

GFMD Mexico 2010
Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity, Shared Responsibility

Special Session on the Future of the Forum
Proposed Framework for the Assessment of the Global Forum on Migration and Development

Background Paper

1. Introduction

This paper is intended to support the preparation and discussion of the 2010 GFMD *Special Session on the Future of the Forum* to be held at the Puerto Vallarta GFMD meeting in November 2010. The main objective of the Special Session is **to reach agreement on an appropriate framework and roadmap for the forthcoming assessment of the Global Forum on Migration and Development**. All decisions on the future of the Forum will be taken by the GFMD participating states, in line with the GFMD's state-led character.

In light of the GFMD's evolving practices and the concrete experiences made with each GFMD meeting since 2007, including the government-led preparations, there has been growing support among participating states for an overall assessment of the GFMD process. The issue was first addressed by Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for International Migration, at the Special Session of the 2009 Athens GFMD meeting, and was taken forward in Steering Group discussions in April, July and August 2010.

During the discussions, the Steering Group reached general agreement to proceed with such an assessment. The assessment would focus on the way the GFMD operates as a process, including its structure, examine the impact and relevance of its outcomes in terms of substantive policy discussion, lessons learned and policy changes, and address the relationship of the state-led GFMD with other stakeholders. **The assessment would subsequently inform the analysis and debate on the Forum's future**, including possible options for the purpose and institutional character of a future GFMD process. The assessment would be made against the stated purpose and objectives of the GFMD as outlined broadly at the 2006 UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and reflected in the 2007 Operating Modalities.

Mexico expressed its commitment to a consensual assessment approach that would be a) **progressive and looking towards 2013**, b) **non-confining of the preferences and positions of future Chairs**, and c) **be government-led** and spearheaded by the Chair, the extended Troika members¹ and a number of interested governments. The extended Troika and these governments would form the **Assessment Team** to 1) prepare the Special Session and 2) take the assessment forward after Puerto Vallarta **until the end of the assessment process**. The Assessment Team includes *Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Greece, India, Kenya, Mexico (Chair), Morocco, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates*.

¹ The extended Troika comprises the past, present and future Chairs of the GFMD, i.e. Belgium, Philippines, Greece, Mexico, Switzerland (2011) and Sweden (2014).

Its composition reflects the diversity of the GFMD membership, represents countries of origin, transit and destination, is regionally balanced, includes developing and developed countries, and also comprises countries that have contributed to the GFMD through new initiatives and resources.²

The Assessment Team's preparations for the Special Session follow the same transparent and open approach as the government teams apply to all other Roundtable sessions. The session will involve the GFMD Heads of Delegation and will be chaired by Mexico and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and Development.

The Puerto Vallarta Special Session will pave the way for the actual GFMD assessment in 2011 and 2012. After Puerto Vallarta, **a first task of the Assessment Team would be to review and agree on the final list of elements to be assessed.** The GFMD activities planned until the end of 2013 (seen by some as the first cycle of the GFMD process) will add further insights to the assessment work.

Throughout the assessment process, the Chair and the Assessment Team will consult closely with the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum, to ensure continued input by these bodies.

This paper **reflects the preliminary views of the current Chair-in-Office and the members of the Assessment Team**, and represents a starting point for the discussions on the subject in Puerto Vallarta.³ The paper **proposes the basic elements of an assessment framework** that would be transparent, inclusive and effective, **but does not at this stage aspire to list all elements and issues to be analyzed during the assessment process.** For **illustrative purposes only**, a tentative and general list of possible elements that could be assessed is given in Annex 1 to this paper.

2. Context

Since its first meeting in July 2007 in Brussels, the GFMD has operated on the basis of the *Operating Modalities* endorsed by GFMD participating states in Brussels (see the full text of the Modalities in Annex 2).

When drafting the 2007 Operating Modalities, governments deliberately opted for a broad and flexible approach, realizing that this was necessary for the Forum's success. Governments were also aware that the GFMD was a work in progress since the GFMD practices and mode of operation would evolve in the years to come (*These Operating Modalities are of a preliminary nature and aim at ensuring sufficient continuity and practical support for the incoming chair(s), to be assessed and revised, as appropriate, in 2008*).

The Modalities state that the Forum *is a voluntary, inter-governmental, non-binding and informal consultative process open to all States Members and Observers of the United Nations. UN agencies and other international and regional bodies may be invited as observers*, and that its purpose is *to address, in a transparent manner, the multidimensional aspects, opportunities and challenges related to international migration and its inter-linkages with development, to bring together government expertise from all regions, to enhance dialogue and cooperation and partnership and to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at the national, regional and global levels*.

² The composition of the team may change subject to interest and other developments.

³ An initial discussion on the assessment framework proposed in the paper was also held by the Steering Group on 14 October 2010.

The Modalities also define in general terms the role of the GFMD Chairs, the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. They make mention of a support structure and ad-hoc working groups, and refer to funding arrangements, the relationship with the United Nations and the participation of civil society.

Following the 2008 Manila GFMD, governments agreed to establish a **light Support Unit** for administrative back-up to GFMD Chairs-in-Office. In 2009, two government-led **ad-hoc Working Groups** were created to help prioritize and review key outcomes of the annual GFMD debates.⁴

In Brussels, Manila and Athens there have also been some advances in clarifying or strengthening the roles of, and interaction with, **civil society and international organizations**, including UN organizations. The special sessions at these meetings debated the role of civil society and international organizations in the Forum, an issue that was also consistently addressed in meetings of the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. In 2010, the Mexican Chair is seeking to **further strengthen such interaction** with the innovative 'Common Space' panel debates between government and civil society on the first morning of the government meeting.

3. The GFMD - A work in progress

Over the past four years, the GFMD has engaged more than 160 governments in discussions, information exchange and partnerships around agreed themes. It has focused the attention of governments, regional and inter-regional processes, international agencies and civil society on the most critical issues relating to migration and development. It has grown to be more than just an annual meeting, with the preparatory process between GFMD meetings being particularly helpful in this regard. Each year, governments work together over many months to shape the debates, define good practices, identify gaps and agree on some key practical outcomes.

While still evolving, the Forum has begun to show results and progress in terms of lessons learned and policy development, at the national, regional and international levels. Its consultative and inclusive approach is helping to make the global debate on migration and development more coherent, as other national, regional and international fora on these issues increasingly adjust their own agendas to that of the GFMD.

As a process, the GFMD has developed a unique style of cooperation through its interactive and government team-based method of preparing and conducting roundtable discussions. The roundtables have yielded concrete policy proposals and outcomes, which have been taken forward voluntarily by participating governments and international agencies and experts. These have been tracked and recorded by the GFMD Taskforce and the two ad-hoc Working Groups (updates on the RT outcomes of each GFMD meeting are available on the Mexico GFMD 2010 website).

⁴ The Working Group on *Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development*, co-chaired by the Philippines and United Arab Emirates Governments commissioned three studies in 2009 on low cost loans to Bangladeshi migrants, Migrant Resource Centers, and Return and Reintegration strategies, linked to the discussions of RT 2. More practical applications of some of this research are being pursued in the context of the Mexico GFMD discussions in 2010.

The Working Group on *Policy Coherence, Data and Research*, chaired by Morocco and Switzerland, undertook a series of actions to promote the concept of evidence-based policy coherence and carried out two informal inquiries among FOFs on the impacts of the GFMD on national practices, policies and institutional coherence. It also organized a seminar to assess the impact of migration and development policies.

From the outset, a large range of international agencies and civil society groups has been associated with the GFMD process. Relevant international agencies, in particular those of the Global Migration Group (GMG), have consistently contributed their expertise to the GFMD roundtable preparations. And civil society actors have created the Civil Society Days, which occur in parallel to the government meetings but also allow for open dialogue between the two. GFMD 2010 will see a further convergence of government and civil society debates in the Common Space.

While each Chair-in-Office has brought a new perspective (and theme) to the Forum, there has also been considerable continuity in the choice and treatment of Roundtable themes. Active follow-up by interested governments and expert agencies on some key Roundtable outcomes has helped to link each GFMD meeting with past and future meetings, fill gaps identified in the discussions and draw policy lessons for the future. The Support Unit created in 2009 helps maintain a working history of the GFMD. The two ad-hoc Working Groups help sift through the accumulation of GFMD outcomes each year and prioritize them for follow-up, linked to the current Chair-in-Office's objectives and GFMD themes. A web-based Platform for Partnership discussed and agreed by governments in 2010 will help showcase GFMD outcomes and foster greater partnerships around these outcomes and other GFMD-related initiatives.

All these developments and mechanisms need to be assessed for their effectiveness in ensuring that the GFMD is meeting its objectives and establishing its relevance for policy makers and practitioners in the migration and development fields.

4. Proposed Scope and Timing of the Assessment

The assessment will move forward based on the outcomes of the discussion by Heads of Delegation at the 2010 Special Session. **The process should commence in early 2011 and be completed in the first quarter of 2013, for final review by the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum, prior to the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013.**

In a step by step approach the assessment **process** would address:

- 1) The impacts and outcomes of the Forum's activities at national, regional and global levels, its value added and relevance, the way the GFMD operates, its structures, the link with other stakeholders, and how it could perform its activities in the future. The assessment would feed into a discussion on:**
- 2) The possible options for the future of the GFMD.**

Part 1 of the assessment, to be carried out in 2011, would examine the way the GFMD operates, its structure, whether it is conducive to productive dialogue and tangible, action-oriented outcomes, the link and interaction with international agencies and civil society stakeholders, and other relevant elements. These issues will be examined in an objective and comprehensive manner, on the basis of the objectives stated in the 2007 Operating Modalities and the evolving practice of the GFMD process.⁵ The assessment would also give regard to the fact that there are different expectations of the Forum, corresponding to different political priorities; and that there are often no common or standard approaches across different country and regional scenarios.

⁵ In its comments on the paper, one government opined that the key reference point for the assessment is "the global dialogue on international migration", including decisions taken by the international community (e.g., UNGA, Human Rights Council) on international migration. The 2007 Operating Modalities are not an inter-governmental resolution. The assessment of GFMD impacts should not be confined by the 2007 Operating Modalities.

Part 2 would focus on the future of the GFMD and be the subject of a **strategic analysis by the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum** that takes into account, as appropriate, the current and future multilateral context of global dialogue on international migration, development and related issues. The discussion with the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum would be **informed by the first stage of the assessment**, and take place in the **first half of 2012**.

Further consultations would take place with the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum in the second part of 2012, including the notion of an overall assessment report, and the possible modalities for its distribution in early 2013. This report could be presented to the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013, as decided by the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum and per recommendation of the Assessment Team.⁶

This relatively long spread of assessment activity over two years would also allow the GFMD to continue focusing on its activities planned in 2011 and 2012.

5. Implementation mechanism

The Assessment Team would lead both parts of the assessment process, working in regular, close consultation with the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum, to report on progress and receive regular feedback and input.

For implementation of **Part 1** of the assessment, two options were initially proposed:

1. Carry out the exercise through a government Assessment Team, supported by an *internal GFMD Taskforce*. The Assessment Team and Taskforce would work by means of specific inquiries among GFMD participating states (and other relevant stakeholders), possibly along the models of surveys and more specific inquiries already applied by Sweden and the Working Group on Policy Coherence, Data and Research. They could be supported by one or two *assessment specialists* recruited part-time to the Taskforce, to analyze the responses and prepare regular interim reports for the Chair and the Assessment Team. Cost implications would be relatively minor.
2. Entrust the exercise to an *external specialized entity* that would operate under clear Terms of Reference and report back to the government team and Troika. This is likely to have greater funding implications for GFMD donors than option 1.

Due to the state-led nature of the GFMD process, and the potential cost implications of option 2, governments agreed to proceed with option 1.

Given the strategic nature of **Part 2**, this would be conducted *in-house* by the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum, supported by the Assessment Team and its Taskforce.

6. Terms of Reference for the Assessment Team

In the weeks leading up to the Special Session, the Assessment Team will prepare the Special Session on the Future of the Forum in Puerto Vallarta, November 2010.

The Special Session will agree on the broad TORs of the Assessment Team for **its work after Puerto Vallarta, and a roadmap of assessment activities up to 2013. A first task of the**

⁶ One government suggested that the Assessment Team could discuss further whether the final outcome of the assessment process should be a report *adopted* by the Forum or a *chair's* summary.

Assessment Team would be to review and agree on the final list of elements to be addressed and assessed. A second task would be to identify one or two part-time *assessment specialists* to the Taskforce, to analyze the responses and prepare regular interim reports for the Chair and the Assessment Team.

This would enable the team to commence activities related to Part 1 in early 2011, and complete this by the end of 2011, when the assessment findings would be presented to the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum for further review.

In the first half of 2012, the Assessment Team would prepare the strategic and political analysis of the future of the Forum, to be taken forward in meetings with the Steering Group, and the Friends of the Forum. The results of this debate would be presented to the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum by mid-2012. **Thereafter, the Assessment Team would prepare further consultations with the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum, including the idea of an overall assessment report and the possible modalities for its distribution in 2013.**

*Mexico GFMD Taskforce
20 October 2010*

ANNEX 1: List of possible elements to be assessed

The following is a *tentative list* for consideration by the Assessment Team and for setting the TORs for the assessment:

1. Impacts of the Forum's activities and outcomes

1.1 General

- What impacts have the GFMD and the outcomes reached at its meetings had on government policies and practices in the field of migration and development, at the national, regional and international level?
- Has the GFMD fostered more informed and constructive dialogue, better understanding, partnerships and closer cooperation and exchange of information among governments and between governments and other stakeholders on migration and development?
- To what extent has the GFMD influenced institutional coherence and a whole-of-government approach to migration and development?
- Are the goal and objectives of the GFMD still appropriate to address the opportunities and challenges of migration and development, at present and in the future?

1.2 Preparation of GFMD meetings

- How effective is the preparatory process leading up to the GFMD Roundtable discussions?
- What is the value of the government-led preparations of the Roundtable session papers and discussions?
- Should other options be considered?

1.3 GFMD outcomes, recommendations and follow-up

- How effectively have governments and other actors taken forward and followed up on GFMD outcomes and recommendations?
- Could such outcomes have been reached otherwise and in other *fora*, or is there a particular value added by the GFMD?
- To what extent have the ad-hoc working groups contributed to follow-up actions and ensured focus and coherence of the process between GFMD meetings?
- How effective/useful is the role of the Platform for Partnerships?
- How do the GFMD outcomes contribute to the policy and operational impacts of the GFMD (link to 1.1 above)?

1.4 Supporting structures and functioning of the GFMD

- Are the Chairs, Steering Group, Friends of the Forum and Troika fulfilling their roles?
- What are the optimal roles of the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum?
- Should the GFMD change or condense its consultative bodies?
- Should there be a rotation system of these bodies? If so, how could this be achieved?
- Is the current GFMD support structure (Chair's Task Force for the substantive support; and the Support Unit for administrative back-stopping) sufficient to ensure the Forum's future in terms of i) thematic quality and ii) efficient administrative, financial and archival management?

- Are the current voluntary funding arrangements appropriate to sustain the GFMD? Or should there be a mechanism to promote more predictable funding?

1.5 Role of and relationship with International Organizations and Civil Society

- What should be the GFMD link/relationship to the United Nations?
- What has been the effectiveness and impact of the involvement of international agencies (especially the Global Migration Group) in the GFMD process?
- Has the involvement of the various branches of civil society contributed to the GFMD process?
- Is the Common Space initiated by Mexico a positive step in this respect?

1.6. Possible options for the future of Forum

- What is the relevance of the GFMD in the international context?
- What is the GFMD's value added as the first ever state-led, global consultative process on migration and development?
- What options can be considered for the future of the GFMD?