

Report on the Special Session on the Future of the Forum

10th GFMD Summit Meeting
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I. From Dhaka to Berlin

The Future of the Forum session was presided over by the GFMD 2017-2018 Co-Chairs, Mr. Götz Schmidt-Bremme and Mr. El Habib Nadir. The co-chairs reported on the major steps that have been taken since the Co-Chairmanship began, leading to the Berlin Summit:

- A report on the GFMD contribution to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2017 will be presented in New York at a side event on 12 July. The report will focus on the linkages between migration and the Agenda 2030, highlighting the GFMD's contribution to the 2030 Agenda. The report will also provide both general and specific recommendations of the GFMD to the HLPF, as well as share the best practices that contribute to the attainment of the migration-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Two (2) dialogues on the Global Compact have been held in February and April to consider the elements of the GFMD's contribution to the GCM process, including the envisaged role of the GFMD vis-à-vis the GCM process that will culminate in an international conference in 2018. The GFMD ad hoc WG on 2030 Agenda and GCM, co-chaired by Germany and Bangladesh, is leading the preparation of this report.
- A thematic workshop on climate change and human mobility was held in Rabat in May. Four main recommendations came out of this workshop:
 1. Continue building on the achievements made in protecting displaced persons in the context of natural disasters and existing instruments (the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework, etc.) must be made operational.
 2. Effectively manage policies on climate-induced migration.
 3. Differential treatment for displaced persons due to climate change remains necessary.
 4. In light of the global nature of human mobility and climate change, there is a common responsibility to act. There should be burden-sharing and solidarity between states which should serve as a backdrop, inter alia, for addressing funding issues.
- The implementation of the short-term recommendations of the GFMD ad hoc WG on Communications that were presented in Dhaka has begun.

II. The Lay of the Land – People, Agreements and Institutions on the Move

Mrs. Louise Arbour, UN Secretary General's Special Representative for International Migration and Development, paid tribute to the work carried out by her predecessor, Mr. Peter Sutherland, in the establishment of the GFMD and in putting migration on the global agenda.

She underlined that the GFMD has a wealth of substantive knowledge, data repository of good practices and thematic recollection, all of which will be invaluable inputs to the GCM. She highlighted that the state-led model and working methods of government-led teams employed by the GFMD may be of continuing value. She also counted on the continuous support of the many dedicated colleagues from member states, civil society and the private sector.

While it is for the GFMD participating states to define the future of the GFMD, the SRSR highlighted two areas in which she saw particular relevance for the GFMD in terms of its support of the GCM process. The GFMD could have a role in consensus-building on an ambitious substantive outcome, complementing the thematic consultations that are underway in the UN. The GFMD could also support the implementation of the GCM when it will be established. The latter will depend largely on whether the GCM will envisage explicitly migration management at the multilateral level and how specific member states want it to be. If the GCM aspires to be a practical and operational instrument to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, the GFMD may address the ways and means by which governments and other stakeholders will report on their efforts to fulfil their SDG commitments in relation to migration, and also serve as a platform to facilitate partnerships to deliver on these commitments.

The SRSR believed that the GFMD can pay attention to particular emerging issues in the GCM process such as: a) How to address the protection needs of vulnerable migrants; b) Irregular migration and extension of legal pathways; and c) gaps existing in disaggregated data, instruments etc.

II. Keynote: Milestones and Footprints – GFMD’s Path in the Migration Landscape

In her keynote address, **Ms. Kathleen Newland** provided a historical background on GFMD discussions since its inception in 2007. In the last 35 years, she has been involved in the discussion on migration related issues, having worked for 7 different entities within the UN system (ILO, IOM, WB, UNHCR, 2 Secretaries-General and the SRSR for International Migration). She has also attended all 10 GFMD summits and has been involved in organizing some of them.

She pointed out that in order to identify the GFMD's added value, it is important to reflect upon the way in which the Forum has succeeded: it is not politicized, it is not a negotiating body; thus, it does not require states to commit to specific outcomes.

She recalled that in the 1980s and 1990s, the discussion on migration within the UN and the international community was frozen and was considered too highly politicized and divisive. Following the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ‘development’ became the gateway to foster a debate on migration within the UN. The GFMD has significantly contributed to promoting the nexus between migration and development since 2007. Though development is still central to the GFMD and to the discussion on migration as a whole, the forum has arrived at a broader conception of development.

On the Future of the GFMD, she highlighted that the Forum would need to be invented if it did not exist. Its continued purpose should entail coalition-building and fostering partnerships to enable concrete actions on the basis of states' common interests. The GFMD is a space for creativity rather than accountability. In this way, the GFMD could also contribute to a concrete and action-oriented GCM.

IV. Common Ground and New Horizons – A Vision for GFMD’s Continued Purpose

During the open discussion, 22 countries intervened, representing Africa (7 countries), Asia (4) and MENA (2), Americas (5) and Europe (4). An additional 6 countries submitted written statements, representing Africa (2), Asia (2) and Europe (2).

All interveners offered very substantive contributions that covered a wide range of issues. I will not be able to give justice to all of those valuable contributions, but I would like to attempt to cluster them together for the sake of brevity.

1. Continuity of the GFMD

There was a very strong consensus that the GFMD must continue in its current informal, inclusive, multi-stakeholder and non-binding character. It has provided a fertile ground for constructive and substantive inter-governmental discussion throughout its 10 years of existence and, in the process, has contributed significantly to the national, regional, sub-regional and global agenda-setting on migration and development, and other policy fields.

At the national and sub-regional levels, the GFMD has created an opportunity and space for governments to talk and interact with non-state actors to promote policy coherence and cooperation. Interveners also emphasized the importance of keeping it ‘state-led,’ but not ‘state-only’ process. Many interveners underlined the need for greater engagement with the private sector, holding the belief that businesses can address the crucial issues that migrants face, and provide solutions to development challenges for both countries of origin (COO) and destination (COD).

Member states also suggested the GFMD to play a role not only in facilitating discussions, but also in profiling practical solutions to ensure policy coherence between COO and COD.

Many also shared the view that the GFMD should play a role not only in providing inputs to the GCM, but also in its implementation. Several ideas were offered on a possible role of the GFMD in this regard:

- a) GFMD can offer knowledge and expertise in the process of elaborating the GCM, as well as during the inter-governmental negotiation process. GFMD can ensure that negotiating delegations can draw from the wealth of knowledge and practical experiences it has accumulated since its foundation.
- b) Many agreed with Dr. Kathleen Newland that the GFMD is not a place for accountability but for creativity and innovation. Currently, under the broad frameworks of the SDGs and the GCM, the GFMD could concretely promote the exchange of pragmatic experiences and lessons learned, inter alia, in policy-making and programmes on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The model of mini-multilateralism—a process of building coalitions of interested parties around specific, practical, actionable issues—can be advanced by the GFMD for states to find concrete actions out of their own volition.

2. Links with the United Nations

Member states underscored the importance of strengthening GFMD’s partnership with the United Nations system, taking into account the following elements:

- a) GFMD enjoys independence but it does not operate in isolation. It must continue to exist as a coalition-building entity and has to be linked with the GCM and the 2030 agenda—the two broad frameworks of the United Nations.
- b) GFMD must recognize the IOM as its leading partner, but not the only partner. The GFMD should also strengthen its ties and draw synergy and support from the other agencies comprising the Global Migration Group (GMG).

3. Link with the RCPs and other relevant processes

The following recommendations were brought up to further intensify the link of the GFMD with the Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) and other relevant processes on migration and development:

- a) Establish a mechanism to build synergies between the GFMD and the RCPs. This is a necessary element for the added value of GFMD in the longer term, say 5 to 10 years.
- b) Ensure coherence of the work of the GFMD ad hoc WG on the GCM and 2030 Agenda with other international and regional dialogues.
- c) Strengthen linkages between regional and national mechanisms, while maintaining due respect for states' sovereignty.

4. Thematic Priorities that the GFMD can focus on, going forward

Member States drew attention to a number of migration and development related themes and emerging issues that the GFMD should consider:

- a) Addressing the drivers and root causes of migration, including development challenges such as climate change
- b) Legal pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration
- c) Addressing migration in a holistic manner
- d) Protection needs of vulnerable migrants
- e) Forced migration and settlement of conflicts
- f) Balance between security consideration and development
- g) Burden sharing that takes into account the level of development of countries
- h) Promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms as a pillar of better migration management
- i) A people-centered approach to migration
- j) Skills mobility and skills recognition, and the important role of business
- k) Connectivity and migration in the context of trade facilitation
- l) South-South migration
- m) Synergies among regional and international dialogues
- n) Return migration
- o) Human smuggling
- p) The role of diaspora
- q) Movement of persons under Mode 4 of GATS
- r) Examining the success and impact of development assistance

5. Process-related recommendations

Member states also put forward several process-related recommendations for the GFMD to remain as a global platform for consensus-building and international cooperation:

- a) Future GFMDs to have a fixed agenda item looking at the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact in a multi-stakeholder approach;
- b) Find a way of engaging business when it comes to critical skills and opportunities for both migrants and nationals;
- c) Providing action-oriented recommendations to the global migration agenda;
- d) Providing reference to practical solutions to address migration in a comprehensive and specific manner;
- e) Providing data and statistics on migration, as well as stocktaking of problems and challenges on the ground and best practices that offer solutions;
- f) Conduct a review exercise to take into consideration how to build synergies among the growing number of regional and international dialogues and how to safeguard the strength of the GFMD process. The outcomes of this review exercise should be shared with other stakeholders ahead of the 2018 conference on migration.

- g) Improve the technical nature of the Roundtables in order to augment the added value of the informal discussions in the Forum;
- h) Advance migration issues in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, including by strategic communications and the involvement of the private sector;
- i) Mini-multilateralism or creation of smaller multi-stakeholder groups to implement certain aspects of the 2030 Agenda;
- j) Elaborate national plans to harmonize what the GFMD has discussed and consider how to implement the plan;
- k) Strengthen the dialogue at the regional and sub-regional levels on migration;
- l) Address funding issues which have an impact on GFMD's continuity and sustainability;
- m) Leverage the new developments (e.g., IOM in the UN, GCM process) that GFMD helped to create, in order for the GFMD to redefine or recalibrate itself and to consider how to play a constructive and creative role in supporting the international dialogue on migration and development, within and outside the UN system, and remain on the cutting edge of international practical cooperation;
- n) Play a technical or secretariat role in the follow up on the principles, commitments, and understandings that emerge from the Global Compact;
- o) Establish a mechanism of synergy between the Global Forum and the Regional consultations processes;
- p) Set up a council of elders comprised of past GFMD Chairmanships to evaluate, to guide and also to reflect together on the proposal for the future of the Forum.

The intervening countries from Africa made a special plea to continue the focus of the GFMD on finding solutions to the challenges in the region. They also welcomed to have a more active role for the African countries in the Forum.

There was a strong recommendation to enhance the "D" component of the GFMD, which stands for development, since many of the causes and answers to the complex migration phenomenon are found in the development process. However, one delegate suggested that the Forum should be renamed the 'Global Forum on Migration' to reflect the mega-trend and cross-cutting phenomenon that migration is today. Many member states also envisaged a Forum that belongs to all countries regardless of their international capacity, where all voices can be heard and taken on board, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs). One delegate suggested to further enhance the inclusiveness of the Forum by expanding the membership of the Steering Group.

Towards the end of the session, the SRSB shared her impressions of the discussion. She noted the strong convergence of views on the desirability of retaining the kind of forum that the GFMD constitutes. At the same time, there was openness to the idea of reviewing the way the GFMD functions in view of recent and upcoming developments – e.g., a renovation of the architecture to fit the challenges ahead while retaining what has been historically successful. One of the key questions for the GFMD was to reflect on its role in relation to the UN system, especially now that migration as a policy area is fully integrated into the UN, and that the IOM has joined the UN as a related agency. A practical issue that was raised was funding the implementation of the GCM.

V. From Berlin to Marrakech

Mr. El Habib Nadir, Moroccan GFMD Co-Chair, took note and welcomed all the rich interventions that were made. He affirmed that the 2018 thematic priorities will be anchored on the 2030 Agenda and the GCM. He committed to promote awareness-raising about the implementation of the SDGs, the follow up of the elaboration process for the GCM, to be done thru the ad hoc WG on 2030 agenda and GCM.

He has laid out an ambitious work program for 2018 that would consist of the following, inter alia:

- A GFMD report for submission to the HLPF in 2018 particularly on SDG goals 6,7,11,12 and 15;
- Support for the GCM drafting process by organizing meetings and dialogues to discuss the first draft of the GCM;
- Lead the GFMD in examining its role in the follow up and the implementation of the GCM, depending on the nature of the actual GCM;
- Improve communication channels with governments and other stakeholders and continue the sharing of practices, through the existing channels such as the GFMD Mobile App;
- Keep on working with the civil society and the private sector.

He underlined that the next phase of the GFMD 2017-2018 Co-Chairmanship will walk the talk and go from “poetry to plumbing”.

In terms of thematic focus, the GFMD agenda in 2018 will be in line with the concerns of the international community, including:

- a) Socio-economic integration of migrants in host communities, supporting vulnerable groups especially children, youth, women through education, employability, empowerment, and improving the inter-cultural aspects of migration;
- b) Engaging local actors by drawing from the expertise and experiences of cities that are welcoming large migrant communities;
- c) Involving national or regional parliamentarians who develop norms and standards, and who can call on politicians to discuss and implement policies;
- d) Focus on South-South migration, factors of forced migration, the role of diaspora and the role of COOs;
- e) Link with regional, intra-regional and inter-regional processes and dialogues.

The proposed work plan will include 3 preparatory meetings in Geneva (February, May and September 2018), thematic workshops and side events at the margins of important international processes, including the IOM’s International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) and the UN Coordination Meeting on International Migration.