

Meeting of the Friends of the Forum  
20 October 2016 Geneva  
Agenda item 10

## Report of Civil Society Activities

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*As prepared for delivery.  
Acronyms at bottom;  
referenced civil society documents available  
at [www.gfmdcivilsociety.org](http://www.gfmdcivilsociety.org)*

### Mr. Chair, Excellencies, partners:

Exactly 7 weeks from today we open the Civil Society Days component of the Global Forum summit this year. On behalf of the International Steering Committee of civil society for the GFMD, I invite and warmly welcome you all to join us Thursday and Friday 8 and 9 December in the Civil Society Days programme in Dhaka!

In civil society: we see and feel utter urgency in these matters of migration and development. But we also see and feel *solutions*.

Last September, 193 UN member states unanimously agreed to a global “Sustainable Development Goal” to facilitate “safe, orderly and regular” migration over a timeline of the next 15 years—through 2030<sup>1</sup>. This September—at the big Summit just a few weeks ago, the same 193 UN Members States unanimously adopted the [New York Declaration](#)<sup>2</sup>—which among other things, committed to developing and adopting a *Compact* on “safe, orderly and regular” migration—in two years.

Of course these are not unrelated to each other. And they are not unrelated to this GFMD.

Who would have ever predicted that speed? Or that we would be discussing governance in the GFMD. Or “compacts”: agreements?

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<sup>1</sup>Adopted unanimously by 193 UN member states in September 2015, the “[2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)” contains at least 8 express references to migrants and migration. Moreover, explicit language in the preamble makes clear that every one of the 17 goals applies to everyone, including migrants, regardless of status. Looking at the *targets* that the 2030 Agenda articulated under the goals, the Global Migration Group (GMG) of 20 UN organizations that work with migrants and migration recently identified 22 as pertaining directly to migrants or migration.

<sup>2</sup> Available in all UN languages at:

[http://www.un.org/zh/documents/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1%20&referer=http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/summit-documents&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/zh/documents/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1%20&referer=http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/summit-documents&Lang=E)

But as fast as it is, it is not fast enough when there is so much suffering in the context of migration today, on journeys, in workplaces, where people live, and with xenophobia booming so dangerously almost everywhere.

So even when talking of speed at some of this, I have to report to you an energy and an impatience for solutions rising among civil society organizations and actors. Organized and numerous; on the ground; increasingly vocal and acting.

With all this at stake and 7 weeks to go to the Global Forum, energy is building in and around civil society meetings both before and within the five days of GFMD Summit week, both among civil society actors ourselves and with states too.

In the next 15 minutes, my colleague William Gois and I will present brief snapshots of that inside and outside work, in the linked Civil Society Days and People's Global Action in Dhaka in December.

## **1. The GFMD Civil Society Days: Thursday and Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December**

Because process should follow substance and not the other way around, allow me to talk substance first, then on the GFMD Civil Society days programme in Dhaka, then interaction with states.

### **a) Civil Society Days substance**

At our last Friends of the Forum meeting in May, we reported that the International Steering Committee of civil society insisted on centering the Civil Society Days on implementation: of existing rights and frameworks, for migrants on the move, workers, diaspora and development. Not complementing the rights and frameworks, implementing them.

So our theme—almost the same as the theme for Common Space—is Time for Action. [*Copies of the [civil society concept paper + programme for GFMD 2016](#) are on the table at the side of the room.*<sup>3</sup>]

But in this extraordinary post-SDG, post-Summit moment we're all living, none of us in this GFMD or any other migration processes should miss the importance of connecting things together.

Your GFMD roundtables do a lot of that connecting, among them 2.2 on *protection of migrants in all situations*, and 3.2 on *principles, institutions and processes for safe, orderly and regular migration*.

In a similar way, the one thread running through all of the Civil Society Days programme is connecting the SDGs that talk specifically of migrants and migration, together with commitments in the New York Declaration.

It is a straight-line connection on substance.

In this direction, I call your attention to the Joint statement and Scorecard<sup>4</sup> that some 100 civil society organizations around the world developed and signed as an assessment of the substance in the New York Declaration. [*Copies of the statement and scorecard are on the table at the side of the room.*]

Because it is central to this year's Civil Society Days programme at the GFMD, let me just touch on one or two highlights of the Scorecard—which unpacks what many in civil society thought were the central commitments in the New York Declaration.

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<sup>3</sup> Available in English, French and Spanish at <http://www.madenetwork.org/civil-society-days-gfmd-2016>

<sup>4</sup> available at:

[http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Act%20Now%20Statement%20and%20scorecard%20for%20UN%20Summit%20for%20Refugees%20and%20Migrants\\_16%20Sept%202016.pdf?amp%3Bqid=169387](http://madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Act%20Now%20Statement%20and%20scorecard%20for%20UN%20Summit%20for%20Refugees%20and%20Migrants_16%20Sept%202016.pdf?amp%3Bqid=169387)

Overall, the biggest civil society concern about the Declaration was urgency. There was wide convergence that the commitments in the Declaration were not strong enough. Not detailed enough.

If you look at the scorecard, you will see that concern considered against 7 commitments in the Declaration. Notably, the two most positive assessments are the commitments to develop a Compact on Migration and to expand the global campaign for social inclusion and against xenophobia.

We are so ready to work with you on both.

In fact, on the day before the Summit in New York, we convened 150 civil society organizations from around the world across the street from the UN. Advocates and practitioners in refugee protection and migrant rights, ½ of us were migrants, refugees or members of the diaspora. ½: which answers the question: are migrants, refugees and the diaspora active in these processes?-- Yes.

Recognizing our own responsibility when we say it is “time for action”, we made 3 propositions:

**# 1: to write our own Compacts.** First using existing frameworks, including those already developed with states and stakeholders in processes with ILO, IOM, OHCHR, MICIC. Basically, to collect. To center ourselves. To converge, and then work to convince not just confront. To advocate—and share responsibly in—solutions.

**# 2: to organize a “capitals strategy”.** To talk much more systematically with governments at home.

**# 3: to continue the civil society Action Committee** that we and 22 civil society networks around the world—11 in refugee protection and 11 in migrant rights—had created for the Summit, which for the first time in memory connected refugee protection civil society organizations with migrant rights CSOs, with the added commitment to now also bring in civil society organizations active in welcome/integration and anti-xenophobia.

## **b) Civil Society Days programme that Thursday and Friday**

Since the last Friends of the Forum meeting, we have had 4 meetings of the programme subcommittee of civil society’s International Steering Committee. Here is what the Civil Society Days programme for Dhaka looks like:

1. **Who** is coming: we received 750 applications in our global open application process. The International Steering Committee sorted through them to identify leading civil society actors and networks at international, regional, national and local level, and to balance region, civil society sector and gender. We have invited 300 delegates, but expect between 200-250—which, at the low end, would be a little less than last year. Distance and cost are two big problems: our fundraising is allowing us to offer support to just 25% of the civil society delegates. Half of those invited are migrants, refugees or members of the diaspora. Again: half of those who participate—as in the prior two years will, as last year, be migrants, refugees or members of the diaspora—and participating in leading roles. We have to stop thinking or saying--- “they” should be here: they/we are.
2. **Features** of the Civil Society Days programme: if you look at the last page of our Concept paper, you will see the outline of the two days. *Please ignore the time indicated for Common Space—it is wrong there.* I will quickly mention only **4 highlights**—each in just two sentences.
  - **First Plenary: 2 ½ hours on connecting the SDGs, the New York Declaration and the GFMD.** At the moment—and to be confirmed in coming days, the plan is to kick-off the Civil Society

Days with two “Davos-style” panels and discussion. The first with governments that have led in both the SDGs and New York Declaration commitments on safe orderly and regular migration, together with IOM and OHCHR; the second with civil society leaders active on safe, orderly and regular migration—including the possible writing of our own compact.

- **4 tracks of parallel working sessions, 7 hours each.** As in the past two GFMDs, these follow civil society’s 5 year 8 point plan as its 3<sup>rd</sup> year comes to a close—but emphatically connecting the SDGs (e.g., 8.8 and 10.7) and New York Declaration. As I reported to you at the last Friends meeting (and also on p. 4 of the concept paper), the four tracks are: *doing protection of migrant workers, doing protection of migrants on the move, doing inclusive development, and doing global governance better.*
- **Cross-cutting all working sessions: “Action papers”** that begin with recommendations and commitments we made at last year’s GFMD and progress since. **Also SDG “trackers” and specific Women and Child rapporteurs,** each with **bridging papers** that match those focuses to each specific working session.
  - Note: even with all these papers, we are actually **“going green”** this year: trying to print and distribute *“programme-only”*.
- **3 special sessions at the close of Day 1,** 2 hours each, all on the New York Declaration. These are strategy discussions.

#### c) Civil Society interaction with states

**Without question the biggest new feature of the Civil Society Days is restructuring for more direct, concentrated interaction with states—*within* the CSD programme itself.**

We are constantly saying that the GFMD is indeed “‘states-led’, but not ‘states only’”. Since 2010 we have greatly appreciated shared time and purpose in the Common Space.

The International Steering Committee of civil society has decided that it is time for *us* to open more of *our* space at the GFMD for interaction with states. Because the wise—and rewarding—direction we all need to go is to expanding, not shrinking our interaction if we want to find concrete solutions. And we realized that our own inflexibility with formatting was part of the problem.

So: within this year’s Civil Society Days programme, there are four entry points for greater interaction between civil society and states, four invitations to states:

- **First, all states are invited to participate in the entire 2 days except** for the 3 “special sessions” at the end of the first day. *We are grateful that the Support Unit has just sent our invitations to all government focal points.* Please come. Register on-line.
- **Second, some states are being invited as speakers,** e.g., in the plenary the first morning that I described earlier. *We will begin sending the invitations from our office next week.*
- **Third, we have organized a whole new structure to our Day 2 (Friday).** If you look on p. 7, right in the middle of our second day you will see **10 small lunch and tea tables** in which 5 civil society leaders and 5 governments are invited to meet on a specific issue for 90 minutes. These are conversations, not panels. We piloted these in Sweden and organized more in Turkey last year. Something like 22 of 25 states accepted our invitation, several at Ambassador or minister-sub-minister level; with civil society leaders also including secretary-generals and directors. Many, both from civil society and from states, said it was the best thing we did.

This year again **some tables will be thematic, some regional**. The list has not been finalized, but among the focuses we expect: taking forward state commitments to end child detention; women in migration; global reform of recruitment processes; guiding principles and voluntary guidelines on treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations; the global compact on migration; and migration corridor tables on Africa and the EU, Latin America-US and ECOWAS. *We will also begin sending these invitations from our office next week.*

- **Fourth**, we welcome the increasing **request states have made in recent years to meet with civil society delegates from your country** during free time in the Civil Society Days programme, and again have plenty of have space available. Just let us know!

## 2. Common Space: the 10<sup>th</sup> of December

Three sentences. As in all years, civil society has worked itself (in the International Steering Committee) and closely with the Chair on a plan for a dynamic and forward-looking Common Space. We have also met several times with the International Organization of Employers to ensure appropriate inclusion of the new business mechanism and private sector in the Common Space.

We support enthusiastically the Chair's plan to center the Common Space on governance, and especially the new global compact on migration.

**3. To close**, 3 final elements of civil society organizing since the last Friends of the Forum meeting: two "b's":

- **Business mechanism:** we've had two solid meetings and multiple consultations on the new business mechanism with the International Organization of Employers; several of us were pleased to participate actively in the related thematic workshop organized in New York in July
- **Budget for the civil society programme:** as you know, we fundraise almost our entire budget for the civil society organizing each year; with the one much appreciated "certainty" being each Chair's contribution to about 15% of budget. Today, thanks to cost management and support from a small number of governments, we are getting close to closing a USD \$75,000 gap. On behalf of civil society, may I thank our public and private donors: Bangladesh, the European Union (Devco), Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates; and the MacArthur + Open Society Foundations, in addition to ICMC itself. A thank you in advance to others who help close that final gap....

But as I have consistently reported to you in these Friends of the Forum meetings, our real work—thinking, convening, acting— occur in multiple forums and activities, year-round, in regions and especially at national and local levels. One notable example is the [People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights \(PGA\)](#)<sup>5</sup> which, since the first UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006, has been organized each year either parallel to or immediately before the Civil Society Days programme of the GFMD.

### Parallel civil society PGA

Though organized separately and with some important differences, over the years the PGA and Civil Society Days have been extremely close: with many of the organizers, participants, focuses and recommendations in common. In fact, there is so much respect, shared energy and strategy between the PGA and the Civil Society Days that, as in prior years, we will actually open the Civil

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<sup>5</sup> PGA facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/gcm2013hld/>

Society Days programme of the GFMD this year with a report and recommendations from the PGA meetings earlier that week.

To talk briefly on the PGA this year, I'm glad to introduce one of ICMC's closest partners—actually Chair of the first Civil Society Days programme that we ourselves organized here in Switzerland in 2011: William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia.

*/Thank you.*

**Acronyms:** **CSD** = Civil Society Days of the GFMD; **CSO** = civil society organization; **GFMD** = Global Forum on Migration and Development; **ILO** = International Labour Organization; **IOE** = International Organization of Employers; **IOM** = International Organization for Migration; **ISC** = International Civil Society Steering Committee of civil society; **MICIC** = Migrants in Countries in Crisis initiative; **OHCHR** = office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; **PGA** = People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights; **SDGs** = sustainable development goals in the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; **Summit** = UNGA Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants (19 September 2016); **UNGA** = United Nations General Assembly;

**Handouts:**

**Concept paper + programme** for civil society GFMD 2016

Civil society **joint statement and Scorecard** on New York Declaration of UNGA Summit on Refugees and Migrants