibility of broader and/or more high-level engagement.
9. The GFMD Chair also invited Ms. Marta Verani to provide an update on the activities of the **United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY)** relating to the GFMD. Ms. Verani extended an invitation for Friends of the Forum members to engage with the [GFMD Youth Forum](https://www.unmgcy.org/gfmdyouthforum), for instance by including youth members (aged 31 or below) in their delegations to the Summit. While official registration to the Youth Forum has closed, the UNMGCY is happy to accommodate registration from Member States. UNMGCY will also host the Youth Leadership and Innovation Award for Migration, which will showcase existing initiatives aiming to empower and improve the living conditions of young people on the move.
10. The UNMGCY is active in the GFMD Working Group on Narratives and, going forward, is looking particularly to leverage young people’s power to contribute to the global campaign organized by this Working Group. In the coming months, the UNMGCY will also be holding capacity-building webinars to help improve the ability of young people to participate in the Youth Forum and Summit. Ms. Verani thanked all those who have contributed to the UNMGCY’s fundraising efforts, and encouraged members of the Friends of the Forum to reach out for more information on their activities.

**V. Overview by the Chair on preparations for the UAE Summit**

1. The Chair announced that due to the ongoing global health crisis, it was not possible to make plans for the format of the GFMD UAE Summit with certainty. The Chair was investigating various options and taking into account potential developments in their planning for the Summit. The Chair thanked all members of the Friends of the Forum who completed the Chair’s survey regarding travel preferences, which will inform the UAE preparations.
2. The Chair committed to organize a Summit that will take place either in a hybrid format, with activities taking place in person in the UAE as well as virtually, or entirely online. Some of the factors that will determine the final arrangements include: the availability of travel from various countries to the UAE, the requirements of quarantine on arrival and on return to home countries, the availability of COVID-19 testing, and the identification of an appropriate venue to accommodate social distancing requirements. In addition to the Government meetings, the three GFMD Mechanisms have all confirmed their intention to participate in the Summit, either online or in person. Concurring with the comments of the Mechanisms, the Chair highlighted that a virtual or hybrid format could hold some benefits, allowing greater connection from participants around the world.
3. In response to a query from the floor, the Chair clarified that they aimed to make the decision between a hybrid or an entirely online Summit format by early November. However this decision will be subject to continuing changes based on the global situation.

**VI. GFMD finances: Report on 2020 contributions by Member States to date**

1. The Chair regretfully announced that funds collected this year are less than necessary to carry out the GFMD activities until the end of the UAE Chairmanship. A deficit of roughly USD 100,000 was predicted. The situation was being carefully considered by the Steering Group, and the Chair hoped to provide more details on the issue at the next Friends of the Forum meeting in December.
2. The Chair once again called on Member States to consider making additional contributions to ensure the financial stability of the GFMD. He warmly thanked the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, the Philippines and Switzerland that have already offered financial contributions.

**VII. Presentation of the findings and recommendations of UNDP report: “*Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: a Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead*”**

1. At the request of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the GFMD Chair provided a space in the Friends of the Forum meeting for the [presentation](https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/shaping_human_mobility.pdf) of the new UNDP Report “*Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: a Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead”*. In opening the presentation, Ms. Asako Okai, Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP, acknowledged the key role played by the GFMD since its creation in 2007 in emphasizing the significant role that migrants make to sustainable development.
2. The two lead authors, Ms. Kathleen Newland and Ms. Jeni Klugman, explained the main findings of [the Report](file:///C:\Users\GFMD3\Downloads\undp_hdr_human_mobility_shared_opportunities_executive_summary_eng.pdf), including concrete policy recommendations to enhance the contribution of human mobility to sustainable development. The presenters stressed how the 2009 UNDP [Human Development Report](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/269/hdr_2009_en_complete.pdf) made a case for migration as an enabler of development, which continues to be relevant today. The Report also updates the recommendations of the 2009 Report to ensure that they are in line with the current realities – including climate change, mixed movement, the future of work, increased forced displacement, and rising inequality. However, the Report was largely compiled prior to the COVID-19 crisis, so it does not engage significantly with this important issue.
3. The Report was welcomed by members of the Friends of the Forum. The UNDP representatives thanked the engagement of the GFMD community, and extended an invitation to the official launch of the Report which is to take place on 21 October 2020.

*Prepared by the GFMD Support Unit*

1. The second meeting of the Friends of the Forum of 2020 was attended by some 70 participants from 50 Member States, 30 participants representing 16 GFMD Observers, and 10 representatives from the three GFMD Mechanisms. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)