

Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development

GFMD 2014- 2015 Second Meeting of the Steering Group

Monday, 24 November 2014
La Salle XI, R2 Level, ILO Building

Summary Report

Welcoming Remarks

1. Ms. Esen Altug, Deputy Director General for Migration, Asylum and Visa of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, chaired the second meeting of the GFMD 2014-2015 Steering Group, which was participated in by 25 member states¹. Lending support to the Turkish Chair was the GFMD 2014-2015 Troika – the outgoing GFMD 2013-2014 Chair Sweden, represented by Ambassador Eva Akerman Borje, and the incoming GFMD 2016 Chair Bangladesh, represented by Ambassador Shameem Ahsan, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva. Also assisting the Chair at the podium was Ms. Ozlem Kural from the Turkish Permanent Mission in Geneva, as well as Ms Estrella Lajom, Head of the GFMD Support Unit.

Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Provisional Agenda prepared by the Turkish GFMD Chair was adopted by the Steering Group.

The 2nd Draft Concept Paper and Work Plan of GFMD 2014-2015

3. The meeting discussed the 2nd draft concept note and work plan for GFMD 2014-2015. The Turkish Chair was encouraged by the general support that has been expressed by member states for the proposed overarching theme's thematic agenda, "*Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development.*" Comments offered by countries and other stakeholders before, during and after the October GFMD preparatory meetings were considered in improving the first draft. Some suggestions contradicted each other, so the Chair revised the concept note in line with the most often expressed opinions. A second version of the GFMD 2014-2015 draft concept note was circulated ahead of the meeting.

4. As explained by the Chair, the 2nd draft concept note clarifies the broad objectives of the GFMD 2014-2015 Chairmanship and the ways in which GFMD intends to interact with the Regional Consultation Processes, the post-2015 development agenda process, and upcoming global meetings such as the G-20 and the World Humanitarian Summit. It also outlines in much greater detail the plans to continue the work of the Swedish Chair to strengthen the administration, governance and financing of the GFMD. The Chair urged countries and other interested stakeholders to **submit additional comments by 10 December 2014**, to be considered in further revising the concept note. The Turkish Chair intends to circulate the final GFMD 2014-2015 concept note by mid-January 2015.

5. SG member states, including the past GFMD 2013-2014 Chair Sweden and incoming GFMD 2016 Chair Bangladesh, broadly welcomed the changes on the draft concept note. They appreciated the fact that many suggestions were considered in revising the draft. The new section on GFMD 2014-2015 Objectives was well-appreciated. Suggestions were made to put the objectives in the beginning of the draft. Some delegates asked the Chair to clarify the objective to consolidate the GFMD as a "one space for all." One of

¹ The meeting was attended by the Governments of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America. See <http://www.gfmd.org/process/supporting-framework/steering-group> for the complete list of SG members.

them posited that perhaps it is now high time to deliberate on whether the Forum should just remain as a space for debate or explore the potential to contribute specifically to designing mechanisms that could further impact on government policies in migration and development.

6. The Chair's initiative to ensure synergy between the GFMD and the regional and global processes was well-taken. Similarly, the intention to continue to strengthen partnership with the GMG was lauded and, in this regard, the Chair was praised for supporting the Global Migration Group (GMG) government briefing on the work, priorities and future direction of the GMG.

7. Some ideas were offered as general comments: a) clarify the link between the overarching theme and the different Roundtable Themes; b) clarify the scope of the focus on human mobility; d) strengthen the argument on linking migration to the post-2015 sustainable development process and the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016; e) explain the link between the concept paper and the multi-annual work plan approved in Stockholm, as well as the existing tools of the Forum, such as the Platform for Partnerships (PfP). The Chair was also urged to make the roundtable themes more focused and action-oriented, in order to promote outcomes that would be useful to the states.

8. On RT 1, the emphasis on integration of migrants in host societies was welcomed. It was also suggested that the inclusion of migrants should encompass not only the protection of migrants, but also the responsibilities of migrants in host societies. Another suggestion was to also look at the need to create decent jobs for migrants in the countries of origin and destination and to strengthen the element of shared responsibility among all stakeholders in enhancing work and living conditions of migrants.

9. No specific comments were offered concerning RT 2. On RT 3, a few delegates echoed earlier suggestion to avoid overlapping issues that may duplicate the work of other mandated formal organizations and/or processes. In this regard, they held the view that it might be useful to include a definition of "forced migrants." Also, it was suggested that the roundtable also look at illegal migration, human trafficking and human smuggling – all negative consequences of international migration that demand strengthened partnerships.

10. Some delegates were interested to know about the Chair's planned initiatives to engage the private sector. One delegate reiterated an earlier suggestion to bring the GFMD to the private sector, for example, by pro-actively approaching the leadership of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in order to explore concrete shared interests between the GFMD and the business community. Another delegate asked if the Chair intended to set up a specific Government Team that will lead the work on the engagement of business in international migration, similar to what happened during the Swedish Chairmanship.

11. The Chair informed the meeting about a proposal from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to organize a side event at the Global Forum on Remittances and Development (GFRD) in June 2015 in Milan. The Chair encouraged member states to send in comments on the feasibility of this proposal as a possible initiative towards engaging the private sector. One SG member held the contrary view, citing that the issue of remittances has already been discussed in many fora and that a discussion on its practical aspects (money, banking, reducing costs, etc) could distract from the more complex issues of the migration phenomenon.

12. The Chair also presented the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the GFMD 2014-2015 Roundtables, adopted from the TORs that were endorsed at the Stockholm GFMD, but without reference to the establishment of the GFMD experts network and online discussions. The Chair underlined the importance of promoting balanced representation of governments in each RT session. On this note, the Chair reserved the right to decide in case of several offers to co-chair the same RT session, and/or to approach and encourage governments to support certain RT sessions where participation seems to be lacking.

13. On thematic meetings, the Chair gave information that in view of the timelines of the post-2015 Development process, the first GFMD 2014-2015 thematic meeting on 5 February 2015.

14. The Chair encouraged delegates to send written comments on or before 10 December 2014, to which many delegates replied in the affirmative. They requested the Chair to circulate conference documents ahead of the meeting to allow sufficient time for internal coordination of comments and inputs in the future.

15. The Chair presented the latest overview of the GFMD 2014-2015 Government Roundtable teams² which is now comprised of at least 15 governments. The Chair expressed the hope that other governments will also offer their expertise in developing the Istanbul GFMD Roundtables.

GFMD Chairmanship Manual

16. The Chair informed the meeting that a GFMD Chairmanship Manual has been prepared by the GFMD Support Unit, in cooperation with the GFMD 2013-2014 Secretariat and under the guidance of the Swedish GFMD Chair. She called on Ambassador Eva Akerman Borje to explain the motivation and key elements of the new manual, an initial draft of which was presented in Ankara in March 2014. As narrated by Ambassador Akerman Borje, they realized during their Chairmanship the value of having a manual that could provide an overview of the role and responsibilities of the GFMD Chair-in-Office. Such a reference could help any incoming GFMD Chair in better understanding, preparing and implementing its work program. Additionally, it is a useful reference for any other government that is contemplating to chair the process. A large part of the work was done by the GFMD Support Unit Head in putting together the manual and its annexes.

17. The Chair thanked Ambassador Akerman Borje for initiating the development of the manual. It is a valuable effort in consolidating lessons and good practices learnt since the GFMD inception for the use of incoming and prospective GFMD Chairs. It is intended to be a living document and may be adjusted over time to incorporate new insights from future GFMD Chairs.

Follow up of GFMD 2013-2014

18. Referring to the presentation of the Swedish Chair during the 21 October first SG meeting, the Chair gave an update on the status of the recruitment of new SU personnel. A total of 67 applications were received for the G4, Administrative and Finance Assistant position and over 400 applications for the P2, Programme Officer position. The selection process is going on in cooperation with the IOM, host entity of the GFMD Support Unit.

19. The Chair also emphasized the need to have an enhanced GFMD communication plan which can increase the visibility of the process. The Chair put forward the idea of setting up an ad hoc team of governments that could elaborate on the communication needs and strategies of the Global Forum. Two governments offered their voluntary services in this regard. The Chair would like to have at least 5 governments in the team who will begin work as soon as possible. The idea is to present a proposal to the SG and FoF in April 2015.

20. In relation to the implementation of the new TORs for the Steering Group, the Chair informed the meeting that the Government of Guatemala indicated in a Note Verbal dated 4 November 2014 its request to join the GFMD 2014-2015 Steering Group. The Chair sought the advice of the Steering Group on how to address Guatemala's request, given the fact that there were already 30 SG members. During the open discussion, delegates highlighted the importance of demonstrating active engagement in the process and maintaining balance in the group not only in terms of geographical distribution per se, but also in terms of thematic interest. There was a majority opinion that it would be ideal to follow the decision in Stockholm to keep the SG membership at a maximum of 30 (as indicated in the TORs). However, others countered that this decision on the maximum limit need not be an absolute rule.

21. In the end, many delegates supported the view that the Chair in consultation with the Troika should approach SG members that have not been dynamic in their membership. In this respect, one delegate proposed that the TORs of the SG, Troika and FOF be reviewed to avoid dragging the Troika into delicate and sensitive situations. The Chair promised to reflect on this proposal and indicated the possibility to update the TORs based on comments/inputs from the SG members. The Chair also stated that the Support Unit will prepare an overview of SG participation and contribution (financial and in-kind) which can help the GFMD Troika in identifying a possible SG member that may be willing to give up its seat for Guatemala.

² See <http://www.gfmd.org/docs/turkey-2014-2015> for the latest Government RT Teams overview.

Any Other Business

22. Before closing the meeting, the Chair thanked the SG members and the GFMD Troika for their valuable remarks. She looked forward to seeing all SG members at the FOF meeting in the afternoon.

23. The meeting was adjourned at 12h00.

Prepared by the GFMD Support Unit
3 December 2014