

Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development

GFMD 2014-2015 First Meeting of the Steering Group

Tuesday, 21 October 2014
La Salle III, R3 Level, ILO Building

Summary Report

Welcoming Remarks

1. Ambassador Mehmet Samsar, GFMD 2014-2015 Chair, welcomed representatives from 29 member states who attended the first meeting of the GFMD Steering Group (SG) under the Chairmanship of Turkey¹. The Chair was assisted at the podium by Ms. Esen Altug, Deputy Director General for Migration, Asylum and Visa of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Eva Åkerman Börje, Swedish GFMD Chair, Mr. Peter Sutherland, UN Secretary General's Special Representative for International Migration, and Ms Estrella Lajom, Head of the GFMD Support Unit.

2. The Chair recalled that under the Swedish GFMD Chairmanship, 29 out of 37 countries reaffirmed their commitment to serve in the Steering Group, namely: *Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and United States*. After the Stockholm meeting, the Republic of Korea sent a request in writing to be allowed to remain in the SG. The Turkish Chair acted favorably on this request, thus bringing the current SG membership to 30 countries.

Adoption of the Agenda

3. No additional agenda item was proposed from the floor. The Chair informed the meeting that he would like to talk briefly about the first GFMD pledging meeting under Agenda item 5, GFMD budget. The Provisional Agenda was then adopted.

The Concept Paper and Work Plan of GFMD 2014-2015

4. The Chair made a PowerPoint presentation of the key elements of the draft concept note and work plan for GFMD 2014-2015. The Turkish Chair's thematic agenda will be organized under the overarching theme, "*Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development*" – a theme that signals recognition that international migration cannot be managed 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 emphasises that mobility within the right policy framework is a positive factor for development.

5. The Turkish GFMD Chair aims to achieve 3 objectives: a) to deepen the discussion on the protection of the human and labor rights of migrants; b) to further explore the development impact of migration on public policies, particularly at the sectorial level; and c) to take the results of the GFMD into other regional and international agenda-setting processes in which Turkey is playing a key role, notably the G-20 Group of States, the first World Humanitarian Summit and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. To achieve these

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

objectives, three roundtables will be organized², each to have two sessions and supported by a thematic meeting.

6. When the Chair opened the floor, 19 Steering Group members intervened. A number of them have already submitted some written comments earlier. They expressed their full support and congratulated Turkey for proposing highly relevant roundtable themes and an ambitious work program. Many held the view that Turkey is in a unique position to organize the next GFMD meeting because of its unique migration experiences as a home, destination and transit country.

7. All speakers supported the overarching theme on “*Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development.*” As articulated by one delegate, strengthening partnerships is a fundamental condition for better managing global migration and for enhancing the migration and development nexus. Forging genuine partnerships on migration, according to another delegate, could be a useful tool for generating concrete outcomes for the GFMD forum, particularly in regard to partnerships with the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders on important cross-cutting issues. One speaker added that these partnerships should also have the element of shared responsibility. In elaborating the notion of partnerships, a suggestion was made to bring to light models of partnerships that have succeeded and failed, and explore the reasons why. Examples of possible partnerships for the GFMD to explore were cited, such as the IOM IRIS program on high recruitment fees and the joint IOM-UPU initiatives on reducing the cost of remittances and enhancing migrants’ financial literacy.

8. Some speakers would like to see more explicit links between the concept note and the outcomes of the 2nd UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, as well as ongoing related processes, notably migration in the post-2015 and sustainable development agenda. One delegate underlined that migration is a crucial part of information and re-information and thus will constitute an important part of development planning at all levels of government and in partnerships with the private sector.

9. The ambition to enhance the impact of the GFMD on regional and multilateral processes on migration was supported by a number of delegates. However, they would welcome more details on how the Chair intends to coordinate its work program and outcomes with these processes. One delegate saw the possibility of making the RCPs as platforms that feed into the GFMD process, which can be leveraged for concrete practices and policy initiatives on managing migration. The Abu Dhabi Dialogue process for example could report to the GFMD on progress achieved in addressing recruitment practices and reducing the human and financial costs of recruitment as a means to increase the benefits of labour migration in the Asia-GCC corridors.

10. RT 1’s focus on migrants’ protection, particularly by improving public perception of migrants and migration, was lauded. Some delegates emphasized the need to highlight the positive role that migrants play and their contribution to the development of both countries of origin and destination, as well as the need to create decent jobs for them. Conversely, one delegate urged to include in the debate the negative consequences resulting from ineffective and inadequate measures, plans and policies. Another delegate suggested incorporating in RT 1 the rights of migrants’ children, especially the unaccompanied minors at the borders.

11. RT 2’s renewed emphasis on the linkage between migration and development was likewise welcomed, especially in the context of ongoing discussions on migration in the post-2015 development agenda. One delegate suggested using the GMG handbook on mainstreaming migration as a reference on how to integrate migration work at the sectorial level.

12. In RT 3, the inclusion of women and the private sector was well-received. One suggestion made was to highlight successful entrepreneurship and skilled contributions by migrants in various communities. However, the focus on forced migrants elicited mixed reviews. On one hand, caution was raised that a discussion on forced migrants might encompass refugee issues that are well-established in other venues and with agencies such as the UNHCR. On the other hand, delegates welcomed it as an opportunity to advance the

² See draft concept paper GFMD 2014-2015.

dialogue on migration, by looking at labour mobility as a tool in responding to situations of forced displacement and as a means to contribute to the development of host countries.

13. Some delegates put forward concrete suggestions. One was for the GFMD to prepare a concrete and detailed policy model for immigration and development by mapping out and analyzing past and existing policies around the world, possibly with the help of a working group. Another proposal was for the GFMD to lead the discussion on how to strengthen the functions of immigration authorities, who play an essential role in the evolution of immigration policies.

14. Many delegates requested the Chair to expound on the different elements of the “Structure of the GFMD 2014-2015” in the concept note. Some would like to see how the Turkish Chair’s work program would link up with the newly established GFMD multi annual work program that was adopted in Stockholm, as well as other existing GFMD tools and mechanisms like the Platform for Partnerships. The outgoing GFMD Chair encouraged the Chair to also mention the regular meetings between the SRSG and the leaderships of the GFMD and the GMG – a result of the 2nd High Level Dialogue which is aimed at deepening collaboration, developing synergies, and promoting the implementation of GFMD outcomes by the GMG member agencies.

15. A number of Steering Group members indicated their interests³ to take part in various capacities (as a co-chair, member or rapporteur) in the Government RT teams that will prepare the GFMD 2014-2015 Roundtables.

16. The Chair appreciated the valuable comments and suggestions made by the Steering Group members. He wished to receive more comments during the Friends of the Forum meeting. On the basis of comments received, the draft concept note will be revised. The Chair’s aim is to send a second draft concept paper by 7 November.

Follow up of GFMD 2013-2014

17. The Chair committed to continue and build upon the efforts of previous Chairs to strengthen the GFMD as a process for promoting dialogue and cooperation between and among states, international organizations, the civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. He recognized the efforts made by the Swedish Chair in paving the path for a more relevant and dynamic GFMD process and implementing many of the recommendations in the GFMD assessment report. He invited Amb. Eva Åkerman Börje to point the way forward for the GFMD, based on the experiences and lessons learned by the outgoing GFMD Chair.

18. Ambassador Åkerman Börje referred to the non-paper on “Operational Recommendations” from GFMD 2013-2014 which was circulated to all Steering Group members ahead of the meeting. The self-explanatory paper outlines the following areas where the GFMD needs continued attention and action:

- a) Implementing the newly endorsed terms of references for the Troika, Steering Group and Friends of the Forum;
- b) Continuing to reinforce the Support Unit;
- c) Implementing the new long-term financing framework;
- d) Updating the GFMD Multi-annual work plan;
- e) Updating the Memorandum of understanding between the GFMD and IOM on the hosting of the Support Unit;
- f) Maintaining the improved format of government teams and thematic meetings;
- g) Encouraging an active use of, and sharing of experiences through the Platform for Partnerships and the Policy Practice Database;
- h) Developing a communication plan for the GFMD ; and
- i) Cooperation with all concerned stakeholders, particularly the Global Migration Group, the civil society and the private sector.

The SRSG briefly intervened after the presentation to underscore the fact that continuing work is necessary because of the paradox inherent to the ad hoc nature of the GFMD – i.e., it has been successful because of the

³ *An overview of governments’ interests is provided in the summary report of the 1st meeting of the Friends of the Forum.*

absence or lack of formal rules and systems; however, the same has also brought about challenges to the process. A couple of delegates also took the floor to laud the Swedish Chair for its hard work and unwavering commitment to the GFMD process, and for preparing the non-paper which will be useful for the overall process. One urged the Chair to provide an opportunity to discuss the suggested action points in the near future.

GFMD Budget 2014-2015

19. Consistent with the format of GFMD 2013-2014 budget, the Turkish Chair has proposed a budget of USD \$ 3,071,855, with three main components: a) Preparatory costs (\$ 543,816); b) Final meeting (\$ 1,502,336); and c) GFMD Support Unit operational costs (\$936,232), plus a 3 percent contingency (\$89,471). The Chair expressed appreciation for the early pledges and contributions from Canada, Israel, Mexico, Norway and the United States of America. He looked forward to receiving more pledges from other members of the Steering Group.

20. The Chair also reminded the Steering Group about the first GFMD pledging meeting to be held the following day (22 October). This is a new GFMD mechanism aimed at promoting planning and funding sustainability and generating support, both financial and in-kind, from all Governments and Observers. He counted on the support of the Steering Group to make the first GFMD pledging meeting a success.

21. One delegate asked for the floor to commend the Swedish Chair for the financial report on the GFMD 2013-2014 international contributions which he believed reflected the commitment, transparency, and efficiency in managing GFMD resources. He encouraged the Turkish GFMD Chair to continue this important financial activity.

GFMD 2016 Chair

22. The SRSB opened the discussion under this agenda item by reiterating the lack of formal systems that has caused some confusion in choosing between Bangladesh and Morocco to be the GFMD 2016 Chair. He underscored the fact that both countries have a huge interest and constructive engagement in the issue of migration and development, with Morocco playing a pivotal role in the development of strategies and programs in regard to the Mediterranean area, and Bangladesh representing an Asian sub-continent with huge migratory flows as well as the community of least developed countries. He expressed the hope that the Steering Group would support the decision made by the GFMD 2013-2014 Troika.

23. Ambassador Åkerman Börje then narrated the antecedent facts. She explained that during the spring of 2014, just before the Stockholm meeting, no country had yet stepped forward to chair the GFMD in 2016. Sweden thus talked with a few countries to encourage them to take on the chairmanship after Turkey. At the Stockholm meeting, both Morocco and Bangladesh indicated their readiness to serve as GFMD 2016 Chair. In accordance with existing Terms of Reference, the GFMD 2013-2014 Troika (comprised of Mauritius, Sweden and Turkey) deemed it best to sequence the GFMD Chairmanship with Bangladesh in 2016 and Morocco in 2017. A decision was reached after serious deliberations to have Bangladesh first, thus taking the GFMD back to Asia 8 years after the Philippine chairmanship in 2008, and to have Morocco in 2017, to return to the Mediterranean region.

24. The delegate from Morocco took the floor. He first thanked the Turkish Chair for granting Morocco's request to take up the issue of GFMD 2016 Chairmanship during the Steering Group meeting. He gave Morocco's interpretation of events. He explained that after being approached by the Swedish Chair and the SRSB in March 2014 to host GFMD 2016, internal consultations were conducted. At the Forum meeting in Stockholm, their head of delegation indicated to the Swedish Chair and the SRSB that Morocco's chairmanship of GFMD 2016 was approved at the highest level and they were prepared to announce it during the special session on the Future of the Forum. However, Morocco was advised against doing so because another country also offered to assume the GFMD 2016 chairmanship. Morocco had hoped that the GFMD 2013-2014 Troika would consult first with the Steering Group before making a final decision. But Morocco came to know later that the Troika had decided in favor of Bangladesh. He underlined that they would give full support to Bangladesh, but urged that in the future, the issue of GFMD Chairmanship should be discussed within the

Steering Group, and the latter could advise the Troika in making a decision if a similar situation where there is more than one candidature for the Chairmanship arises. He stressed that the choice of candidates must be done in a transparent process, taking into account the urgency, priorities and pressing nature of migration issues.

25. Over 10 countries asked for the floor. All of them congratulated Bangladesh and thanked Morocco for its flexibility and willingness to consider hosting the GFMD 2017 after Bangladesh. They all held the view that both countries would be excellent chairs of the GFMD, and wished that the sequencing solution would materialize to ensure the Forum's continuity. Some delegates expressed full support for the decision made by the GFMD 2013-2014 Troika. Many echoed the suggestion to better define the procedures for selecting future Chairs of the GFMD and to clarify the terms of references of the Troika and the Steering Group. A suggestion was made to have a system of three (3) stand-by future GFMD Chairs.

26. The SRSG and the Swedish Chair expressed their regret for the confusion caused by the Troika decision, and welcomed the suggestion to clarify procedures.

27. The delegate from Bangladesh, incoming GFMD 2016 Chair, profusely thanked the GFMD 2013-2014 Troika and the SRSG, in particular, as well as all delegates who took the floor. He was optimistic that Bangladesh will be able to offer a lot of pioneering ideas and models during its Chairmanship, including on how to integrate migration into the post-2015 development architecture.

Any Other Business

28. The Chair expressed his appreciation to the Steering Group members for their dynamic participation during the meeting. He called on the GFMD Support Unit to provide some practical reminders concerning the Friends of the Forum meeting and the pledging meeting to be held the following day.

29. The meeting was adjourned at 12h30.