

Civil society reports to GFMD Friends of the Forum

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- agenda item 4 - Chair's Concept Note and Work Plan
- agenda item 7 - Update on Civil Society GFMD activities

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*As prepared for delivery;
Civil society documents referenced here
are available at www.gfmdcivilsociety.org*

Deputy Director Altuğ—Madame Chair,

Thank you for this opportunity to report on recent civil society activity in these processes.

Thank you also for receiving my colleague Wies Maas and me in Ankara in December. We appreciated meeting with you, the broader meeting with other government offices and Civil society leaders of NGOs, trade unions, and employers and academics, and with the office for Turkish diaspora abroad.

We further appreciated the meetings you helped us arrange with Civil society actors in Istanbul, and our separate meetings with civil society organizations. We were struck with the commitment and concern that many had for forced migrants, especially from Syria throughout the region and Europe, and the strong academic attention to the range of migration issues. One of our objectives was to discuss perspectives for a national organizing process by Turkish Civil society, and we were impressed with both the interest and capacity of university and NGO actors to take this forward.

Agenda Item 4: Turkey's concept note and work-plan for GFMD 2015

As on the first draft, Civil society submitted consolidated feedback to the Chair on the second draft of the concept paper. On the whole, we like the changes that have been made in the revision before us. We are glad to see the Concept Note emphasizing the importance of increasing interaction with Civil society in the GFMD. We look forward to taking that forward meaningfully with you.

We also continue to appreciate the Concept Note's call for the GFMD to turn at last to considering the link between forced migration and development. This is not "making" a link, or inventing one, but rather seeing a linkage that exists, in plain sight, and asking to look at it, evidence-based. From the very beginning of the GFMD in Belgium 2007, Civil society has called for development alternatives to forced migration (i.e., in GFMD language, "migration by necessity") as well as development solutions for migrants that are forced.

But allow us to express two concerns on this revised Concept Note. First, the opening text on page 1 quite prominently refers to "safe, fair, orderly, well-governed migration", in terms that echo the

wording and priority of Goal 10, target 7 of the states' Open Working Group outcome document for the new, post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Unfortunately, there is nothing further in the Concept Note that picks that up: nothing on safe migration, nothing on fair migration, nothing on systemic approaches to migration that reduce risks to migrants on the move. If we may re-emphasize the request in both of the two Civil society inputs to the drafting process, to dedicate a specific Roundtable session to protection of migrants in distress in transit or on borders, either under Roundtable 1 (as several states have also suggested) or even more logically, as a third session under Roundtable 3.

Second, there is one change in this revision that has us completely baffled. On page 5, in the bottom paragraph, the fourth sentence suddenly floats the following "definition" of forced migration—between hyphens that add emphasis: "*The role of international forced migrants—people who are compelled to cross borders to escape the effects of man-made or natural disasters...*" We have not seen that definition before, either in text or in reality, and we do not see or like how it changes the plain reading and, we believe, wise intent, of the rest of that section on Roundtable 3.

Agenda Item 7: Update on Civil Society GFMD activities

1. Activities of Civil society “before and after” the GFMD meeting. In the two months since the last Friends of the Forum meeting, Civil society has continued to organize activities focused on taking GFMD work forward. In “before and after” work, we emphasize that the GFMD is not one meeting but a steady commitment to action; not an international gathering in one city but positive impact on the ground around the world. We know that you see that too—especially where we partner together.

To be clear: the GFMD process is now just one piece—and important piece, but one piece--of a menu of migration and development activities that we coordinate together with NGOs, diaspora and other civil society partners worldwide.

A big part of civil society’s “before and after” work is the “MADE” (**M**igration and **D**evelopment) project, which ICMC and our civil society partners need to co-fund together with the European Union. To expand on brief reports to you at prior meetings, MADE is committed to three things:

1. continuity in this work that leads to change
2. widening regional and national work of civil society
3. sharpening the focus for collaboration and results

The “continuity” is to follow-up on GFMD recommendations concretely, and prepare further possibilities, within civil society and with governments. As in the programme of the GFMD civil society days, this centers on specific points within Civil society’s “5-year 8-point Plan for Collaboration”, which we developed for the High Level Dialogue and which converges with so much of the Declaration that UN member states adopted at that Dialogue.

The “widening geography” involves more and regular with civil society leaders in regions and at national levels. In recent months, we and our MADE partners have organized

- Civil society **regional network** meetings in Jordan and Malaysia
- meetings of **global thematic Working Groups** on post-2015 development, and labour migration, in particular reform of migrant worker recruitment, placement and employment practices

In “sharpening the focus”, we and partners both in and outside the MADE project have emphasized two of the 8-points in particular since my last report to you in November.

#1. Our top priority—in fact **Point 1 of Civil society's "5 year 8 point plan"**, and a strong commitment of states in the HLD declaration: **properly incorporating migrants and migration in the post-2015 global development agenda**, especially for decent work and social protection at home and abroad, and safe, orderly, and regular migration.

We are glad to see the Outcome Document of the Open Working Group (OWG) reflecting both. We are also glad to see the Chair's first preparatory event for the GFMD dedicated to this subject tomorrow.

Today I would only note that many of the OWG's references to migrants and migrations come straight-line from the government Roundtable and Common Space reports in last year's GFMD. And the OWG incorporates many of the other priorities that Civil society emphasized in the unified global civil society position, the "Stockholm Agenda," which also grew out of the GFMD and parallel Civil society processes in Stockholm last year. 311 Civil society organizations around the world have now signed it; *copies are again on the side table*.

In recent months, the migration community of Civil society has picked up its direct post-2015 advocacy with governments, in regional as well as national offices, with:

- letters to the UN Secretary General, the European Union and EU member states
- events in Brussels, Geneva and New York. Next week, GFMD 2014 Civil society Chair Michele LeVoy will speaking on this at the UNDESA Coordination meeting in New York

#2. Protection of Migrants in Transit: Points 3, 4, 5 + 6 of Civil society's 5-year 8-point plan, with specific attention to vulnerable women and children in contexts of migration.

Every one of the regional MADE civil society meetings last year has emphasized this issue, with urgency. Not in opposition to equally important GFMD-based work on "migrants in countries of crisis", rather complementary to it. But not waiting however long for that migrants in countries of crisis process to be complete—because people on the move are suffering and dying today. How revolutionary is this?

- This is where UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR and other international agencies have recently amplified a shared priority
- It picks up directly on recommendations from the last *five* GFMD and HLD meetings
- It resumes the fine, practical work that UNHCR, IOM, the International Federation of the Red Cross and others did in the years 2007-2010 under the term "mixed migration" and, in UNODC during the same period, on frameworks of protection of victims of both human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Funding at that time from the US and European Union supported related consultations at a regional levels, productively involving governments and Civil society together with the international agencies.

Migrants in *transit*: refugees and asylum seekers of course, but also children, and victims of torture, trafficking, trauma and violence in migration journeys, on the sea and over land.

Many of us participated a month ago in the UNHCR's High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection at Sea. At the Dialogue, 121 Civil society organizations around the world joined the NGO Committee on Migration (New York) and MADE civil society partners in presenting a unified civil society positon entitled "*Sea Change Seven*". It is one call with seven points for greater international cooperation: real-world and competence-centered responsibility-sharing, including Civil society actors, in rescue and in needs-based response to boat people and other migrants and refugees in distress in transit. This statement and issue will be carried widely in many processes, including as a significant focus of the GFMD Civil Society Days in Istanbul.

But we were glad to see clear *consensus* at that Dialogue on urgently improving protection of migrants, including refugees, in transit across the Mediterranean and other waters. Consensus

among governments, consensus among Civil society, and perfect harmony on this issue among the heads of UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR and the UNSG Special Representative for Migration Peter Sutherland. To quote Mr. Sutherland: "*Boat people, as we've seen, can be found all over the world. They cross oceans but they also cross land. And they suffer appallingly, as we know, everywhere. Their motives are similar, whether they are refugees or economic migrants. Their aspirations are the same. I think so far as this meeting is concerned, I cannot see any legitimate distinction that can be made between refugees and economic migrants. We're talking here about saving lives, and I think that that has to be fundamental to our thinking on this particular subject. Asylum seekers or migrants resort to the same smugglers, to the same boats, and they face the same hazards. Their lives are at risk.*"

Mr. Sutherland went on, connecting quite directly, we note, to how your Concept Note describes Roundtable session 3.1 for the GFMD this year. "*There's much more that we can do. I would particularly support UNHCR's efforts to identify migration-related solutions for refugees, while at the same time encouraging IOM, who has done so much work at this, to develop its protection approach towards migrants, thus bridging the humanitarian gap affecting people on the move.*"

Madame Chair, civil society is glad to see in your concept note that RT 3.1 has maintained its focus on "*Enhancing human development and human security approaches for forced migration through international cooperation on labour market access, educational opportunity, family reunification and other avenues of mobility.*" With great concern however, we note—and we do not understand-- that according to documents for this meeting, it is the only one of the 6 Roundtable sessions that has only one government co-chair. May we join our voice to yours, Madame Chair, in appealing for stronger commitment to this crucial Roundtable and work.

Finally, when I talked about Civil society "*sharpening our focus*", I referred to the 8 points of Civil society's 5-year plan from the HLD. So now let me report that **MADE and other civil society partners are actually exploring a "9th" point of action and collaboration with states: fighting xenophobia.** The phenomena of xenophobia has been cross-cutting all regional and thematic meetings of MADE, and other civil society partners at every level, "*part of the problem*" on almost every issue before us. Not just changing public perceptions of migrants, but changing the discourse by changing speakers, by raising migrants and diaspora voices. What we are looking at is raising quite specifically *migrant and diaspora voices* against xenophobia, including the possibility of a new project with diaspora and development partners, beginning in Europe but globally.

2. To close: some flashes on Civil Society activity at the GFMD in Istanbul. We are happy to note the schedule of the GFMD 12-16 October and look forward to organizing the two Civil Society Days that Monday and Tuesday and co-organizing the Common Space with the Chair Wednesday. Taking a successful innovation from last year forward, we will once again organize a small number of single-issue breakfast tables that Wednesday morning before Common Space, with the "5 + 5" formula of government representatives and civil society leaders.

Later this month we will be convening a new International Steering Committee of Civil society leaders from around the world, with whom we will once again organize the Civil society concept and `format. Together we will take as a starting reference the Chair's now-final Concept Note and Work plan, together with Civil Society's work to date in the GFMD. Once again, we expect that this year's Civil Society Days will revolve around the 5-year 8-point Plan, with a distinct emphasis on measuring progress and impact, including what we ourselves have done in civil society to implement GFMD recommendations and collaboration with states. We will also seriously consider a proposal from civil society partners in Latin America to organize part of the Civil society Days with meetings with government leaders of a number of the Regional Consultative Processes.

Civil society GFMD budget. In one sentence, thanks to Sweden's very welcome contribution to Civil society today, we are now working with a budget gap of about **US \$310,000**. This month we will be circulating to you all, the full detail of our budget and of opportunities within it that we would warmly invite your government to participate in.

/Thank you.