

OPENING REMARKS

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Global Forum on Migration and Development

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H.E. Sigmar Gabriel (Foreign Minister, Germany),

H.E. Gerd Müller (Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany),

H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita (Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Morocco).

GFMD Co-Chairs Ambassador Dr. Götz Schmidt-Bremme, H.E. Mr. El Habib Nadir

Distinguished delegates, colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct honor to have been invited to take part in the opening of this conference. I am humbled at this gesture, for which I thank you most sincerely. It is, as usual, a pleasure to meet with the international migration community -- especially here in the beautiful, historic capital of Germany -- Berlin. Wie Man Sagt, "Berlin is 'c IMMER Noch eine Reise Wert!"

This is the tenth edition of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. I missed out on the first -- it occurred in 2007, the year before I joined IOM. But I have been a faithful and enthusiastic participant ever since.

Drafted by : Neha Sinha, Maurizio Busatti
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A tenth anniversary is an ideal opportunity to look back and celebrate all that the GFMD has achieved. This important milestone allows us to reflect on what this very special Forum is all about, what it means to us all; and what we may expect from it in the future.

I have, accordingly, organized my thoughts in three parts: GFMD's past, its present and some thoughts about the future.

I. The past

The GFMD arose out of a strongly felt need for governments to have a space for discussion and information exchange -- an annual occasion to engage in voluntary, informal and non-binding discussions on migration and development. This was, however, quite a challenge. Migratory realities are not the same everywhere. Each government has its specific set of interests, concerns, perceptions and priorities. There are many overlaps, of course, many differences. And not all development partners were originally convinced that Migration is an enabler of development, tending rather to see migration as a failure of development.

- A. The GFMD's first achievement has been -- once a year, -- to bring together governments from all regions of the world to survey the migratory landscape. In due course, civil society and the private sector joined and enriched the deliberations. The Forum has been and continues to be, first and foremost, a platform for sharing experiences and exploring best practices.

Heretofore, significant progress had been made at the regional level among governments. In 2007, when the GFMD was established, there were already some fifteen or more Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs), but no global consultative process. The GFMD has filled that gap successfully for a decade now.

B. The GFMD's second achievement has been the development of a broad, balanced agenda built around the critical nexus of migration and development. A review of the agendas and outcomes of all nine GFMD sessions to date reveals there is hardly any policy issue that has remained untouched: human rights; labour migration, trafficking, smuggling, protection, recruitment, remittances, cultural orientation, decent working conditions; return and reintegration; border management; and integration -- to name but a few -- all and many other aspects have been addressed.

C. The GFMD's third achievement has been its very significant contributions to other global consultative processes, including the second UNGA High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development; the SDGs and 2030 Agenda; and, especially, the September 2016 Summit on Refugees and Migration.

II. The present

The present is us -- we who are gathered here in Berlin this week. The present is well-reflected in the Forum's agenda for this week, particularly in the Roundtable themes and topics. I commend the German and Moroccan Co-Chairs for their vision for this year's Forum; they have wisely chosen to highlight three key areas:

1. **Coherence** between national and local policies to ensure a coordinated response at every level of government.
2. **Partnerships** to enhance the development impact of migration.
3. **Cooperation** with the private sector and civil society to explore new avenues for the integration of migrants in the job market and in the host community in general.

The GFMD has contributed to the development of shared practices and common tools, and I believe this unique nature of the GFMD will certainly facilitate the negotiation process for the global compacts and inform future developments. Which leads me to my third and final point.

III. The future

While the roadmap to the future of migration has not been fully drawn yet, we know the name of the next important milestone. It is the Global Compact on Migration.

And, quite frankly, it is hard to imagine last year's Migration Summit and the Global Compact process it initiated without the GFMD -- and without SRSG Peter Sutherland.

We dare not miss this “rendezvous with history; this opportunity may not present itself again anytime soon. The GCM invites the international community to move away from reactive, unidimensional, populist approaches to migration governance, and to reach consensus on a comprehensive, long-term, multi-faceted framework of shared responsibility - - a framework that will enable migrants to move in a safe, orderly and dignified way – and thus create “shared opportunities.”

The human reality is that migration will continue, whether we act or whether we don't. Migration has been a feature of our existence since time began. But, without a common understanding and commitment on legal and safe alternatives, migrants will continue to be forced to undertake more arduous and irregular pathways; and we will all witness more unnecessary loss of life, and deprivation will continue.

The Global Compact on Migration on the other hand, can put us all on the “High Road”:

1. Facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration -- the migration we wish to have;

2. Reducing the incidence and impact of forced and irregular migration -- the migration we do not wish to have; and

3. Responding to the impact of natural and human-made disasters on human mobility -- the migration that occurs whether we want it to or not.

To get on the “High Road”, we must place migrants and their rights, needs, responsibilities and capacities at the heart of our efforts. The “High Road” means linking migration comprehensively to development, humanitarian, climate change, and peace and security.

Conclusion

GFMD 2017 is taking place at an extremely critical moment -- in the midst of global, regional and national consultations on an historic Global Compact on Migration and I, for one -- I am confident that our exchanges over the next few days will contribute constructively and imaginatively to the Global Compact on Migration.