

Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development

GFMD 2014-2015
Republic of Turkey, Chair in Office

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Introduction

International migration is one of the most powerful forces shaping the world today—in economic, social, political, demographic and cultural terms. UN estimates place the number of international migrants at 232 million, almost equally divided between women and men, and making up 3.2 percent of the world’s population. Many more people are profoundly affected by international migration: former migrants, intending migrants, short-term migrants, those who employ or work with migrants, those who benefit from the services migrants provide, those who find themselves living alongside migrants, those who have migrants as clients or customers and—not least—the families and friends left behind when people emigrate.

International migration—defined by the United Nations as movement to another country for a period of at least one year—is imbedded in a broader context of international mobility, in which people move from one country to another in various patterns for multiple, often overlapping reasons. In many cases, people circulate regularly between two or more countries, leading truly transnational lives. International mobility is increasingly woven into the fabric of life in our times, and it is an ever more important factor in development.

Migrants whose human rights are duly promoted and respected, who are well integrated in the countries where they live, and who are able to exercise their talents and energy in productive employment and decent work can contribute mightily to the development of their countries of origin and destination, and to the well-being of their families and communities, while providing economic, social and cultural added value and also pursuing their own development as human beings. A policy framework conducive to safe, fair, orderly, well-governed and productive migration, that is respectful of the human rights and dignity of every human being, is a prerequisite for realizing the full developmental potential of international migration and averting negative manifestations such as forced labour, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of migrants, discrimination and xenophobia.

Migration is a force whose positive contributions to development can be enhanced by the cooperative efforts of states at every point along the spectrum of the migration experience—departure from the country of origin, transit, temporary sojourn, arrival at a destination and settlement, circulation or return. However, migration can also have negative effects, for example on the wasted skills of migrants who are not well incorporated in the labor markets in countries of destination, on social cohesion in countries of destination, and sometimes on the human rights of migrants; these challenges need to be identified and addressed in order to harness the potential of migration as a positive contributor to development.

Turkey has a long history as a crossroads of international migration. With her vast experience in the area of migration and development, Turkey is committed to achieve development potential of migrants with a view to maximizing benefits of human mobility.

With this understanding, Turkey is privileged to assume the Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) for the period of eighteen months from July 2014 to December 2015. The GFMD is a unique arena in which policy makers and practitioners can discuss the practical challenges and opportunities that lie at the intersection of migration and development. In this informal and non-binding setting, ideas and experiences about policies to enhance the benefits of migration and reduce its costs can be generated, discussed and shared in the roundtables, thematic meetings and through GFMD tools such as the Platform for Partnerships and, within it, the Policy and Practice Database.

Objectives of the Turkish Chairmanship

The Turkish Chair's objectives can be summarized in three points:

1. Enhancing migrant-focused migration

Considering the GFMD as a platform that enables states to discuss and follow a cooperative approach in the management of migration, the Turkish Chair aims to enhance the focus of migration management on the rights, dignity and well-being of the migrant, incorporating a variety of perspectives, including the views of civil society and migrants themselves.

2. Recognising the development impact of migration in public policies

The GFMD should contribute to the consideration of migration in discussions of development policy at all levels from the local to the global, up to and including the adoption of the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

3. Engaging relevant stakeholders in strengthening the linkages between migration and development

While preserving the State-led character of the GFMD, Turkey will continue to gather all relevant actors in an inclusive, transparent and transformative dialogue while maintaining the focus on development and encouraging more input from development actors. Elements of the GFMD will enable dialogue among states as well as between states and a broad range of civil society actors (including migrants and migrant organizations), the private sector, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

Themes of GFMD 2015: Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development

The themes addressed in the GFMD have evolved since its first meetings, showing both continuity on issues of continuing concern and the ability to incorporate new issues as they arise. The overarching theme of the Turkish Chairmanship is “Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development.” This theme signals recognition that international migration cannot be addressed effectively by any one country alone, or by states without the cooperation of other stakeholders—including international organizations, civil society, the private sector and

migrants themselves. It also emphasizes that mobility within the right policy framework is a positive factor for development.

Three roundtables, each with two sessions, will elaborate upon the overarching theme; in addition, three thematic meetings on cross-cutting issues are to be held to provide more evidence-based inputs into the RT discussions. The proposed themes for the roundtables and associated thematic meetings are as follows:

RT 1: Human mobility and the well-being of migrants

The objective of this roundtable could be to identify specific forms of cooperation among states, and between states and other stakeholders, to a) protect and promote human rights in the context of mobility and b) to increase transparency and lower fees associated with recruitment and money transfer.

- 1.1: Partnerships to promote inclusion and protect the human rights of all migrants in order to achieve the full benefits of migration
- 1.2: Reducing the human and financial costs of international migration, particularly labor migration: Cooperative approaches to fair recruitment practices and lower remittance fees

The importance of protecting the human rights of all migrants has been emphasized at every GFMD, with a particular focus on labor and social rights. Although awareness of the difficulties that migrants have in realizing their rights has been growing steadily, abuses are still far too common. Specific, pragmatic partnerships among countries of origin, transit, and destination, as well as non-governmental partners, may contribute in very tangible ways to the well-being of migrants and enhance their contributions to the development of their countries of origin and countries of destination. Partnerships for inclusion and the protection of migrants' rights are particularly important in the light of emerging challenges associated with the relationship between mobility and security issues, and should be guided by the principle of shared responsibility and a development-based approach. All countries in the migratory cycle should promote and protect the human rights of all migrants irrespective of their migratory status.

Greater well-being flows from and contributes to the enhancement of migrants' economic and social capabilities. One way of doing this is by making it possible for migrants to keep more of the money that they earn by lowering the transaction costs associated with mobility. Progress has been made in two areas that are central to the experience of many migrants: money transfer and labour recruitment. This roundtable may take stock of ongoing initiatives to reduce the costs of migration in these and other areas, implemented directly by states or through international organizations such as IOM, the World Bank and the ILO.

Migrants often pay high fees to recruitment agencies to gain access to a job abroad. In some cases, the job turns out to be much less rewarding or more dangerous than was promised, or does not exist at all. Control of recruitment is difficult, with many small operators and subcontractors who easily evade regulators. Recruitment processes have been analyzed in many parts of the world and principles have been articulated; the issue is ripe for policy development. Exposure of the problems, experiences and successes in various countries and in cooperative efforts among stakeholders, including governments, recruitment agencies, trade unions, private employers, civil society organizations and public services could illuminate the possibilities for promulgating fair recruitment practices.

The GFMD may give new impetus to efforts to reduce the costs to migrants of sending remittances to their countries of origin, through emphasizing the need for stronger partnerships between states, regulatory bodies and the private sector. All these partners need to work together to promote greater transparency and competition among money transfer agencies as well as the use of new technologies and products.

RT 2: Migration as a factor in development

The outcome of this roundtable could be an in-depth exploration of sector-level integration of migration in planning, and a menu of strategies for implementing migration targets and indicators that may appear in the SDGs.

2.1: Mainstreaming migration into planning at the sectoral level

2.2: Making migration work post-2015: implementing the SDGs

Assessing the impacts and the effects of migration in different sectors is of growing importance in many emerging economies. Migration considerations should be integrated into sector-specific development policies. Mainstreaming migration into deliberations across a wide range of policy fields in destination countries is also a significant factor in coherence among immigration policies, employment policies that address labor market needs, and development cooperation policies. The Turkish Chair-in-Office will build upon the outcomes of the second High Level Dialogue as well as GFMD discussions on mainstreaming.

The ability to retain and attract skilled labor, and to draw on the skills that reside in the diaspora, are essential to a country's ability to remain competitive in the global economy. In globalized, skill-dependent sectors such as information technology, engineering, biotechnology, international finance and others, migration policy needs to be part of the national strategy. Case studies of the role of mobile talent in the development of particular sectors could provide some good practices for adaptation to other settings. The need for labour market and migration policies to recognize the demand for lower-skilled labour in sectors such as agriculture and care work, as well as the corresponding need to improve protections for these workers and enforcement of their rights, also needs further discussion.

By the time the 8th GFMD meets in Istanbul, the post-2015 development agenda will have taken shape. The immediate next steps will be to analyze the place of migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to explore ways of achieving the migration-related targets mentioned in the post-2015 agenda and the possible GFMD contribution to this effort. This roundtable might also consider implementation of migration-related SDGs that do not mention migration but that nonetheless will be strongly affected by trends in international mobility. It will also discuss how the GFMD could respond to the suggestion made in the Synthesis report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda to look at voluntary, state-led, participatory, evidence-based, and multi-tiered processes to monitor progress, including through thematic reviews at a global level at regular intervals.

RT 3: Enhancing international cooperation on emerging issues in migration and mobility

The purpose of this roundtable is to refresh the GFMD agenda to assure that it is relevant to events unfolding in the world today, by introducing or continuing the exploration of new and emerging issues in international migration.

- 3.1: Enhancing human development and human security for forced migrants, who are compelled to cross international borders, through international cooperation on labor market access, educational opportunity, family reunification, and other avenues of mobility.
- 3.2: Private sector-government partnerships to support migrant/diaspora entrepreneurship and job creation, with a focus on small and medium enterprises

Human mobility is a dynamic field of inquiry and of policy. New issues arise and existing ones are given greater prominence as circumstances change. Therefore the Turkish Chair of the GFMD will work to enlarge the space for international cooperation on new and emerging issues in migration. The role of people who are compelled to cross international borders to escape the effects of man-made or natural disasters—arising from forces such as environmental degradation, armed conflict or political turmoil—as agents and beneficiaries of development is one such issue. Another is the potential for public-private partnerships to support migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs to create or expand businesses.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees declared 2014 to be the worst year for human displacement since World War II. With government budgets under stress almost everywhere, and particularly in refugee-hosting countries, it is clear that the traditional “care and maintenance” model for refugees and other forced migrants, including those affected by natural disasters and environmental degradation, is unsustainable. Moreover, it deprives them of the opportunity to use their energies and talents to support themselves and their families, which is a source of dignity and satisfaction for people everywhere. The waste of human potential that results when displaced people are forced to be idle or to work in the underground economy is nothing short of tragic, and has severe consequences for host communities.

Humanitarian agencies are exploring developmental approaches to address the needs of migrants who are compelled to move across borders, but development agencies and migration authorities, along with other stakeholders, also need to be involved in this debate. A migration-and-development approach could be advanced at the GFMD, considering that the immobility of these populations (including the inability to return to their countries of origin) could have a negative impact on their already difficult situations. It should be noted that UNHCR has welcomed the inclusion of this topic on the GFMD agenda. The 2015 GFMD therefore should discuss avenues for international cooperation on mobility and labor market access for these migrants as a winning approach to burden sharing beyond traditional humanitarian approaches. Thinking of displacement in a migration-and-development framework may lead to approaches that can benefit migrants who have been compelled to leave their countries of origin, as well as countries of asylum, and the countries that are in need of migrants’ energy and skills. It is especially important for countries that have hosted huge populations of migrants who are unable to return home for protracted periods. International mobility may play a role in relieving the stresses on these countries.

As a highly pertinent example, Turkey today shelters close to two million Syrians under temporary protection, of whom some 250,000 live in accommodation centers. The government of Turkey has spent more than US\$5 billion to care for them, and the Turkish people much more. The massive displacement continues. Other countries hosting large refugee populations face similar concerns. We urgently need to find sustainable, long-term arrangements for Syrians and other forced migrants, and this will require innovative policies involving development and mobility as well as humanitarian relief.

The topic is expected to be on the agenda for the World Humanitarian Summit, which Turkey will host in 2016. The GFMD presents an opportunity for the international community to develop policy approaches that can be the basis for solid accomplishments at the World Humanitarian Summit.

A second issue that is gaining more attention at the GFMD and more widely is the potential for public-private partnerships to support migrant and diaspora entrepreneurs to create or expand businesses, thereby, in many cases, achieving self-sufficiency and creating jobs for others. The private sector and government authorities both have critical roles in creating the conditions for these entrepreneurs to flourish, yet have little communication or collaboration in this arena. Small and medium-sized enterprises are the most potent job-creators in market economies, and many migrants are drawn to entrepreneurship in the SME sector, both as investors in their countries of origin and in countries of residence. However, they often lack the experience and connections to gain access to credit, markets and technology. This roundtable would explore the track record and the potential of cooperation between the private and public sectors in support of entrepreneurs in communities of migrant origin, with the objective of giving particular attention to the growth and job creating potential of diaspora entrepreneurs, and to promote necessary tools on how both the government and the private sector actors can work together to support them.

Thematic Meetings on cross-cutting issues

Thematic meeting I: Migration in the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

Because of the timeline of the post-2015 negotiations, the first thematic meeting under the Turkish Chairmanship was held early in the GFMD process. It discussed the treatment and placement of migration in the post-2015 development agenda. It also highlighted ongoing national examples of initiatives that serve two of the migration-related targets proposed in the UN Open Working Group (OWG) report: targets number 8.8 on protecting labor rights of all workers, including migrant workers; and 10.7 on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility. Although the thematic meeting was structured around these two targets, other important migration-related targets in the OWG report were also discussed. This meeting also considered how to incorporate migration into states' implementation of the SDGs that do not mention migration but that nonetheless will be strongly affected by trends in international mobility.

Thematic meeting 2: The role of communications in promoting widespread recognition of the benefits of migration, improving public perceptions of migrants, combating discrimination, and promoting integration

The well-being of migrants is facilitated when the benefits of migration are widely recognized and communicated, and so a thematic meeting will be devoted to the role of communications tools in improving public perceptions of migrants and migration, and promoting better integration. The public should be exposed to information about the importance of migrants' contributions to economic, social and cultural development in countries of destination as well as origin. Sophisticated uses of social media, traditional media, and face-to face exposure to migrants have been shown in some settings to be effective in preventing the consolidation of xenophobic attitudes, and promoting respect for migrants' human rights. Successful integration not only contributes to the well-being of migrants, but also enhances their ability to contribute to their origin and destination countries. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the perception of migrants.

Thematic meeting 3: Recognizing the contributions of women migrants to economic and social development in countries of origin and destination and addressing their specific needs, particularly concerning respect for their human rights.

Although women make up about 48 percent of the world's international migrants, their particular needs and potential contributions are often ignored, especially in areas such as support for diaspora and migrant business development. Similarly, women are often treated purely as victims rather than capable agents when they are forced to migrate. A thematic meeting will explore policy that affects women differentially. The particular needs and contributions to development of women migrants is a cross-cutting and often neglected theme running across all the roundtable themes of the GFMD, and will be the subject of the third thematic meeting of the GFMD in 2015.

The Structure of the GFMD 2014-2015

Much has been accomplished to identify ways to strengthen the GFMD. The GFMD Assessment conducted in 2012 by participating states recognized the need for appropriate processes, financing mechanisms, supporting structures and tools to make the GFMD more efficient and effective. The Swedish Chair from January 2013 to June 2014 took important steps to develop new frameworks and working methods to give the GFMD greater impact. This progress must continue.

Turkey will continue the efforts of previous Chairs to develop the GFMD as a cooperative process led by states and involving many other stakeholders. This commitment will be seen in three dimensions: (1) the format of the GFMD Summit and preparatory meetings, (2) the interaction with different stakeholders, and (3) the GFMD process itself.

(1) The GFMD meetings in 2014-2015 will be interactive and inclusive.

- **GFMD Roundtable themes** that reflect the priorities and concerns of participating governments and draw support from civil society, international organizations and relevant processes
- **Thematic meetings** to promote more evidence-based GFMD Roundtables and address some cross-cutting and emerging themes, including the roles of women migrants
- **Preparatory meetings** of the Steering Group and Friends of the Forum with complementary agendas that cover both substantive and process-related issues
- Planning and organization of **Government Roundtables** in accordance with established Terms of Reference for Government Teams

2) Cooperation with different stakeholders will continue.

- Closer collaboration with the **SRSG**, who provides strategic guidance to the Chair
- Strengthening partnership with the **Global Migration Group** (GMG) and other multilateral organizations, including through regular briefings and exchanges
- Interaction with **GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office** for cooperation with Civil Society Days and planning of the Common Space
- An ad hoc meeting with the **private sector** that builds on past efforts to engage business in international migration and in the GFMD process, and helps to ensure a broad-based understanding of the international migration issues and trends that concern the private sector. The GFMD will explore working with partners that are close to the private sector, such as the World Economic Forum and The Hague Process.

3) The operational mechanisms of the GFMD will be strengthened, along the lines in the Multiannual Work Plan adopted at the GFMD in Stockholm in 2014.

- Implementing the terms of reference for the central mechanisms of the GFMD: the **Troika**, the **Steering Group** and the **Friends of the Forum**
- Strategic consultations among the members of the GFMD Troika
- Planning and implementation of the GFMD program with the GFMD Troika, Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum
- Establishing a **communication plan** for the GFMD
- Utilizing the **Platform for Partnerships** and **Policy and Practice Database** for knowledge sharing and cooperation on migration and development
- Implementing the **long-term financing mechanism** aimed at ensuring the sustainability and continuity of the GFMD
- Updating the **GFMD Multiannual Work Plan** in cooperation with the Troika, with review by the Steering Group
- Strengthening the **Support Unit** in order to assist in implementing the Chair's work program, including the organization of the Forum

The 8th summit meeting of the GFMD will take place in Istanbul on 14-16 October, 2015. The basic features will be an opening ceremony, plenary sessions (one of which will be dedicated to the Platform for Partnerships), six thematic roundtables and a session for heads of delegations on the Future of the Forum.

Civil Society Days are expected to precede the governmental meeting, with a Common Space session providing for interaction between the two.

An ad hoc business meeting will also be part of the GFMD process, to ensure a broad-based understanding of the issues related to private-sector engagement in international migration processes. This meeting will explore common concerns about migration processes held by business and government stakeholders.

Enhancing the impact of the GFMD on related regional and multilateral agenda-setting

The Turkish Chair-in-Office is committed to taking the results of the GFMD into other regional and international agenda-setting processes in which it is playing a key role. Turkey, drawing on its experience as Chair of the Budapest Process, will revive GFMD past initiatives to engage regional migration dialogues more actively on those issues where their agendas overlap with that of the GFMD. For example, the GFMD Chair-in-Office might make a presentation, when invited to a meeting of a Regional Consultative Process (RCP), or invite the Chair of an RCP meeting to participate in a GFMD meeting.

Turkey assumed the Presidency of the G-20 in 2015. A joint side event with the G-20 is being planned, to be added to the Turkish GFMD work plan.

In 2016, Turkey will host the World Humanitarian Summit, the first global humanitarian event of this scale. The topic addressed in RT 3.1 will be on the agenda for the WHS. The GFMD presents an opportunity for the international community to develop policy approaches that can act as the basis for solid accomplishments at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Additionally, in 2015, Turkey is joining with other UN member states to negotiate the final shape of the post-2015 development agenda. A thematic meeting early in the period of the Turkish Chairmanship of the GFMD considered a collaborative approach to advocate for migration as an appropriate element within the sustainable development goals for 2016-2030. A position articulated by many states participating in the GFMD could influence the final shape of the agenda – while still respecting the non-binding and informal character of the GFMD.

In all of these settings, Turkey will promote the linkages between migration and development and the outcomes of the GFMD process.

Cooperation with the UN system

Since the second High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development was held at the UN in 2013, the GFMD has entered what might be thought of as the second stage of its evolution. It has matured as a platform for consultation and collaboration, and participating states have made clear that they find it useful. It is developing procedures and mechanisms that will allow it to build on existing strengths. Sweden and the other previous Chairs of the GFMD have made remarkable efforts to strengthen effective cooperation on migration among all partners. The able leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development (SRSG), Mr. Peter Sutherland, has strengthened the bonds between the GFMD and the UN system.

The Declaration of the 2013 High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development acknowledged that the United Nations system can benefit from the discussions and outcomes of the GFMD. The GFMD, in turn, as the only state-led global platform for migration and development, is well positioned to push forward the recommendations of the High Level Dialogue, included in the Declaration of the participating states, the Secretary-General's eight-point agenda, and the civil society's 5-year 8-point plan. Many of the themes in these documents are on the agenda for the 2014-2015 GFMD: protecting the human rights of migrants, raising public awareness, lowering the costs of migration, incorporating migration into development agendas, and building partnerships.

Conclusion

Turkey, located on a major historical migration route, has been at once a transit and origin country for migration, with millions of its citizens living mostly in Western Europe and contributing both to Turkey and to the development of their countries of residence.

Over the last decade, the Turkish economy has achieved steady growth, which has now made Turkey an attractive destination for migrants. Moreover, as mentioned above, Turkey is a host country, not for the first time in recent memory, for hundreds of thousands who are seeking refuge. The Turkish Chairmanship of the GFMD will draw on its own experience along with all the stakeholders, to develop pragmatic policy approaches to strengthen partnerships on human mobility for sustainable development.

The GFMD continues to evolve as a platform for information sharing, confidence building and cooperation among states and other actors. It has developed mechanisms for joint actions by willing states and has proved able to provide a safe space for discussion of often sensitive and important issues. The Turkish Chairmanship of the GFMD is determined to build on the GFMD's record of accomplishments to build partnerships that can enhance the benefits of migration for all.