

GFMD THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON GFMD CONTRIBUTION TO GCM

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Breakout Session on Addressing Drivers of Migration, Including the Adverse Effects of Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Human-Made Crises, through Protection and Assistance, Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, Conflict Prevention and Resolution

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

By

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And Other International Organizations in Geneva

Introduction

Good afternoon to all of you. I warmly welcome you all to this working session on the GCM Cluster 2 theme, *Addressing Drivers of Migration*. We had very dynamic first round of simultaneous sessions this morning. Let us continue the momentum and contribute to an enriching debate in this session.

Understanding and Addressing Drivers of International Migration

At the outset allow me to point out that we are concerned, within this session, on international migration and not internal migration, which is mainly related to internal displacement.

Looking at the title of this breakout session, one could readily see that it has two parts which would need to be discussed: First is seeking to understand the “drivers of migration” or the factors that lead people to migrate, voluntarily or involuntarily, permanently or temporarily. Drivers of migration include economic, demographic factors and environmental factors and climate change, and social and political dynamics. Second is uncovering some of the ways forward, including through protection and assistance, sustainable development and poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution.

In 2015, there were an estimated 244 million migrants, or around 4 percent of the total global population. According to the studies published by the McKinsey Global Institute, almost 90% of international migrants move due to economic, social, political and environmental factors, and only 10 per cent were refugees fleeing violence, persecution, human rights abuse, and/or armed conflict. Yet because of the dramatic loss of lives and suffering of those fleeing, migration is often seen as a response to conflict and a way of avoiding human rights abuses and persecution.

The reality, however, is that the overwhelming majority of international migrants move through safe, orderly and regular means, and as a matter of choice and not necessity. International migration is a natural phenomenon in a globalized world especially in the age of connectivity, powered by internet and other web-based communication, as well as the availability of not so expensive transportation.

It is important to highlight that the drivers of migration, the so called push and pull factors of migration, are almost always a combination of different factors: economic, socio-cultural, demographic, environmental, climate change and natural disasters and conflict and widespread civil unrest. These drivers interact in complex ways, influencing individuals' migration decision-making, including the choice not to migrate.

The Philippine reflections and experiences

As Chair of this session, let me briefly share on behalf of the Philippines some of our reflections on this complex topic, as well as initiatives taken, which have been influenced largely by the GFMD process:

- Addressing the drivers of migration is about looking at ways of reducing the adverse factors that motivate people to move out of necessity in unsafe, dangerous and irregular situations and of maximizing the benefits of migration for the migrant and their families and for communities and countries of origin and destination.
- Addressing drivers of migration is also about appreciating migration as a facilitator of sustainable development. At the international level, we have recently forged agreements such as the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Development from where we could draw inspiration in our national action plans on development. Migration needs to be mainstreamed in the development plans of countries of origin and on the socio-economic policies of countries of destination.
- Key to addressing the drivers of migration is the spirit of burden sharing and the implementation of the principle of shared responsibility among countries of origin, transit and destination. These are not only aspirations but also operational guideposts on the ways forward. Among others, these could take the form of mutual recognition of skills and skills matching, allowing labor mobility, upholding ethical recruitment practices, maintaining decent work standards, and expansion of legal pathways to migration.
- Another important element is data and evidence. Efforts to address the drivers of migration must be tailored to different populations and contexts. This will only be possible with better, more comprehensive, comparable and disaggregated data on migration.

It is a truism that the more regular migration channels are restricted, the more migration is diverted to irregular and often exploitative channels, especially for low-skilled migration flows. However, while there are greater risks of abuses with irregular migration, this does not mean that with regular migration migrants at destination countries will not be exploited, discriminated or abused.

Indeed, in the GFMD process, we have consistently discussed both the promotion of regular channels of migration and the avoidance of pitfalls of irregular migration. The Philippines has long subscribed to this approach. We have professionally mainstreamed migration in our medium development plan (Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022). Our major challenge is to have migration mainstreamed in the development plans of our local governments. I am proud to proclaim that this achievement, which by the way is also doable in the context of other developing countries, is largely a result of our active engagement with the GFMD process.

In its national capacity, the Philippines co-lead with the US the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative that developed the MICIC Guidelines – a set of voluntary non-binding guidelines to improve the ability of States and other relevant stakeholders, like the international organizations, civil society organizations, private employers, recruitment agencies, and diaspora organizations, to respond to and alleviate the suffering and protect the dignity and rights of migrants, regardless of their status, caught in situations of acute crisis due to civil unrest or natural disasters. Since the launching of the MICIC Guidelines last year several capacity building activities have been initiated in several regions, with the ample assistance from the International Organization for Migration or IOM and International Center for Migration Policy Development or ICMPD), respectively.

The Philippines has also been involved in, and committed to other international actions to counter the effect of displacement due to disasters and effects of climate change such as the Nansen Initiative and its follow up platform on disaster displacement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster-Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement.

The Philippines is also mobilizing its national agencies and local governments units and the private sector to ensure that climate change initiatives are in place and disaster risk reduction and management plans are available.

Working session objectives

Our objective in this session is to reflect on the relevant outcomes and recommendations from the decade-long discussions in the GFMD, which we could, in turn, submit to the GCM stocktaking exercise in December.

We will be assisted by two eminent experts on migration. On my right, we have Ambassador Eduard Gnesa and Mr. Lukas Gehre.

Ambassador Gnesa chaired the 2011 GFMD hosted by Switzerland while serving as Swiss Ambassador for International Migration. As GFMD Chair, he introduced the concept of holding thematic meetings as a preparatory step to the extended Summit Meeting. Under his leadership, the GFMD in 2011 hosted 14 thematic meetings all over the world. He was instrumental in the establishment of the GFMD business mechanism to give business a space to voice out their concerns and to inform policymakers. In view of his significant contribution to migration discourse and cooperation, he was invited by the German Co-Chair to serve as one of the four (4) GCM rapporteurs in Berlin.

As an input speaker, he will provide an overview of the GFMD's contribution to the GCM on the thematic cluster area of addressing drivers of migration. I note that this portion of the report of the GFMD Working Group on SDGs and GCM is still a work in progress. I would encourage Ambassador Gnesa to include in his remarks his own insights on the guiding questions.

On my left is Mr. Lukas Gehre. He is Director for Policy, Research and Strategy of the International Center for Migration Policy Development or ICMPD. Lukas has also accompanied the GFMD process for a long time as the ICMPD's focal point for the GFMD. We count on his institutional memory and thematic expertise in synthesizing the outcomes of our discussion. He will report these back to the plenary at the closing session at 16h30.

Allow me now to turn over the floor to Ambassador Eduard Gnesa.

Ambassador Gnesa, please take the floor. **END**