

Thematic Workshop on GFMD's Contribution to the GCM
9h00 – 18h00, Hotel Savoyen, Vienna

Opening Plenary Speech by Mr. Ola Henrikson
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Thank you very much. Good morning everybody. Let me start by thanking the organizers of this very timely meeting. The Global Compact on Migration presents a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to improve the way we cooperate on migration. I have been told that the Compact is about diverse actors making mutually reinforcing commitments designed to achieve a shared vision. Through the 2030 Agenda, the New York Declaration, the Sendai Framework and other international commitments we have those shared visions. In the GFMD in Dhaka, and in the Sutherland Report, these have been broken down into a number of objectives:

- Promoting the rights of migrants and providing protection for migrants in vulnerable situations, including in times of crisis;
- Facilitating safe and regular movement of migrant workers for decent work;
- Addressing irregular migration, by maintaining the integrity of national borders, combatting trafficking and smuggling and ensuring effective returns;
- And enhancing the development effects of migration and ensuring inclusion of migrants in their host countries.

All of these objectives require better cooperation and governance of migration. And they all need concrete operational commitments in order to become a reality. Over the consultations – and indeed in the GFMD – many of us have shared good practices from our respective countries and Ambassador Schmidt-Bremme told us about the 800 best practices that have been shared and that are available in the database. However, very seldom do we say what those experiences mean for the global compact and what that should be. We do not say what kind of international cooperation would facilitate such actions – whether it is improving the good practices as we as nations are already doing – often times with other stakeholders – or help other nations and actors to take similar action.

Today, we will ask you to do that analysis, and to articulate what international cooperation would be needed to deliver on the international commitments made and to facilitate the kind of good practices we have heard so much about over the years.

The GFMD was mandated to contribute to the GCM precisely to help us to go from often lofty words in declarations to operational commitments. Over the course of consultations we have heard about national commissions that facilitate whole of government and whole of society approaches to migration. We have heard of bilateral labour agreements that have reduced the exploitation and recruitment costs for migrant workers. And we have heard about the legal obligation to readmit returning nationals and ensure that they are duly received without undue delay.

Well today we must answer how the Global Compact could facilitate these types of practices and obligations. Is it simply a matter of national commitments:

- to agree that by a certain date, we will all have decided inter-agency coordination structures on migration?

- Or is it also about establishing voluntary funding channels and pledges towards assisting governments develop their capacity to implement well-managed migration policy?
- Recognising the value of regional mobility and bilateral labour agreements, should the Global Compact simply be about quantitative targets: of working towards increasing the proportion of labour migration that comes through legal channels leaving the overall numbers aside?
- Or can we be bolder and commit, through the Global Compact, to task a multi-agency initiative to facilitate drawing up the key components of such agreements and facilitate the negotiations and implementation?
- And should we simply restate the international obligation take back our own nationals, or could we agree on a process that would make all stakeholders more prone to effectively cooperate on returns?

My answer to those rhetorical questions is both. We have to be at once bold and concrete. The Global Compact should be a framework for cooperation. We need to spell out how that cooperation can facilitate the kind of good practice we have been discussing in the GFMD and other fora over the decade since the Forum was formed.

Luckily, we do not need to start from scratch. The New York Declaration, the 2030 agenda and the Sendai Framework, to name a few of the important international agreements in this area, set out bold ambitions on "what" should be achieved. And as seen in the excerpts of the draft GFMD report on the Global Compact, numerous recommendations have been made over the years in the GFMD on "how" we could deliver on those commitments.

As we go through this exercise, I would also like to recall one excellent piece of work that provides some very concrete steps to facilitate migration, while making it safer, more orderly and regular. I am talking of the Sutherland Report. I think we, as a community, owe it to Peter Sutherland to give his recommendations the consideration they deserve. I say this not simply as recognition of the personal commitment he made over the years – which in many ways brought us to where we are today – but also because of the institutional role that he has played. It was Peter Sutherland who thought up the GFMD together with a handful of countries – not least Belgium, which agreed to host the first GFMD – and made it a reality. And, as stated in the Operating Modalities, during his tenure as the SRSG, Mr Sutherland also served as the primary link between the GFMD and the UN system.

In recognition of this – the patron in person and legal terms – you will have seen that the draft report acknowledges the recommendations of the Sutherland Report and reflects on their viability to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves through different international commitments. Of course we do not limit ourselves to these recommendations. Many other actors, not least the GFMD and IOM continue to bring valuable recommendations that could make the Global Compact the operational framework that it needs to be. However, for the GFMD to really impact the way international cooperation is carried out, it needs to be complemented with more systematic analysis capacity.

This is just one of the issues that we need to figure out together. In the first round of breakout sessions, in the discussion on the governance, Sweden will for example bring up the need for the GFMD to enter into a dialogue with IOM on how to enhance cooperation and synergies.

Over the course of the day, I would urge you all to be as concrete as possible in terms of how international cooperation can facilitate the actions we would like to see and what the operational commitments could be. Thank you!