

“Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development”

**Fifth Meeting of the Steering Group
La Salle XI, ILO Building, Geneva
11 March 2014**

Summary Report

1. Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje, GFMD 2013-2014 Chair, welcomed representatives from 29 member states who attended the final meeting of the GFMD Steering Group under the Chairmanship of Sweden¹. The Chair was assisted at the podium by the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Migration and Development (SRSG), Mr. Peter Sutherland, the incoming GFMD 2015 Chair Turkey, represented by Ambassador Amb. Mehmet Samsar, Director General for Consular Affairs of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as representatives of the GFMD 2013-2014 Secretariat and the GFMD Support Unit. She also introduced new members of the Swedish GFMD 2013-2014 Secretariat.

2. As in the past meetings, the Chair invited the SRSG, Mr Peter Sutherland, to address the Steering Group. The SRSG shared his reflections on migration issues and the relationship between domestic policies and the global situation. He underlined the fact that the political context today is very different from what existed several years ago. Public concerns about migrants and migration play a significant role in the rise of negative reaction in politics. Thus, he stressed the need for active engagement in the Forum not only by Geneva focal points but, more importantly, by the capitals in order to show evidence of the positive impact of migration. He acknowledged the progress made by the GMG and expressed his belief that the UN can do much more to improve the plight of migrant workers and to promote the inclusion of migration into the post-2015 development agenda.

Enhancing the working methods of the GFMD Steering Group

3. Following the discussions of the Steering Group in September and November 2014, the Chair circulated on 4 March 2014 the updated draft Terms of Reference (TORs) of the GFMD Steering Group, together with a cover note and draft TORs for the Troika and also for the FOF. The revised paper outlines concrete proposals on how to enhance the working methods of the GFMD Steering Group, a key recommendation of the GFMD assessment exercise to *“ensure an appropriate regional balance and manageable size of the Steering Group”*.

4. In her brief presentation, Ms Sofia Ostmark, Senior Policy Adviser at the Swedish GFMD Secretariat, highlighted the changes that have been made on the draft since the November 2013 meeting of the Steering Group. The objective is to ensure efficiency, flexibility and transparency in the work of the Steering Group while promoting complementarities between the Troika, the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. As agreed in previous meetings, the proposed TORs are built around the following principles: i) aim to limit the size of the Steering Group; ii) clarify expectations of SG members; iii) further define the roles and responsibilities of SG members; iv) define a clear process on how other governments can indicate their interest in becoming members of the SG; and v) explore the possibility of a rotating membership.

5. The Chair had requested the Steering Group Members in March 2013 to reconfirm their interest to remain members and to provide inputs for enhancing the working methods. Of the 37 Members, 29 countries have expressly communicated to the Chair their wish to remain in the Steering Group while 2 offered to step down.

¹ The meeting was attended by the Governments of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America.

6. As stated in the draft TORs, the SG is mandated to provide overall strategic direction to the GFMD process, consider and advise on policy issues, provide advice, as required, to the Chair-in-Office, and periodically assess the activities of the Forum. The SG members are expected to demonstrate their sustained commitment and active engagement which implies both intellectual/substantial input and, to the extent possible, also financial contributions. They have the responsibility to promote the process and to support the Chair in Office.

7. The draft ToR for the Steering Group also includes a proposal for a possible rotational system that takes into account regional balance and countries with different migration perspectives in the SG. The proposed informal rotational system is flexible and a) allows for new countries to join the SG; b) is based on confirmation from countries of their willingness to remain members of the SG; c) offers the possibility once a year for rotation during pledging meetings; and d) calls on the Troika to decide on requests for membership. The Chair stressed the importance of self-evaluation or self-assessment of the country's capacity to remain engaged while serving as SG member.

8. At the suggestion of the Steering Group in November, the Chair also prepared the respective TORs for the Troika and the Friends of the Forum, in order to avoid duplication of work and to promote the complementarities of the different GFMD bodies. In the draft TORs, the Troika – comprised of the past, present and future GFMD Chairs – has the mandate to assist the Chair-in-Office with the overall organization of the Forum, discusses strategic and political issues and makes recommendations to the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum to address emerging issues of process and content.

9. On the other hand, the FOF is open to all states that are members or observers of the United Nations, as well as other GFMD Observers. The FOF acts as a sounding board that advises on the Chair's concept and thematic agenda, structure and format of the Forum meeting; serves as a consulting body that endorses and challenges policy/strategic issues concerning the Global Forum as a process; and discusses other issues of substance, such as those being dealt with by the GFMD Platform for Partnerships and preparatory meetings leading to the Forum meeting.

10. When the Chair opened the floor for questions and answers, 17 Steering Group members intervened. They all welcomed the proposal as a good middle ground, taking into account most of the comments that were offered at the last meeting. The proposed number of 30 SG members was duly noted, although one government wished to have between 23 and 25 SG members only. Others stressed that the number of people is not the problem; rather, some members were not committed enough to be in the SG.

11. Many delegates reiterated the need for regional balance. However, a comment was made that geographical balance is not intuitive, inasmuch as countries represent different migration continuum. A question was asked if there were other countries that were really interested in joining the Steering Group, to which the Chair replied in the affirmative.

12. Some concrete ideas were offered to improve the draft TORs: a) increase the number of SG meetings indicated in the TORs from twice a year to 3-5; b) further explain the role of the SRSG whose mandate has been strengthened as a result of the 2nd HLD to facilitate regular meetings of the GMG and the GFMD; c) elaborate the GFMD session on the future of the Forum; and d) give a different meaning to the FoF, for example, consider it as a platform for a regular exchange between the GFMD and the Global Migration Group.

13. On the role of Troika in deciding on the SG membership, opposite views were held. Some raised caution that the Troika may be overburdened and that, at the same time, it does not represent regional balance because it is only comprised of 3 countries. Thus, it was suggested that the decision should be made within the Steering Group. However, others (including the SRSG) held the view that the Troika is the body that needs to be empowered to assess and to come up with recommendations to the FOF about the composition of the Steering Group. Otherwise, there is tendency for the existing Steering Group members to vote themselves in and out permanently.

14. The Chair appreciated all the comments and suggestions made. She clarified that the Troika will be responsible for organizing informal consultations with states about their engagements and to discuss each state's responsibility in the SG. She presented the opportunity for states to apply for the GFMD Chairmanship of 2016, after Turkey. She urged all members to submit written comments until March 25. After this date, the draft TORs

will be finalized for endorsement at the special session on the Future of the Forum of the GFMD 2014 Forum meeting in May.

Long-term financing framework for the GFMD

15. The Chair informed the Steering Group that the long-term financing framework document presented in November was slightly amended. The proposal includes two annexes – Annex 1 is a template for a standardized budget, with some indicative figures for the operational costs of the GFMD Support Unit and the organizational costs of preparatory meetings in Geneva, while Annex 2 explains the existing financial arrangements of the GFMD, including the delineation of tasks between the Chair, the Support Unit and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), host of the GFMD Support Unit. The draft builds on earlier SG discussions in May, September and November, and takes into account key inputs from the Troika and the Government of Switzerland².

16. Ms Sofia Östmark reiterated to the Steering Group the key objectives of the proposed long-term financing framework: a) it supports a multiannual work plan; b) it enables donors to make multi-year contributions and c) it facilitates carryover of unspent funds from one year to the next. The main features would include a standardized budget, an established pledging mechanism, clear governance and accountability framework, and a proposed review in 2017.

17. The presentation elicited a couple of comments. One deemed that the proposal promotes transparency and makes it easier for a developing country to assume the GFMD Chairmanship. Another asked how the pledging meeting would be organized in view of the different budgeting calendars of countries. The Chair explained that the pledging meeting aims to provide a better sense of the financial requirements of an incoming Chairmanship. In case the schedule does not meet the budget calendars of donor countries, the Chair gave assurance that other opportunities for pledging would be offered, and incoming Chairs would have some leeway on when and how to organize such a meeting.

18. SG members were encouraged to send in written comments before 25 March so that the proposal could be finalized and endorsed at the Forum meeting in Stockholm for implementation at the end of the Swedish GFMD Chairmanship.

Multiannual work plan for the GFMD

19. The development of a multi-annual work plan was another key recommendation of the GFMD assessment report. Since May 2013, the Swedish GFMD Chair and the incoming Chair Turkey, in consultation with Mauritius, have worked closely together on preparing a draft Multiannual Work Plan (MWP) with the objective to contribute to the sustainability and consistency across GFMD Chairmanship and help to increase the transparency and visibility of GFMD outcomes and progress.

20. The draft presented in November was further improved. The aim is to arrive at a standardized format while leaving some room for flexibility for each Chair to choose its own priorities. The MWP is envisaged to become a planning tool for future years, increasing transparency and functioning as an aid for incoming Chairs, and for the Troika to work closer together and draw on synergies and joint efforts.

21. Mr. Justin MacDermott, Senior Policy Adviser at the Swedish GFMD Secretariat, made a short presentation of the 2nd draft MWP which has three main sections – a) thematic substance: continuity and progress; b) GFMD process and its sustainability; and c) evidence base, outreach and impact -- each with outcome statements and objectives drawn from the recommendations in the GFMD Assessment Report, the priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship, the ideas for priorities of the incoming Chair Turkey as well as the outcomes of the High-Level Dialogue (HLD) and its implications for the work of the GFMD. The MWP comes with an Annex, which tracks its implementation under each heading, with clear objectives, required action(s), lead, timeframe, and achieved output/results.

² The Chair invited interested members of the GFMD Steering Group to join the GFMD Troika in elaborating the TORs/guidelines for a multi-annual funding framework for the GFMD. Switzerland expressed its interest and offered some comments on the draft proposal.

22. The MWP section on “thematic substance” ensures both continuity and progress of discussions by developing a multi-year thematic agenda and enhancing the development focus of the GFMD. The section on “the GFMD process and its sustainability” shows improvement on the GFMD working structures, relations and dialogue with various stakeholders, and funding structure. The last section on “evidence base, outreach and impact” presents the impact of the GFMD outreach to the global community, efforts to strengthen the GFMD evidence base, and progress with the GFMD follow up to the High Level Dialogue outcomes and recommendations.

23. Incoming GFMD 2014-2015 Chair Turkey expressed appreciation for the work that has already been done by the Swedish Chair, which would ensure a smooth transition for their Chairmanship. After further reflections, Turkey revised their proposed themes for their Chairmanship. One possible theme is “Strengthening partnerships to demonstrate the development potential of migrants, such as by a) highlighting the contribution of labour migration to development and b) advancing human mobility and exploring ways to address its challenges. Another theme is "Capacity building to improve the situation of migrants and ensure their rights in host countries." A third theme is "Harnessing the potentials of private sector in international migration as an enabler to development." The Turkish Chair will also follow-up on GFMD efforts towards the integration of migration in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda, as well as support international efforts towards enhancing well-being of migrants stranded in crisis situations. The new Turkish themes will be reflected in the final document to be circulated before the Forum Meeting.

24. A number of SG members asked for the floor to show support for the MWP and also for the revised Turkish themes. All interveners considered the MWP as a useful tool that can ensure continuity and coherence in the work of the GFMD. Also, it is helpful for any country that is contemplating on taking the Chairmanship. It was also deemed as a good idea to share the MWP with the capitals to show the activities of the GFMD and the progress it achieves over time. A suggestion was made to include the Forum Meeting as an element of the MWP.

25. The Chair invited all Steering Group members to submit any further written comments on the draft MWP by 25 March.

Closing Remarks

26. As the meeting ran out of time, the Chair announced that the last agenda item, “GFMD Engagement with the Private Sector,” will be first discussed at the Friends of the Forum meeting in the afternoon. The Chair thanked all the delegates for their very helpful comments and dynamic participation. As it was the last meeting of the GFMD Steering Group, the Chair bade the Steering Group members farewell and expressed words of appreciation for their support throughout the Swedish Chairmanship.

This summary report was prepared by the GFMD Support Unit.