

GFMD Thematic Meeting No. 3:

Migration as an enabler for inclusive social development

November 20, 2013, Geneva

*Introduction by GFMD Chair, Ambassador Eva Åkerman-Börje*

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by thanking my co-convening colleagues here from the Government of Greece and the Government of El Salvador who have supported this event.

I would also like to share with you the purpose of this thematic meeting. As you know, this is the third of three scheduled Thematic Meetings over the Swedish Chairmanship. The idea is that each of these supports the agenda of the corresponding Roundtable, within the areas of policy coherence, inclusive economic development and inclusive social development respectively. Today's meeting is thus designed to support GFMD's work on inclusive social development, which is being dealt with directly under Roundtable 3 *Migration as an enabler for inclusive social development* including its two sub-sessions on *RT 3.1. Empowering migrants, their households and communities for improved protection of rights and social development outcomes* and *RT 3.2. Migrant asset transfers and their effects on health and education*.

Our ambition is two-fold. We want to have a deeper understanding of the importance of the legal and structural frameworks necessary to promote empowerment of individual migrants to access their rights and also to contribute as development actors enabling others to gain access to developmental cornerstones – namely health and education.

The concept of empowerment needs clarification - and our speakers and panellists today will be able to explain further - but we interpret this as the ability for individuals to *claim and access* their rights. This rests on a rights-based legal framework, policies that reflect a human rights based thinking, and measures in place to ensure that individual migrants are aware of their rights and how to claim them.

We have chosen to focus on *health and education* because of their central importance as MDG indicators and as a foundation for positive human development outcomes.

The first half of Panel 1 will look at what states can consider when establishing a rights-based approach towards migrants anchored in core international human rights law, so that

an individual's ability to *access to fundamental rights* is protected regardless of migrant status. The second half of panel 1 considers the ability of individual migrants to *contribute* to improved health outcomes. We ask what are the barriers to their contributions, how can governments facilitate monetary remittances and increase the ease and quality of knowledge transfer?

We repeat the same format for panel 3 on education, looking at access to the right to education first, and then the opportunities to contribute to education outcomes, second.

It is our hope that by deliberately not dividing up access to rights from social and economic remittances, we can underline the important link between these two ideas.

Migrants cannot be expected to be able to contribute fully towards development outcomes in their countries of origin, if their own rights and access to these rights are not respected in the countries of destination.

We hope to be able to draw some lessons from the examples you share on how states can empower migrants in their midst, with a particular focus on health and education. What does your government do to ensure that migrants have access to health care or education? What are good examples of what your government does to help migrants who wish to contribute towards health and education in their countries of origin? This is what we are looking for. It would also be valuable if you would express the nature of partnerships that you would like to see in order to enhance the opportunities that exist, be it private sector actors or civil society in general. By sharing these lessons, we can contribute to replication of successful initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these words, I would like to hand over to our keynote speaker today, Mr Gibril Faal.