

GFMD Dhaka – 10-12 December, 2016

*Opening Statement by Francois Fouinat,
Office of the UN SRSG for Migration and Development*

Honorable Prime Minister, Madame Sheikh Hasina,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am addressing you on behalf of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Migration and Development who is unable to be with us today for health reasons.

This is the first time that Peter Sutherland is missing a GFMD annual summit meeting.

I have accompanied him since December 2005, when he was appointed by Kofi Annan. It was his vision and persuasion that convinced the UN Secretary-General to endorse the unlikely proposal, coming from a UN adviser, to create an independent Forum of States to foster a global dialogue on migration. The Special Representative, in this ad-hoc configuration, is the link between the GFMD and the UN. The proposal was widely accepted at the 2006 UNGA High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development and steadfastly implemented through the bold Belgian decision to organize the first Forum meeting in Brussels, in 2007.

Since then, with Peter Sutherland guidance and support, GFMD has gradually developed the scope and depth of its debates. Its state-led and informal character, its rotational chairmanship system, both thematic and geographical, have allowed governments to engage into discussions erstwhile unthinkable. These advances have promoted an ongoing dialogue on issues touching on rights and human security of people on the move that paved the way to the milestone

Declaration of the second 2013 UNGA High-Level Dialogue and the most recent New York Declaration for refugees and migrants.

GFMD can take pride on these achievements as well on related crucial developments such as the IOM joining the UN – a move tirelessly advocated by Peter Sutherland -- which is a clear and welcome acknowledgement of the need to deal with migration issues from a global cooperation angle.

The September 19th decision to develop a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration opens a long awaited opportunity to concretize many of the ideas that have emerged from GFMD discussions. It takes only to look at the Theme of the 9th GFMD summit meeting: “Migration that works for sustainable development for all: Towards a Transformative Migration Agenda” to see the direct correlation between what we are expected to achieve here and the important process taking place in Geneva and New York. GFMD continues to play a critical role in the effort that will eventually lead to a better international cooperation for the benefit of all.

For his part, though regrettably absent today, Peter Sutherland will continue to provide his advice and support through a report that will be made available at the beginning of next year.

I want to praise and thank Bangladesh for organizing and chairing the 2016 GFMD and express our gratitude to the chair, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque for his visionary and inspiring leadership in spearheading this effort.

Thank you very much