

GFMD Business Thematic Meeting 3 – 4 April 2017 - Geneva

Concept Note

Introduction

The purpose of this note is to provide background and set out objectives for the April 3-4 meeting of the Business Mechanism to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), a long-standing government-led process to address migration and development interconnections. Established in 2016, **the Business Mechanism is a network of companies and employers organisations from all sectors of the global economy and all regions of the world.** It is coordinated by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the WEF Global Future Council on Migration. (www.gfmdbusinessmechanism.org). The Business Mechanism serves as a channel to bring the voice of business to the GFMD and its participating governments.

The GFMD Process

At a time when migration and labour mobility issues are at the forefront of political discourse in many countries, the GFMD is an increasingly important vehicle for governments. It is characterized by a focus on action, i.e. practical recommendations on migration policy, and a recognition that effectively addressing migration issues requires multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation. Germany and Morocco co-chair the 2017-2018 GFMD, which will culminate in a Summit to be held in Berlin from 28 to 30 June 2017 (www.gfmd.org).

This year's GFMD process is particularly important as UN member states have agreed to a 2018 deadline for adopting an international instrument, the Global Compact on Migration (GCM), for safe, orderly and regular migration. To this end, Member States are in the process of consulting all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. Thus, the Business Mechanism offers the private sector an international platform for a dialogue on migration issues of paramount concern to companies, with the output feeding into both the GFMD and GCM.

The Role of the Private Sector

International labour mobility is a key component of competitiveness, both for companies and economies. Yet, myriad hurdles prevent or hinder the ability of companies to recruit and/or to move their key personnel across borders, as well as the ability of workers to exercise their ambitions to seek out new employment opportunities. Growing skills mismatches and skills gaps in many countries, as well as looming demographic challenges, make it all the more urgent for business to strengthen its role in advocating for a regulatory environment in which labour migration policies support business and development to create jobs and economic growth.

Just as the private sector is the main source of employment and services for economic migrants, including the highly skilled, so too it has a role to play in the refugee crisis now playing out in many parts of the world. Companies have a vital interest in the

stability and civility of the communities in which they do business. They have technologies, data and expertise sorely needed by governments. And, ultimately, they will provide the jobs critical to the integration of refugees.

In short, governments and the private sector have a strong mutual interest in promoting more transparent, effective and humane migration policies, taking into account labour market needs.

Business Mechanism Accomplishments and Objectives

The Business Mechanism presented its inaugural position paper to the 2016 GFMD Summit held in Dhaka, Bangladesh ([Business Case for Migration](#)). This paper articulates the role of the private sector in promoting a coherent and comprehensive strategy that seeks to maximize the benefits of migration through facilitation of regular avenues of moving skills across borders, while at the same time minimizing the risks by combating abusive and unscrupulous practices.

The goal of the Business Mechanism for 2017 is to deepen and elaborate that paper's recommendations with a view to providing input to the Berlin GFMD Summit and the GCM process. Specifically, business recommendations on the following topics will be presented to governments in Berlin:

- Skills Mobility;
- Responsible Recruitment;
- Employment of Migrants and Refugees; and
- Entrepreneurship in the context of Circular Migration

The April 3-4 meeting of the Business Mechanism will be organized around these four work streams. It will provide an opportunity for companies and their representatives to gain better understanding of the numerous ongoing international initiatives and actors working on each topic, as well as to have a seat at the table in the development of recommendations and strategies for advocacy. **Participants will have the opportunity to participate in developing a communication strategy and a work plan for concrete project deliverables for each work stream.**

As the attached agenda indicates ([link to the Agenda](#)), the meeting will include a briefing session on ongoing initiatives from governments and international organizations and workshop sessions for business participants covering each work stream. Its second day will be devoted to a multi-stakeholder dialogue. Briefing notes for each work stream topic will soon be available [here](#).

Conclusion

The work of the Business Mechanism speaks directly to the interests of companies and the economies in which they do business. This platform offers business an opportunity to help shape policy measures and frameworks directly affecting companies' ability to address skills gaps, access and retain talent and ease the cost and risks of cross-border recruitment. At the same time, it provides an essential resource to governments and international organizations as they address one of the largest and most serious economic and humanitarian challenge facing the world today.