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Statement

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Future of the GFMD session

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Excellencies,

I would be amiss not to start my intervention in this session on the future of the GFMD without reminding us all of my predecessor, SRSG Peter Sutherland, and the formidable job he did in building up the GFMD and forcefully setting migration on the global agenda. His work has led to a more constructive global dialogue and created an atmosphere of trust between stakeholders, leading us to where we are today. He helped demystify some of the previous difficult migration subjects that now are at the center of the debate.

I would also like to remind us of the context in which the GFMD was created. Ten years ago in the UN it seemed impossible to have a constructive debate on migration without ending up in strong polarization, trench digging and finger pointing. During its ten years of existence, the GFMD now has advanced the global understanding and cooperation on migration by allowing an exchange of views and experiences in a spirit of mutual understanding and trust. This type of working method will continue to be an important vehicle to arrive at sustainable compromises, which will be particularly important in the state-led process towards a global compact on migration.

The GFMD has had a long-standing and important role in setting the global agenda on migration, framing the challenges and possibilities and building the trust not only amongst states but also between states and other stakeholders. The GFMD has a wealth of substantive knowledge, data repository of good practices and thematic recollection, all of which will be invaluable input into the consultation phase of the Global Compact on Migration.

The GFMD's greatest asset is the many dedicated colleagues, from states, civil society and private sector who have tirelessly worked to advance these efforts. As did my predecessor, I will continue to count on your support to move our agenda forward.

The Sutherland report raised the issue of the future of GFMD. The report pointed out that as migration becomes more firmly anchored in the UN, the GFMD's membership will face inevitable questions regarding the Forum's continued purpose and added value.

My mandate as the SRSG for international migration first and foremost leads me to look at how the current United Nations inter-agency governance arrangements on migration can be streamlined and clarified to increase our capacities for more coherent and effective leadership. The responsibility to decide the future of the GFMD lies squarely with the GFMD participating states, but I would like to suggest a few issues that could usefully be addressed during today's session. This discussion is of course important not only to the GFMD but also to the ongoing process to establish a global compact on migration.

I would therefore find it useful to examine the following issues:

- Most importantly, how can the GFMD support consensus-building on an ambitious Global Compact on Migration?**

I wish to acknowledge the leadership of the co-chairs of the GFMD for their strong commitment to have the forum serve as a support for the GCM process by putting it at the center of this forum meeting in Berlin and their work program.

In the months ahead, the GFMD could usefully complement the discussions that have already taken place in the three thematic sessions held so far - on human rights, drivers of migration and, particularly governance. It could also pay attention to the issues that will emerge on the next set of consultations on development, trafficking and smuggling and, most importantly, labour mobility issues.

Emerging as central preoccupations so far, some questions would especially benefit from input from the GFMD, namely

- 1. How to address the protection needs of migrants moving among large groups of people prior to proper determination of their status. This includes humanitarian concerns as well as respect for human rights, questions of detention, unaccompanied minors, limits on the use of force in border control and other migration policy and practical issues.**
- 2. Equally central to the discussion so far has been the question of irregular migration and the need to expand on a variety of legal pathways. Here again, input from the vast experience of the GFMD would be invaluable in the design of the GCM.**
- 3. Finally, contributions from the GFMD in the months ahead could focus on issues such as gaps in existing**

disaggregated data related to migration, instruments for better regional and international cooperation and the like.

In short, between now and the end of this year, the GFMD has a unique opportunity to shape the GCM by sharing, in a concrete, detailed manner, the knowledge and insight it has accumulated in ten years of substantive wide-ranging consultations.

- Next issue I would suggest is to examine is - How can the GFMD support the implementation of the GCM when established?**

This will depend largely on whether the GCM will envisage explicitly migration management at the multilateral level and how specific member states will want to be. As the GCM aspires to be a practical, operational instrument to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, it 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.

In this context, a forum such as the GFMD can help strengthening collective approaches to migration, whether in its current form or with an expanded mandate. The success of a non-binding GCM will depend to a large extent on the willingness and capacities of national governments to implement it. Here not only will the past expertise of the GFMD be very helpful, but it may be necessary, going forward, to retain a space for confidence building and experience sharing. The state-led model and working method of government-led teams employed by the GFMD to explore different themes may be of continuing value; additional initiatives may also prove useful, all this depending on the direction taken by the GCM.

The key features of the work of the GFMD has been for States to come together on a voluntary basis and cooperate in setting the stage for constructive debate; outlining issues of convergence and divergence and pave the way for common definition of challenges and opportunities and pushing forwards towards solutions.

A new institutional framework for migration will have to find a way to incorporate both the experiences of the GFMD and the new environment created by the GCM.

The task ahead of us is a formidable one over the next 18 months, and the timelines are tight. We have the unprecedented chance to set a new course for governance of international migration and for meaningful improvement to the lives of millions of people on the move, by the people they leave behind and of those who will be hosting them. As the GFMD contemplates its own future, it should keep in mind the centrality of its purpose: to support States dealing with the welfare of people.

The Global Compact on Migration should develop a comprehensive framework for international cooperation on international migration, a framework that reconciles individual states' own responsibilities and interests with those of the international community more broadly. The New York Declaration recognized that with a topic as far-reaching as migration, no one can operate in isolation. The GFMD is a vital part of this international framework at present. It has been a critical motor for progress on migration, one of the defining issues of our time. I am convinced that it will contribute positively to setting the scene for the future international governance on migration, including its own future role in it.

The success of the Global Compact on Migration will depend on effective international cooperation and political leadership. I hope this Global Forum will remind us that the Global Compact should not be considered to be the end of our collective efforts on migration. Nor is it the beginning – as you mark ten years of this Forum, we should also celebrate the many achievements in bringing to the fore the numerous ways by which we can better manage migration.

It is time to take a next step. The GFMD has helped lead us to where we are now. I count on your continued positive contribution as important architects of the structure that will serve us for years ahead.