

**TENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
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**INPUT OF INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC MIGRATION COMMISSION TO THE TENTH COORDINATION
MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION¹**

International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

“Civil society actors are often the unsung heroes in the Migration and Development story, the welcome critics of policies, the unofficial implementers of activities, the conscience of societies, the watchdog of governments, the advocates of migrants’ rights and the promoters of migrants’ rights and development at the negotiation table.”

Ambassador Eduard Gnesa of Switzerland, GFMD Chair 2011

1. Civil society engagement in the 2011 GFMD: *Structural shifts for self-management, continuity and impact*

In 2011, for the first time in the five years of the Global Forum on Migration and Development:

- the task of coordinating civil society activities within the GFMD was given to an NGO practitioner, with an express charge to introduce strong, multi-year *continuity* in both civil society coordination and collaboration with the GFMD government programme
- civil society was free to design its *own focus and program of activities* within the GFMD process, obviously with clear reference to the states’ concept paper but no longer compelled only to mirror the states’ programme, as in prior years
- impact assessments were launched to study, separately, both within the states process and the civil society dimensions of the GFMD

Civil society self-management and continuity

Upon the invitation Swiss Chair of the 2011 GFMD, a Civil Society Coordinating Office was established in 2011, under the auspices of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)², assuming responsibility for the organizing civil society consultation and the GFMD civil society activities for 2011. Picking up and advancing affirmatively on the impulse of the Mexican chair of the 2010 GFMD to build continuity in the civil society organizing (remedying the ad hoc annual start-and –stop nature of prior organizing), the Swiss chair expressly charged ICMC to work closely with civil society leaders worldwide³ and with the annual Chairs of the GFMD on preparing continuous coordinating support for the civil society programme. Multi-year seed grants from the MacArthur and Bancomer Foundations provided further impetus in this direction through at least 2014.

As in prior years, an International Advisory Committee (IAC, also known as the “Core Group”) of 15 civil society leaders in migration and development, with sectoral, geographic, and gender diversity, assisted the Coordinating Office in developing, implementing and monitoring GFMD civil society activities. In addition to the IAC, a broader and open network of nearly 200 civil society leaders, GFMD veterans and original thinkers — a “Consultation Circle” — was regularly consulted on themes, format and selection of speakers, panellists and background papers. Like the IAC, this new network was a cross section of civil society actors including human rights, development, labour, diaspora and migrant organizations, academia and private sector, but also included a number of experts in regional and international organizations.

Civil society agenda and programme of activities

² Prior to its appointment as GFMD civil society coordinator, ICMC was active in multiple capacities in all prior GFMDs, including as member of the International Advisory Committee and as Chair of the civil society Steering Committee for the GFMD 2010 upon the invitation of the Mexican government. For over 60 years, ICMC has worked on the ground and in policy-building with refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of race, faith, nationality or ethnicity, often in partnership with its own global network, with other NGOs and social partners, with international organizations and with governments. ICMC’s worldwide membership is engaged in the field of development as well as migration.

³ Prominent and productive in this collaboration with civil society leaders was close engagement with the *Peoples’ Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights*, an international movement of civil society organizations that organized civil society convenings and action parallel to and with effect upon each GFMD since the GFMD was launched at the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006.

Prime objectives for the 2011 GFMD civil society programme were to put forward a distinct civil society voice in the GFMD process, to pick up on and advance the work done at previous GFMDs and to ensure continuity beyond GFMD 2011: aiming for depth above breadth, for action beyond the discussion, and for more sustainable organizing and budgeting formulae. Cross-cutting it all, civil society aimed for more, direct, meaningful and constructive engagement with governments.

In pursuit of these objectives, civil society chose to focus its 2011 programme of activities on the central theme: *Taking Action on Labour Migration, Development and the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families*⁴. A number of innovations were introduced in the format and methodology of civil society activities, including in the lead-up to the yearend GFMD civil society days, including:

- two “Joint Reflections” engaging some 120 representatives of governments and international organizations as well as civil society leaders and experts in multi-day reflection on GFMD themes, work-to-date and prospects for follow-up⁵.
- a distinct national process engaging through the year over 60 organizations of Swiss civil society in deliberation and policy-building on migration and development⁶
- an orientation towards recommendations for follow-up actions, not only for governments, but also for civil society itself; and
- a “future focus” not only on the GFMD but also on the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013

The Civil Society Days took place in Geneva on 29 and 30 November, prior to the Government forum on 1 and 2 December. While further detail is provided in section 2 below, among the important innovations in the 2011 programme of the GFMD civil society days:

- increasing to four the number of roundtables, each with two contiguous sub-sessions linked by common moderators and rapporteurs
- right-sizing the number of participants by function of the additional roundtable and by reducing the number of delegates and observers
- dedicating twice as much time to each working session, i.e. 3 hours;
- beginning each working session with examination and ratification or modification of recommendations already made by civil society in previous GFMD meetings, thus ensuring continuity and reducing “start from zero” inefficiencies

A standing-room-only crowd of civil society delegates, international organizations and states attended the two plenary sessions that focused on the future of the Forum and the High Level Dialogue during the second of the civil society days. This crowd was attracted by the featuring of the High Level Dialogue and global governance for discussion *singularly* within the civil society days of the Global Forum, and the headlining participation—in two-way, open floor debate—of Sir Peter Sutherland, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA.)

On the morning of 1 December, civil society presented the results and recommendations from their two days in a statement to the governments within their opening GFMD plenary.⁷ Following the precedent set at the GFMD in Puerto Vallarta, the statement was immediately followed by three hours of a “Common Space” debate on Demographics, Youth (un)employment, Development and Migration, with an emphasis on positive alternatives to irregular migration and remedies to migrants in irregular status. The common

⁴ The full concept note and information about civil society activities, including the programme for the 2011 GFMD Civil Society Days, can be accessed at www.gfmdcivilsociety.org

⁵ These reflections took place in Geneva in August and in Bellagio in October. The Geneva reflection focused on broad themes of the GFMD and was co-organized by ICMC, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (Geneva) and the advisors and task force of the Swiss Chair. The Bellagio reflection focused specifically on data collection and the development of migration indicators, and was organized by the International Network on Migration and Development (RIMD, la Red Internacional de Migración y Desarrollo.)

⁶ The national process was facilitated by ICMC but organized by the Graduate Institute (Geneva) within an organizing committee of five Swiss civil society organizations.

⁷ The full statement and a matrix of recommendations and outcomes are available at www.gfmdcivilsociety.org. The matrix in particular was prepared as a baseline for discussion and action in 2012.

space was moderated by BBC correspondent Zeinab Badawi with over 700 participants from governments and civil society present.

Impact assessments

Two separate processes were launched in 2011 to assess impact of the GFMD. The states began a two year process of evaluation, including a broad survey of states, international organizations and observers, culminating in a report to the 2012 GFMD in Mauritius. Alongside, the MacArthur Foundation tasked an independent consultant to conduct a study of the civil society dimensions of the Global Forum for publication and circulation among GFMD stakeholder ahead of the 2012 GFMD.

2. Flash facts and figures on the GFMD civil society days 2011

Civil society delegates and other participants

- ▲ record number of civil society applicants: 625
- ▲ 186 civil society delegates selected
 - ☆ 73 migrants, 61 different nationalities
 - ☆ 50 of them speakers or panellists in the Civil Society Days programme
- ▲ 45 observers from regional and international organizations
- ▲ 43 special guests
- ▲ 71 government representatives of 35 countries
- ▲ 18 media representatives

Delegate diversity

- ▲ for the first time in the five years of the GFMD: the largest group of delegates (38) was from diaspora/migrant-led organizations
- ▲ second largest group of delegates (34) from human rights organizations
- ▲ followed by, in size order: development organizations, labour organizations, academia and think tanks, and private sector
- ▲ 16 from Swiss civil society organizations
- ▲ 95 male, 91 female
- ▲ 88 organizations active in Africa, 82 in Europe, 79 in the Americas, 77 in the Asia-Pacific, and 51 in the Middle-East

Scope: many organizations conduct programming and advocacy at multiple levels.

- ▲ 87 organizations work at a global level
- ▲ 102 at a regional level
- ▲ 124 at a national level
- ▲ 88 at a local level

New/special focus (each topic with three hours or more each)

- ▲ alternatives to irregular migration, including jobs creation in countries of origin and legal channels of migration
- ▲ diaspora, development and investments
- ▲ family unity and reunification
- ▲ ILO Multilateral Framework for Labour Migration
- ▲ key agents of change in labour migration
- ▲ “labour matching“, temporary/circular migration and other mechanisms for labour migration
- ▲ regularization of undocumented migrants

New organizing

- ▲ An NGO (ICMC) was selected to organize the Civil Society activities for the first time
- ▲ 2011 activities organized at 1/3 the budget of 2010, thanks almost entirely to the support of five donors, led by the Swiss federal and cantonal governments, the MacArthur and Bancomer Foundations, and ICMC’s own contribution.
- ▲ 200 civil society leaders worldwide consulted to prepare subjects, process and programme

3. Civil society outcomes and recommendations from 2011

The two Civil Society Days resulted in a civil society statement and an overview of 18 key recommendations⁸ for follow-up actions to be taken up independently or in partnership by governments and civil society around the following 5 themes:

1. rights-based policy-making for the benefit of migrant workers and families
2. improving protection of migrants moving or working in irregular circumstances
3. re-imagining labour mobility
4. investing in development alternatives to migration
5. advancing the global governance of migration and the future of the Forum,

Just to highlight three elements of in those recommendations:

- A number of areas were noted as having outcomes within reach, in particular: measures to improve recruitment and placement processes; cooperation on piloting mechanisms for labour and skills matching; and securing ratifications of the new ILO Convention on Domestic Workers.
- There continues to be appreciation that the “D” in “GFMD” is for *human* development—but not as the opposite of *economic* development. Human and economic development are not opposites in this Global Forum: they go together.
- Again the predominant emphasis of civil society was on protection of the rights of migrants and their families for the well-being of migrants, their communities and states—including fundamental rights essential to positive diaspora engagement. In these directions, civil society remains unequivocally committed to universal ratification of the 1990 Migrant Workers Convention.

Further, the recommendations included strong suggestions to move forward, to improve the GFMD’s impact and prepare for the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD) in 2013. In particular, civil society called on all actors:

- in considering the Future of the Forum, to affirm that the primary concern is actually the future of *migrants*. International governance is urgently needed to protect the rights of migrant workers and families where a specific government fails to do so.
- to further reflect upon the possibility of integrating the GFMD within a rights-based, accountable and transparent framework with binding engagements

The recommendations further charged not only governments but civil society itself to work harder at exploring avenues for deeper and alternative modalities for interaction between civil society and governments, throughout the year as well as during GFMD meetings, including the value of creating a small, time-limited working group on labour mobility before the High Level Dialogue to consider the role of recruiting agencies, migration data, labour shortages and surpluses, forms and programmes of labour mobility that work and do not work for migrants, employers and communities in both countries of origin and destination.

Evaluation

The Coordinating Office 70 responses to an evaluation form sent to all who participated in last year’s civil society days. Responses were widely positive, in particular with respect to efforts at continuity and to direct engagement within the civil society programme with government and UN leaders. Strong appreciation for the value that common space adds in bringing delegates from both “sides” of the Global Forum together on a single theme, exploring not only existing good practice and common ground among civil society and state actors, but also some complex political sensitivities. Many of the evaluations applauded the quality of the panelists and the moderator while raising the challenge to structure more focused and connective dialogue within that common space and within other portions of the states’ GFMD programme.

⁸ *Ibid.*

4. GFMD 2012 and the High Level Dialogue

At the invitation of the Mauritian Chair, and with part funding from the MacArthur and Bancomer Foundations, ICMC continues to serve as the Coordinating Office for 2012, working with civil society partners worldwide to organize the activities of civil society within the processes of both the 2012 GFMD and the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013.

Steps taken in the first two months of GFMD 2012 (December 2011 and January 2012)

As the year began, there were already commitments for about 1/3 third of the core budget for civil society activities in 2012—entirely from prior donors. While that support is clearly an expression of confidence in the place and value of civil society within the GFMD process, achieving a broader and more sustainable resource base continues to be a major challenge for civil society. And yet, the support among most states for civil society engagement in the GFMD remains strong and vocal. Indeed, the Coordinating Office believes that there is genuine funding potential in this GFMD process, especially as both civil society and states become more focused—voluntarily—on specific and measurable outcomes. With that in mind, an organized appeal will be launched in February and March for a diverse group of 10 states to become “*investors in the GFMD civil society.*”

The Coordinating Office formally pursued several funding opportunities for civil society activities related to the Forum: each with the possibility of *multi-year* funding; two referring to civil society convenings between GFMD meetings at an inter-regional level, including continental Africa; and one for research on so-called “south-south” migration and related development issues.

Along with 16 other civil society organizations, representatives of 11 agencies of the Global Migration Group⁹ and intergovernmental organizations, and even 10 states, ICMC’s Coordinating Office participated actively in (and moderated) the day-long the brainstorming among *non-states* actors that the Mauritius Chair organized on its draft concept paper in Mauritius January 19th. The discussion was lively and positive: 32 different speakers made 89 interventions, broadly supportive of the themes of the concept paper, and the drive of the Chair towards outcomes. Particular emphasis was made on keeping migrants at the center of the discussion, engaging more fully with diaspora and on development, and taking discussion to action.

With respect to partners, the Coordinating Office will once again be working with an International Advisory Committee core group of 15-18 civil society representatives that are geographically and sectorally diverse. It is hoped and expected that many of the veterans from prior years will stay on, but there will be new and more representatives from Africa, and more diaspora, along with Mauritian civil society representatives (as was the case with representatives of Swiss civil society last year.) On the ground in Mauritius, the presence and direct partner for the international planning and logistics of the civil society days will be ICMC’s network member Caritas Mauritius, who along with other local civil society groups will also collaborate in a distinct process of organizing Mauritius civil society with the Mauritius Council of Social Services and IOM Mauritius.

Civil society’s work immediately ahead

The Civil society Coordinating Office is heavily engaged in fundraising and, given the experience of challenge (and success) in 2011, will continue to be so engaged through most of the year. With important budget as well as format and political implications, the office is negotiating logistics for the yearend meeting in Mauritius, working with the Chair towards a **suitable location** that satisfies plenary, break-out session and common space requirements of both the states and civil society meetings.

Following the imminent adoption by the Mauritius Chair of its concept paper for the *states* programme, civil society will refer to it alongside civil society’s work in the Global Forum to date as the two principal

⁹ The Global Migration Group is a voluntary inter-agency convening of fifteen UN agencies plus the International Organization for Migration to share information and develop joint action on matters of international migration.

references for civil society's *own* concept paper this year. Like last year, this effort will involve wide consultation, participatory review of two drafts, and on substance, operate according to the principle "less is more." So for example, the civil society concept paper is likely to have a more limited focus than the states', for example with great attention to issues particular but not exclusive to Africa (including "south-south" migration), and on dynamics of development and diaspora.

The High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development

Finally, thinking has proceeded in earnest about the Future of the Forum and the High Level Dialogue (the HLD) next year. As far as organizing the HLD goes, "next" year is really "this" year, only underscored by the UN Coordinating Committee on International Migration scheduling a panel on the HLD in New York at the end of this week. Honestly, civil society—like many governments and international organizations—has a lot of thinking to do. For one thing, contrary to wide assumption, there is no consensus in civil society that the GFMD belongs in the UN, even as many agree that the GFMD needs a UN framework of some kind, at a minimum normative but also more structured and sustained than is presently the case.

Moreover, after six years of constructive participation in these GFMD meetings since the last HLD in 2006, and all the on-the-ground partnering between civil society and states and international organizations, it should go without saying that civil society is to participate more substantially in the next Global Forum and HLD than has been permitted in the past.

At the same time, even as such modalities of process and engagement get so much attention in coming months, it is important not to lose the essential focus of the HLD on the substance of the issues at hand, and, as in the first HLD, its potential to address real-world aspects of migrants and societies in migration and development. Perhaps a strategic few aspects, like data and mechanisms for labour and skills matching, or normalizing effective protection for vulnerable migrant victims of violence and trauma, whether forced, stranded, in transit or in destination countries, regardless of their immigration status...

ICMC's Coordinating Office believes in the value of this Global Forum, notwithstanding all the ways and areas in which it needs to be improved. Like so many other civil society actors and most of the international organizations and states involved in the GFMD, ICMC believes in the importance of assuring the impact investing in the GFMD; civil society's role is to step up to, and into, what is possible to really achieve that value and impact for the benefit of migrants, migrant families, communities and states.

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