

## IOM's IDM Diaspora Ministerial Conference

18-19 June, 2013

*Presentation by Ambassador Eva Åkerman-Börje*

I would like to begin by thanking IOM Director General William Lacy Swing for the invitation to Sweden as the **Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development** to speak here today. I am here on behalf of the Minister for Migration, Tobias Billström and the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Gunilla Carlsson, our two Swedish ministers who ***are co-responsible for Sweden's efforts.***

Excellencies; distinguished participants. Our chairmanship of the Global Forum comes at a crucial time. In October 2013 we have the second **UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development**, and at the same time we are in the midst of preparations for **a new post 2015 development agenda.**

This is a time to **mobilize action** and support among governments to ensure that migration is fully integrated into the new development framework as an **enabler for social and economic development.**

The Eminent Panel recently submitted its report to the UN Secretary General. Overall the report presents a strong agenda for change but we would have liked to see stronger wording on migration to acknowledge it as the enabler we know it to be for development goals, and as an area that calls for partnerships.

Sweden, a long-time advocate of the linkages between migration and development, **reaffirms its position and strong support for enhancing the role of migration in the new international development agenda.**

The theme for the Swedish chair of the GFMD is ***Unlocking the Potential of Migration for Inclusive Development***. This has been carefully formulated because Sweden believes that we must focus our attention on **identifying the means** by which **migration can be a positive force for human development**.

It has always had that potential – but we need to enhance the benefits of migration for positive development outcomes, and minimize the downsides.

We need to **make visible the contribution of migration to development** and the **costs of NOT addressing migration sufficiently** in the national, regional and global development agendas.

In **our increasingly globalized world**, it is **not unlikely that every other person on the planet at one point in time will be a migrant**, or have a direct relation to a migrant. **It is in our mutual interest to ensure that there is a framework in place** for this that will support **positive development outcomes**.

**Let me say a few words about the Global Forum**. At the GFMD governments can share experiences and lessons learned, leading to improvements in policy, programmes, and practice. Its voluntary, non-binding nature has facilitated trust building, and exchange of views and experiences in the area of migration and development. Civil society manages a parallel process globally that joins with the state-led GFMD in the Common Space during the week of the Global Forum.

**More than 160 governments** come together regularly throughout the year in Government Teams in preparations and thematic meetings to discuss issues such as labour migration and mobility; diasporas; remittances; strategies for addressing irregular migration and enabling regular migration; the rights of

migrants; policy coherence and mainstreaming, as well as data and research; governance of migration and coordination of dialogue.

**The GFMD remains the only global platform where governments can meet informally to discuss migration and development issues.** In a recent assessment of the GFMD, an overwhelming majority of states confirmed that the Forum brings value-added.

**Given its practical nature, the GFMD roundtables have three points of focus this year.** The High Level Dialogue and the post 2015 development agenda is a priority for the first roundtable.

**The second roundtable** focuses on the dynamics of **labour migration, recruitment and skills-matching.** We also look at how members of the diaspora contribute to development through skills transfers, investments and trade.

Better tuned policies and tools could enhance the portability of skills, help employers find the requested skills in a more timely fashion and at the adequate level, and help migrants access work where they enjoy rights and decent working conditions.

Diaspora entrepreneurs often recruit their employees from their countries of origin or ancestry through informal networks. If facilitated by relevant policy frameworks, they could contribute to job creation in their countries of residence as well as origin through the transfer of skills and knowledge, the setting up of SMEs or with their investments and trade.

The **third roundtable** addresses **empowerment, protection, and transfer of social and economic assets.** Here we explore how to empower migrants and their households in both countries of origin and destination. We ask **what policies enable and support diaspora** efforts to transfer skills and knowledge

as well as remittances. We especially consider the **impact of diaspora economic and social transfers**- specifically on health and education outcomes- in countries of origin. This is an area that is little researched and we need to expand the evidence base in order to work more effectively with diaspora actors.

**2013 marks a shift in engagement with diaspora actors globally.** The GFMD stakeholders recognize this, which is why engaging and supporting **diaspora in their social and economic development efforts** is a recurring theme of the Global Forum meeting in Stockholm, May 2014.

The attention focused on remittances over the past decades has also highlighted the enormous sums of money that are sent home which easily dwarfs development assistance and foreign direct investment, **but we should not forget about the importance of human and social capital transfers.**

Within the GFMD, participating states of the north and south **are rethinking how we can work together to support the diaspora as transnational development actors.** It is clear that a partnership model needs to be established in both countries of origin and destination.

Diaspora entrepreneurs face the same challenges as other entrepreneurs, but they must also deal with the challenge of raising funds in countries that know little about the business environment where the proposed investment will take place, plus they may also face a lack of interest by investors in general.

Here bilateral relations founded on **mutual trust between governments** can **positively influence the visibility and role** of the diaspora as transnational development actors.

As we move closer to the final Global Forum meeting in May 2014, Sweden encourages stakeholders to nurture the constructive approach to migration and development that has emerged over the years in the GFMD.

We also look **forward to support from many of the governments represented** here today through participation in the GFMD roundtable sessions.

If there are ideas or practises that you would like to share or discuss regarding relations with your diaspora worldwide, **this is your opportunity to engage.**

**We have a mutual interest** in formulating strategies on how to better support migrant and diaspora groups, so **the lessons** you are prepared to share here today will be **very valuable indeed.** Thank you.

Stockholm, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013