

ClosingRemarks

22 November 2012

Excellencies

Distinguished colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

We have come to the end of another GFMD Summit meeting and taken another big step towards common understandings and common actions on migration and development.

Our Government took up the challenge of chairing and hosting this important Forum, because as a country founded on migration, peopled by diasporas, and with a well established mixed culture, we could not afford to rest idle on an issue so directly affected by the rapid global changes and instabilities of today. Protecting and supporting the interests and well-being of our migrants is interlinked with the protection and support of the well-being of our whole society, our economy, our national development plan and our place in Africa and the world. We have benefited enormously from the diversity of our society, and would like to continue and grow that model of social cohesion.

It is not by chance that the Forum this year was chaired by a Government development agency for the first time in the history of the Global Forum. When our Ministry of Finance and Economic Development stepped up to assume the chairmanship, it was in large part to help redress an imbalance in the migration and development debate and draw out more of the development implications and outcomes of migration.

We also took up the GFMD challenge this year for Africa, the only continent which so far had not hosted the Forum, despite the fact that Africa has large diasporas in Europe and elsewhere. We have used the platform of the GFMD to revitalize the migration and development dialogue with our African neighbours, and hope that the Forum this year has been a little effective in strengthening Africa's voice in the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

So what have we achieved over the last two days? Let me go back to former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's image of the migration puzzle and how we all need to pool our resources and wits to complete that picture, and I quote:

“Each of us holds a piece of the migration puzzle, but none has the whole picture. It's time to start putting it together”

I am not vain enough to suggest that we have completed the picture this year, but hopefully have added more pieces towards a clearer global vision of migration-development synergies, and where we can focus our energies to make this world a better one for all migrants, their families, and the communities touched by migration.

We can say with certainty that the Forum has met the objectives set at the 2006 High Level Dialogue, namely to address the migration and development interconnections in practical and action-oriented ways and in a multilateral setting that is informal, non-binding, voluntary and government-led. This was reinforced by the outcomes of Phase 2 of the GFMD Assessment exercise, commenced by Switzerland last year and brought to conclusion by our Permanent Mission in Geneva. There is also continuing and firm commitment by governments like Sweden and Turkey to chair the Forum well into 2016, a testimony to the fact that the GFMD is not just here to stay, but is forging a path into the future.

Over the past 6 years, the Forum has become the largest, most multilateral and inclusive of all international processes dealing with migration and development at both the substantive and institutional levels. It has given momentum to high priority issues such as labour mobility, temporary and circular migration, diaspora engagement, and

gaps in migration data, which challenge policy makers and practitioners across the globe.

This year, Mauritius has tried to increase this momentum by addressing some of the very specific issues that have emerged in international policy discussions as needing global attention and strengthened international governance. These include skills and jobs among global mobile workers as drivers of job-based growth, diaspora as agents of socio-economic change, integration of migration into development planning, managing the perceptions of migration and migrants, designing comprehensive and protection-sensitive migration strategies; addressing the needs of migrants of distress, ensuring that mainstream migration programs protect and empower migrants, and protecting vulnerable mobile workers such as domestic workers. We aimed all our discussions and activities at achieving concrete outcomes that can make a difference to people's lives, not just perpetuate a process of dialogue.

We believe the dynamic exchanges of good practices in the past 4 days have given many of us something to take away from the meetings - some new ideas, a business plan, a policy formula - to try some time at home, and improve the situation of migrants, diaspora, the community, and by extension the economy.

Mauritius has also stimulated a debate on the margins of the Forum on possible labour mobility options for refugees, that could help lift them out of a dependency spiral and help them realize their human development potential, while meeting some real labour needs in host countries. We have taken up this topic because of its inter linkages with GFMD core themes. We hope that we have contributed to shifting the mindset about refugees being purely a humanitarian problem; and possibly paved the way for some pilot programs among willing partners.

We have also initiated this year a multi-annual labour mobility program to engage and assist countries in the Africa region to develop mechanisms and frameworks to effectively manage labour mobility, which in spite of its significance to development has not received much attention in the migration policy discourse. The vision of the program is to facilitate labour mobility and skills development to improve employment opportunities in Africa through a comprehensive labour mobility framework to be implemented on a bilateral basis between governments and between governments and the private sector. Mauritius has taken the lead in laying the groundwork for this program to commence in 2013.

The Global Forum on Migration and Development has provided a space for us to share the ideas and outcomes of workshops and meetings like

today's in a more global context, and to learn from each other in an open and frank way how to meet these kinds of challenges together. We hope and expect that the model of consultation and cooperation throughout this year, and the policy messages from the Summit meeting, have given further direction to the preparations for the next High Level Dialogue.

On behalf of the Mauritian Government, I thank you all for the excellent and stimulating debates of the past two days. I congratulate and thank the organizers – Mr Ali Mansoor and his national team from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Labour; Industrial Relations and Employment, as well as our international advisers and administrative support unit - for their extraordinary commitment and energy in ensuring that this GFMD meeting was a success. Our civil society partners, ICMC in Geneva and CARITAS in Mauritius, have helped to strengthen our common cause and open up the common spaces where ideas and actions can cohere among the public and private actors involved in migration and development. We could also not have succeeded on the ground without the operational and expert support of our partner in migration issues, the International Organization for Migration. I also thank again UN Special Representative Sir Peter Sutherland and our good friend Ambassador Gnesa, last year's outstanding Swiss Chair, for their unfailing, warm

support and guidance throughout the year. Ambassador Servansing and his colleagues in Geneva made it possible to conclude the GFMD assessment and prepare the way for a report by the GFMD to the UN High Level Dialogue next year. I also thank our diplomatic missions in New York, Brussels, Addis Ababa and elsewhere in the world for helping us make the strategic global connections with government partners.

But the final accolades go to all of you, our friends and colleagues, members of the Friends of the Forum, who are the life and soul of this process. Without the enduring interest and engagement you have shown this year and in the past days, this Forum process would not be as robust as it has become in only 6 years. I wish Sweden and the team of governments taking the Forum forward next year all success in the search for outcomes that will benefit migrants and their families and communities in real social and economic terms.

I wish you all safe travels home.

22.11.12