

Geneva, 12 March 2014

## Summary Report of the GFMD Thematic Meeting on: The Role of Business in International Migration *Engaging the private sector as partners for positive development outcomes*

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On March 12, 2014, the GFMD, together with the governments of Canada and Turkey convened a Thematic Meeting on the Role of Business in International Migration. The meeting was opened by Mr. Ola Henrikson, Director General of the Swedish Department of Migration and Asylum, with remarks from SRSO Peter Sutherland. The opening session included a presentation by The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration on the highlights of the GFMD global study on how ten key business sectors are impacted by migration policies in their daily operations. A business panel commented on the findings of the presentation, followed by a discussion with the floor.

Following the break, participants broke into four roundtable sessions: a) **Extractives:** *The broader economic impact for states and business of local content and hire policies;* b) **Ethical Recruitment:** *Ensuring ethical recruitment practices in the supply chain;* c) **Financial services:** *Aligning identification requirements and migration policies to ensure access to financial services for migrants; and* d) **Emerging Needs:** *Shaping visa policies to address skills gaps in emerging sectors such as human care, education and hospitality*

Although topic specific, each of the roundtables also addressed the following questions:

- *What practical recommendations would business stakeholders like to make to governments on how migration policies can improve the investment climate and competitiveness of the country thereby enhancing development?*
- *What new models of public-private cooperation exist which balance the need to access skills and talent with adequate protection of domestic labour markets?*
- *What consultation process would you like to see states establish with businesses and what format would you prefer to use?*

The Afternoon Plenary Session was hosted by co-conveners Ms. Esen Altug, Deputy Director General for Migration, Asylum and Visa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey and Ms. Jennifer Irish, Minister-Counsellor, Canadian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva which included a report from each of the roundtables (attached herewith). While lessons can be learned and shared across sectors, based on discussions and outcomes of the meetings, proposed entry points for continued discussion with business could be:

- 1) How to ensure that the broader economic impact for states and businesses of local content and hire policies within the extractives sector is factored into overall development strategies (including education and vocational training and regional development plans)?

- 2) How to promote fair recruitment practices in labour supply chains and how to address the jurisdictional impasse for states (and businesses) attempting to comply with international labour recruitment regulations?
- 3) How to align identification requirements, security directives and migration policies to ensure access to financial services for migrants?
- 4) How to shape visa policies to address skills gaps in emerging sectors such as human care, education and hospitality?

Ms. Lynn Shotwell, Executive Director of the *Council for Global Immigration* held the concluding remarks. She commented from a business perspective on the next steps needed to build on the partnerships and trust that had emerged between states and businesses during the Swedish Chairmanship, culminating in the current Thematic Meeting. Ms. Shotwell highlighted the consensus that had emerged across the roundtable sessions regarding the importance of having a sustained dialogue with business to address key areas of mutual importance – not only regarding socio-economic growth, but also how to address public perceptions of migration. Ms. Shotwell reminded the room that current demographic patterns will impact all global regions in the foreseeable future albeit in different ways. How countries choose to leverage opportunities created through migration and mobility will shape their business environment and global competitiveness over time. Ms. Shotwell then turned to the daily reality of businesses. Citing results from a study that the Council for Global Immigration did in 2013, some companies are spending up to USD 5,5 million annually to just manage migration compliance, while the average spending is lower overall, migration compliance is the largest, most resource intense sector within human resources departments of many companies. The reason for this can be attributed to the lack of harmonisation of processes, definitions, titles and categories for work visas between countries worldwide.

Ms. Shotwell suggested that meetings like this at the GFMD, between states and business representatives open up a path for addressing practical solutions. Based on the interventions at the roundtable session, Ms. Shotwell pointed out that there are already positive examples of visa procedures that are working well for businesses and that much could be gained, both in terms of trust, but also operational advantages, if these good practises could be shared. To date, the roundtables held in New York and Brussels offered the ideal format for trust-building and exchange of views. She added that businesses have both an opportunity and a responsibility to provide support and guidance for states wishing to ensure their future competitiveness in the face of demographic challenges. Echoing the words of one rapporteur, she reminded the floor that there is a shrinking space for a reasonable debate on migration, and that businesses should be aware that if they did not speak for migration, companies would have to deal with more restrictive migration environments. She suggested that the next steps within the framework of a consultative dialogue between states and businesses could be to look at harmonizing processes and common definitions of what a working visa entails. This would save costs, increase transparency between states and employers and reduce the scope for non-compliance.

Co-conveners Canada and Turkey each contributed with reflections on their countries' engagement with the business sector and insights based on the outcomes of the roundtable discussions. Ms. Irish, speaking on behalf of Canada, emphasized the importance of clarity

for businesses and suggested that more research be done to identify migration models that work, perhaps seeking inspiration from other sectors. She closed by calling for a platform for action that includes an agenda that attracts the engagement of the private sector, reminding the floor also of the importance of addressing integration of migrants within their public policy objectives. Ms. Altug, speaking for Turkey in her closing remarks added that politicians must commit to doing the right thing for business. She added that states must provide evidence to businesses that if they engage with states, they will see results. As incoming Chair of the GFMD, Ms. Altug emphasized the importance that Turkey places on private sector engagement and that this will be a focus area for the Turkish chairmanship.

The GFMD Chair, Eva Åkerman-Börje closed the meeting by extending an invitation to all present to attend the May Forum meeting in Stockholm.

Copies of the rapporteurs' reports from each of the four roundtable sessions are attached to this summary report.



Thank you to government and private sector panelists for your contributions to this meeting.