

From Evidence to Action:
Facilitating South – South Labor Migration for Development

Abuja, 17th and 18th October 2011

Introductory Remarks by

H.E. Amb. Eduard Gnesa
Special Ambassador for International Cooperation in Migration, Switzerland
Chair-in-Office for GFMD 2011

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

[Protocol]

Before I begin, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the Government and the People of Nigeria for their warm welcome here in Abuja and to His Excellency, Ambassador Uhomoibhi, for honoring this thematic meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development with his presence.

It gives me great pleasure to have been given the opportunity to act as co-chair here today. Firstly, because this meeting marks just one of many activities the Governments of Nigeria and Switzerland have initiated after concluding a Migration Partnership earlier this year. This pioneering agreement on migration issues is the first of its kind we have concluded with an African state. It paves the way to strengthening a comprehensive and global cooperation to the mutual benefit of both countries. Secondly, because I can share the privilege of chairing this august meeting with a good friend of Switzerland – Ambassador Martin has been Nigeria's Ambassador in my country for several years and a true and highly respected partner ever since.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The GFMD is a process which aims at producing tangible recommendations for governments to improve their policies and practices in favor of sending, transit and host societies as well as the migrants themselves. This year's GFMD has provided space for a series of smaller, focused and action-oriented thematic meetings in support of the Chair's flagship theme 'Taking action on Migration and Development – Coherence, Capacity and Cooperation'.

Under Swiss Chairmanship, the GFMD has travelled the world, from Dubai to El Salvador, from Batumi to Accra. Now, reaching almost the end of a series of 14 thematic meetings – the Abuja

meeting being the 13th – we can look back on a wealth of knowledge created, best practices shared, contacts established and synergies identified. All of this – including the outcomes of the meeting here in Abuja – will come together at the Concluding Debate on December first and second in Geneva. It will be an exciting moment of stock tacking from 14 thematic meetings, drawn on by the vast and concrete knowledge of experts on the ground. All Member States and Observers of the United Nations have been invited and I hope that your delegations have been announced through the foreseen channels.

This workshop will build on the content and key outcomes of the GFMD 2010 in Mexico on issues of labour mobility and protecting contract workers. It will further continue a series of thematic meetings which were in line with the GFMD 2011 Cluster one theme of *Labour Mobility and Development*. The Accra meeting last month explored policies and practices governments have adopted, or can adopt, to protect migrant domestic workers at all stages of migration. A thematic meeting in Dhaka earlier this month discussed bilateral labour agreements as an instrument to frame labour mobility in a legal setting. Our meeting will focus on south – south movements – a reality of today's migration patterns often more important in numbers than south – north migration – but seldom discussed at the global level. Other meetings have addressed Migration Profiles and the mainstreaming of migration into development – elements we will most certainly touch upon in our debates.

The GFMD is building a puzzle depicting a multifaceted picture of the nexus between migration and development to be discussed in Geneva and in the coming two days we are going to form the 13th piece of it.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The news may have reached you already, but let me nonetheless reiterate what was announced at the last meeting of the Friends of the Forum in Geneva. At the end of this year, I will have the great privilege to pass on the Chairmanship of the GFMD process to the Government of Mauritius, which has graciously accepted to take over this position. We are delighted that an African nation will Chair the Global Forum in the coming year. This will give additional impetus to the presence of this continent in the GFMD process.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency, Ambassador Gbeho, President of the ECOWAS Commission and thank him for having associated the Commission to this meeting. I trust that the ECOWAS Commission will continue to be an active partner in the region for all of us.

Special thanks also to the IOM (the Chair's Supporting Partners for this event), without whose assistance this workshop would not have been possible. Our gratitude goes to the ACP Observatory on Migration which has prepared an extremely useful background note for this meeting.

I would like to extend once more my sincere thanks to the Government of Nigeria for their leadership and proactive role in ensuring that this workshop is in the true spirit of the GFMD: a state-led, voluntary process dedicated to informal, non-binding and **outcomes-oriented dialogue**.

I wish us the very best for the two days of substantive discussions and intense sharing of experiences and knowledge.