

**15th Coordination Meeting on International Migration (CM15)
16 February 2017**

**Plenary: A Roadmap for Implementing the New York Declaration
Comments by Colin Rajah
Chair, Civil Society Days of the 2016 Global Forum on Migration and Development**

Excellencies and colleagues, especially my fellow civil society colleagues;

Thank you Director-General for mentioning my new role in relation to the Global Compact. It is a real commendation to you, IOM, and especially Michele Klein-Solomon, for making such a commitment to civil society as a critical stakeholder in the process towards the Global Compact. And personally, I'm very honored and humbled to be given the opportunity to take it on.

Director-General, you might be pleased to know that following your lead, I also have 3 points to share:

Firstly, from our Civil Society Days¹ from the GFMD in Dhaka last December. There we had almost 40 hours in 2½ days, in plenaries, work sessions, special strategy sessions, the very popular tea-tables, and the Common Space, directly dedicated to the New York Declaration, and specifically to commitments to the Global Compact on Migration. And that doesn't include countless other hours in the People's Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights² which preceded the Civil Society Days, that focused heavily on the Global Compact, including its keynote and opening panel which included Amb. Riaz Hamidullah from the Bangladesh Chair's office. I have a laundry list of points that emerged from all these but perhaps let me just share some of the key highlights.

- In all of these, civil society unanimously applauded the New York Declaration's strong language on the protection of ALL migrants, regardless of status. We hope this will be re-emphasized throughout the Global Compact process.
- We agreed that the Global Compact should be firmly rooted in principles of rights and justice, and these should be the starting point and connection point for the deliberations on both compacts.
- But rather than just re-stating existing rights, we should focus on tools, cooperation, and systems to implement those shared principles. And we should structure these with clear goals, targets and indicators, very much like the SDGs. These should then be laid out along a graduated timeline of 2, 5 and 15 years.

¹ <http://www.madenetwork.org/civil-society-days-gfmd-2016>

² <http://dhaka.peoplesglobalaction.org/>

³ <http://dhaka.peoplesglobalaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WIMNone->

- We ask that the Global Compact include commitments to address the root causes of forced displacement, the humanitarian needs of migrants, and be accompanied by the financing and technical support for effective implementation.
- It should draw on existing multi-stakeholder processes — something already referred to in the modalities resolution – and these must build from the local, grassroots-level on up.
- The women’s rapporteur in the Civil Society Days asserted that we should reject the notion of women as just a “vulnerable population”, but they should be regarded as advocates of rights, and agents for change. Additionally, the Women in Migration Network has also come up with a set of accompanying points on gender³ for the Global Compact, which you can find at the back of the room.
- We pledged to strengthen our focus on red-lines on *forced* return. We understand that this might be a touchy point in the current climate. But we think this is the right opportunity to have an honest and constructive dialogue that is rights- and evidence-based. In fact, the next GFMD Civil Society Days in Berlin will already include a special 90-minute strategy session dedicated to this issue.

Those are the related points from the 2016 Civil Society Days in Dhaka. There is a 2-page booklet⁴ that summarizes all of the highlights of those Civil Society Days at the back of the room. I’d like to offer thanks to the Civil Society Days Coordinating Office – John Bingham and his ICMC team – as well as the International Steering Committee for their work on all these.

Next, the process for the Global Compact this year and next...

- Turning towards the next GFMD in Berlin, and following on Amb. Schmidt-Bremme’s comments, the Civil Society Days will see 100% of its entire program dedicated towards the Global Compact. Discussions are also underway with the Chair to have the Common Space plenary and breakout sessions also have a focus on the Global Compact.
- We will draw from our collective civil society experience, especially in relation to the 2013 High Level Dialogue, and in a slightly more microcosmic manner, the MICIC Initiative in 2015-2016, where civil society has organized independent, regional consultations of its own. We have found these to be very beneficial for ALL stakeholders, and provide good channels for engagement for civil society. As the Director-General has just confirmed indicated in his opening remarks, there will be

³ <http://womeninmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WIMNone-pagerFebruary2017onGlobalCompact.pdf>

⁴ http://www.madenetwork.org/sites/default/files/GFMD_CSD_2016_Highlights_and_principal_recommendations-final.pdf

five regional civil society consultations for the Global Compact. We plan and hope for these to correspond and feed into the states' consultations as well.

- For the six thematic consultations, we also expect to have representatives of civil society as active participants, particularly experts in each respective thematic area.
- The Director-General indicated that 35 states have indicated interest to undertake national-level consultations. We are already working to identify local civil society focal points in each of those. This is not only for civil society to participate in the consultations, but then to engage to implement the Compact on the ground in those states.
- For IOM's International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), as in the past, civil society expects to be actively participating. But more so than before, we'll bring our collective thinking on the Global Compact in relation to this year's IDM focus.
- For the stock-taking convening in Mexico at the end of the year, we expect to bring a strong and robust participation of civil society leaders from the regions and globally, to share and dialogue about the outcomes of our consultations from throughout the year.
- And for the interactive hearings next year, we look forward to bring the full breadth and depth of global civil society participation. We also recommend that civil society help to define those hearings – something we can draw from the 2013 High Level Dialogue experience – including the program, selection of speakers, drafting its outcomes etc.

Finally, we know our commitment to each other will be fully tested over the next couple of years. We might find ourselves in uncomfortable situations, sometimes perhaps even on opposite ends of the table. But we will be at the SAME table, working towards the same goals. And we think that it is only with real engagement and partnership with all stakeholders – and we consider civil society as one of the important pillars of stakeholders – can we reach a Compact that can bring real change and meaning to migrants' lives.

It might seem like we're asking a lot in all these. But I challenge everyone to take a look around this packed room this morning, and try to identify each and every civil society member. My point here being that I'd like to thank the Under Secretary-General, DESA, and in particular Bela Hovy, who have opened up these Coordinating Meetings to civil society. We have had civil society not only as participants but as speakers in plenaries in all the Coordination Meetings these past few years. That is precisely the kind of spirit that we must have in engagement for the deliberations these next two years towards the Global Compact.

We of course recognize that this will be an intergovernmental process, but we also want to underline the brilliance of the New York Declaration, the brilliance of the Modalities

Resolution, and in fact, the brilliance of Peter Sutherland's report, that all pointed to the need to have an effective multi-stakeholder process in order to reach a meaningful Compact.

So it is time now for us to roll up our collective sleeves, and to take action to work towards that. And we look forward to doing that in partnership with all of you.