

# FINAL REPORT

# 15<sup>TH</sup> GFMD SUMMIT



RIOHACHA, COLOMBIA 🌿 SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2025



## CIVIL SOCIETY MECHANISM



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## Introduction: The GFMD in Unprecedented Times

In recent years, anti-migration sentiment and narratives have spread across many regions of the world, becoming increasingly normalised and polarising public discourse. Civil society have closely monitored this, pushing back against the rising tide of xenophobia and signs of closing civic spaces in decision-making. However, despite these concerning trends, opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue and the involvement of civil society in international agenda-setting have remained a cornerstone of our global advocacy and have been supported by aligned governments and donors.

As such, with one eye on these worrying trends, civil society entered the 15th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) process with much to build upon. Supportive member states have continued to assist our meaningful participation and advocacy contributions, including efforts made by the last two GFMD Chairs, the United Arab Emirates and France, to bring stakeholder groups more closely into the wider process. Building from the 14th GFMD, in which the French Chair embraced more innovative formats, such as smaller dialogue breakouts in each Government Roundtable, the Colombian Chairship sought to expand on new approaches for dynamic collaboration.

Unfortunately, this Chairship, held between summer 2024 and the end of October 2025, fell across one of the most tumultuous and unprecedentedly challenging times in recent history. Following the change in the United States administration between the first and second GFMD Preparatory Meetings, development actors across the world were rocked by significant international funding cuts and geopolitical shifts that continue to threaten the core of the international community.

With resilience and urgency at the forefront of our minds, global civil society headed into the 15th GFMD Summit in September 2025 with one thing in mind- the significance of this moment. Amidst a climate of rising normalised xenophobia and discrimination, the dismissal of human rights, and increasingly flagrant contraventions of international and domestic law, this was not only a chance to come together for solidarity and mutual support, but also an opportunity to make a statement. It was our opportunity to set the tone for how we will confront the coming times – collectively.

This report details the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism’s (CSM) official constituency preparatory process across the 15th Chairship to the Summit in September 2025, including our priorities and efforts for local leadership, responsiveness to current times, and civil society-led agendas. However, it also represents a crucial foundation stone laid by civil society for the hard road ahead – these challenges are far from over, and we will continue our work to meet them.

**Thank you for your interest, and for any future support you may give, hand-in-hand with civil society, to our migrant communities across the world.**



Reflecting on the value of the GFMD and civil society advocacy, **Stéphane Jaquemet**, ICMC Director of Policy, stated



*‘It’s still so important that the like-minded can keep talking to each other, and that you can still have civil society, countries of origin, and countries of destination in direct dialogue. The GFMD is still a platform where pragmatic issues can be discussed, and those pragmatic issues can have an impact for some migrants, in some cases. Like everything related to internationalism and multilateralism, it’s better to keep it alive for better times. Our objective can be solely to maintain a dialogue, knowing that we may not have an impact today, but that we will be ready for a tomorrow when, maybe, there will be a better environment. For me that’s important.’*



[Read the Interview](#)



## Road to Colombia

The 2024-2025 civil society preparatory process was shaped by civil society feedback from the 14th GFMD process, highlighting the need for more engagement opportunities beyond official GFMD spaces and for greater visibility of civil society's diverse perspectives. In response, starting from July 2024, the GFMD CSM put in motion a series of preparatory activities nicknamed 'Sociedad Civil en Rumbo a Colombia' / 'The Civil Society Road to Colombia'. This process brought together grassroots and migrant-led organisations, trade unions, diaspora organisations and regional networks from all over the world. Together, participants shaped advocacy, refined messaging and developed strategies to address current challenges affecting migrants' access to rights and protection.

A key feature of the preparatory process was its building-block approach, mirroring the Chair's vision for a sequence where each Roundtable Consultation feeds into the next:

- 1** The **first** explored **challenges and opportunities** related to the six thematic priorities.
- 2** The **second** focused on the **exchange of policies and practices**.
- 3** The **third**, eventually merged with the Summit itself, looked at **solutions and partnerships**.

Throughout the preparatory process, the 'Civil Society Thematic Dialogues' (TDs) took centre stage. These sessions were dedicated to strengthening collective advocacy, reflecting on the Chair's thematic priorities, and providing space for wider civil society to react to shifting regional dynamics and plan actions beyond the GFMD process.



## GFMD Six Thematic Priorities



**1. Strength in Movement: The Impact of Women on Global Migration and Development**

**2. Children and Youth on the Move: Innovators for Tomorrow's Development**

**3. The Interplay of Media and Culture to Construct and Deconstruct the Reality of Migration**

**4. Climate Change: Safe Labour Routes as a Bridge to Prosperity**

**5. Regional Cooperation and Integration to Promote Safe and Regular Migration for Development**

**6. New Technologies and Digitalization: Improving Migration Management and Regular Migration Pathways**

## Thematic Dialogues in Focus

- 1** **1<sup>st</sup> Thematic Dialogues** – challenges and opportunities across the GFMD priority themes
- 2** **2<sup>nd</sup> Thematic Dialogues** - Civil society on the exchange of policies and practices: What makes a policy or practice good or successful?
- 3** **3<sup>rd</sup> Thematic Dialogues** - Priorities from the ground: building a global civil society agenda
- 4** **4<sup>th</sup> Thematic Dialogues** – Session 1: Beyond dialogue? The GFMD's role in today's migration context & Session 2: From Words to Action: Civil Society's path to mobilising governments and allies

# Civil Society Calendar of Self-Organised Activities



## Thematic Dialogues in Focus (Continued)

The range of topics covered in the TDs reflected direct applicability to the Chair programme, as well as attentiveness to the changing context – which later necessitated a general approach of ‘no business as usual’. This allowed for thinking that was grounded in the realities of all participating organisations and that recognised the potential of the GFMD as a dynamic process- shaped at the local, regional and international levels. Most importantly, it emphasised that civil society’s engagement can and must evolve with our realities on the ground, our values and actions that influence migration discourse.

To capture the outcomes of the TDs, Civil Society Advocacy Briefs were developed to distil ideas, identify priorities and draw actionable recommendations.

Civil Society  
Advocacy Briefs

## Civil Society Thematic Strategy Working Groups in Focus

To further strengthen engagement, the GFMD CSM established strategy-focused thematic working groups, open to all civil society representatives interested in actively shaping strategy discussions, framing civil society activities, and advancing collective advocacy.

For the 15th GFMD process, six groups were established, each reflecting one of the Chair’s thematic priorities. Co-leads were members of the International Steering Committee (ISC) with expertise in their thematic area and experience in strategic engagement with various stakeholders, while membership was open to all participants in the GFMD civil society process.

Members’ responsibilities were to:

-  **Guide** strategic engagement by identifying opportunities to share GFMD inputs directly with governments or in other relevant migration forums.
-  **Brief** and prepare civil society representatives for each GFMD Roundtable, ensuring that advocacy messages from the broader civil society are communicated effectively.
-  **Review** applicants for the 15th civil society delegation to ensure thematic balance. Recommendations from the working groups were shared with the ISC and informed the final selection of delegates.



Each working group could organise activities to enhance advocacy on the thematic priorities. However, changes in the Summit location and fragmented communication about the Chair’s preparatory meetings made this aspect challenging, leading to more ad-hoc engagement by working group members during the thematic dialogues and the civil society delegation selection process.

## Information Sessions

To support broad, informed, and inclusive participation, the CSM Secretariat organised a series of five online information sessions between October 2024 and April 2025. These sessions were designed to explain and clarify the GFMD, discuss how civil society can engage and participate meaningfully in the process, outline the requirements for eligibility to the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit delegation, and create accessible entry points for organisations and networks across all regions to engage.

The sessions included two global briefings in October 2024 and March 2025, as well as three region-specific ones: A Spain-based civil society session in November 2024, a

Colombian civil society session in March 2025, and a Latin American regional session in April 2025. Together, they reached out to organisations working at different levels, from long-standing GFMD participants to groups engaging for the first time under the Colombian chairship.

Beyond sharing practical information on timelines, eligibility, thematic priorities, and delegation processes, these sessions also created a critical space for dialogue. Throughout them, participants raised questions, shared concerns, and reflected on the political context in which the Summit would take place, including shrinking civil society space, rising anti-migrant narratives, and the need for stronger, more coordinated civil society engagement. The feedback received during these sessions helped shape the tone and focus of the broader civil society preparatory process, including Thematic Dialogues and the delegation’s Civil Society Preparatory Meetings (CSPMs).

The strong turnout and sustained interest across all five sessions reflected the general interest in the Civil Society Road to Colombia process, demonstrating the relevance of the Riohacha Summit and the appetite among civil society to contribute to solidarity and collectivisation within it.



# Local Action for Global Impact

## Local Committee

A Local Committee (LC) was established in February 2025 to support the engagement and participation Colombian civil society into the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD process, bringing together representatives from Colombian organisations and diaspora actors to provide a collective entry point into the global preparatory cycle and to anchor Colombian engagement in the Summit in a transparent and accountable way.

Its primary roles were to ensure that information related to the Summit and preparatory process was shared with the Colombian organisations and networks, and that local questions, updated, and contextual realities were channelled back into the broader process.

The LC also played a formal role in selecting Colombian and Colombian diaspora delegates to the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. Following the same eligibility criteria and democratic principles applied globally, the CSM Secretariat first verified that applicants had fulfilled the qualifying requirements and then shared the relevant expressions of interest with the LC. Based on this information, the 17 LC representatives carried out the selection process and identified **20 delegates**, whose nominations were subsequently submitted to the ISC for final approval.

Beyond these responsibilities, the LC also engaged with the Colombian authorities on issues affecting the conditions and integrity of the Summit itself. In this context, the LC collectively drafted and submitted a formal letter to the Colombian government regarding the proposed change of location to Riohacha, outlining both the symbolic importance of the decision and the practical, logistical, and participation-related considerations required to ensure a successful and inclusive GFMD Summit.

You can find the letter here:

[Colombian Letter](#)

During their entire mandate, the LC met regularly and worked in close coordination with the CSM Secretariat.

The CSM Secretariat would like to recognise and thank all members of the LC for their time, care, commitment, and, most importantly, for believing in the process. Their work, often carried out alongside demanding organisational and community responsibilities, was essential to ensuring that Colombian and Colombian Diaspora civil society organisations could engage in the GFMD process and the Summit in a coordinated and meaningful way.



## Jornada de Acción de la Sociedad Civil Colombiana - Colombia Day

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Colombian civil society gathered in Bogotá for a Colombian Civil Society Action Day, convened by the GFMD CSM with the support of the Mayor's Office of Bogotá, as part of the lead-up to the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. Held at the Centro de Paz, Memoria y Reconciliación, the day brought together more than 60 participants from migrant-led organisations, Colombian NGOs, trade unions, local and national authorities, international agencies, youth groups and the private sector. In a context marked by growing criminalisation of mobility, forced returns, shrinking civic society space and increasingly hostile narrative on migration, the Colombian Day created a dedicated space to move from diagnosis to coordination, allowing local civil society actors to align priorities, strengthen alliances and, importantly, connect local realities to the GFMD.

The programme combined high-level institutional engagement with grounded civil society. Representatives from the Mayor's Office of Bogotá, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the District Secretariat of Government, and the Instituto Distrital de la Participación y Acción Comunal (IDPAC), shared policy frameworks and participation pathways, while the CSM Secretariat set out how the Colombia Day and national mobilisation connected into the broader global preparatory process for the Riohacha Summit. Three thematic panels then explored some of the most pressing issues for Colombia and the region: forced returns, deportations and alternatives to detention; pathways from informality to decent work, labour mobility and regularisation; and migration within an intersectional feminist agenda.

Across these conversations, participants highlighted the need to centre dignity, due process and protection in returns and deportation practices, to remove structural barriers to labour inclusion, and to ensure that gender, care and LGBTQIA+ realities are meaningfully integrated into migration policies and advocacy.

The day concluded with working groups that translated these discussions into concrete priorities and action points for national, regional and international advocacy, including around regularisation, protection in the Darien context, local government engagement and stronger collective organising among civil society.



The **full article**, including detailed panel summaries, key messages, resources, and documentation from the day, is available here:

The **event relator notes**, written by Juan Pablo Rangel from **Fundación Ideas para la Paz**, can be found here:

**Pictures** of the day:

Article

Relator Notes

Album

## Local Actors

Local partnerships were essential to ensuring the Civil Society Process and participation at the Summit were well supported and effective, and that all was smooth in Riohacha.

La Guajira. Santo Ángel supported the 4th Civil Society Preparatory Meeting by providing professional photography and hand fans for the delegation, helping document civil society participation and collective moments while also contributing to the process's visibility and historical record.

Asociación Santo Ángel, in addition to being a strong local civil society partner, presented its own exhibition at the Summit. On the theme **'Voces que cruzan fronteras'** (Voices that cross borders), the exhibition featured visual testimonies created by migrants, returnees, and host communities. These works highlighted lived experiences and emphasised that migrants are not only subjects but also agents of change. Community art and collaborative narrative production were at the heart of the exhibition, demonstrating their power to reshape the migratory narrative around dignity, social justice, and resilience.



*'Voces que Cruzan fronteras' © Asociación Santo Ángel 2024*

In parallel, the CSM Secretariat worked with a Local Runner, Leiner Pinto, who provided critical logistical and operational support in Riohacha before and during the 4<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. Acting as the Secretariat's on-the-ground focal point, Leiner supported day-to-day logistics, coordination of materials, ad hoc transportation requirements, and troubleshooting in real time.

The CSM Secretariat extends its sincere thanks to Asociación Santo Ángel and to Leiner Pinto for all their assistance, professionalism, commitment, and generosity. Working with them was a great pleasure for the CSM Secretariat and the Civil Society delegation to the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit.



## Delegation Selection Process

Building on reflections from the 14<sup>th</sup> GFMD and wider discussions on the current state of international migration governance, the Civil Society Mechanism adopted a more strategic approach to civil society participation for the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. The aim was to ensure that a focused delegation could engage effectively, contribute meaningfully, and advance shared civil society priorities and solidarity throughout the Summit.

As in previous cycles, the ISC reviewed and approved the overall delegation framework and eligibility criteria. This year, however, greater emphasis was placed on sustained and demonstrated engagement in the civil society preparatory process and local engagement of Colombian Civil Society and Diaspora. With this in mind, in addition to meeting the criteria applied in past GFMD cycles, prospective delegates were required to demonstrate active participation in the 2024-2025 CSM activities and preparatory process, including attendance at Programme Consultations, Thematic Dialogues, and Working Groups.

Eligibility for consideration required participation in at least one of the following activities:

-  **July 2024** - Programme Consultations

 **October 2024** - 1st Thematic Dialogues

 **February 2025** - 2nd Thematic Dialogues
-  **April 2025** - 3rd Thematic Dialogues

 **May 2025** - 4th Thematic Dialogues

This requirement, different from previous years, responded directly to reflections from the 14<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit delegation, which highlighted the need to both open the space for newer voices and ensure that all delegates are committed, active contributors. Beyond attendance, eligibility also reflected a willingness and capacity to represent civil society's collective priorities, engage in coordination efforts, and contribute proactively to bilateral, side events, and Summit sessions such as the Roundtables.

There was no open application process for individuals part of organisations that had not engaged in the 2024-2025 civil society process. All organisation representatives seeking to be considered, including ISC members, Working Groups participants, and members of the Local Committee, were required to submit an expression of interest or nomination. The form was circulated exclusively to those who had been active in the process.

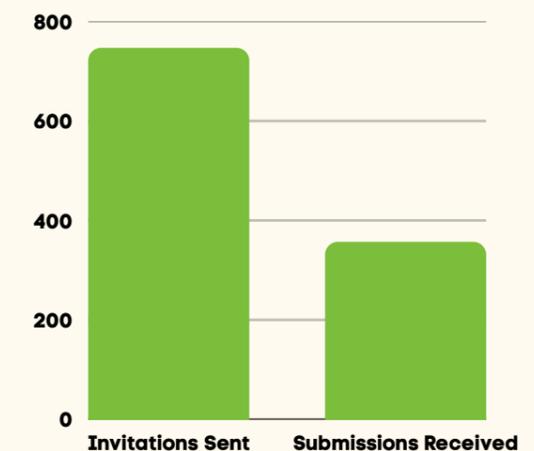
The CSM Secretariat compiled all expressions of interest and nominations and shared them through two parallel pathways. On the one hand, submissions from global and regional networks and organisations were shared with the relevant Working Groups, which reviewed them and formulated recommendations for the ISC. On the other hand, submissions from Colombian representatives and Colombian Diaspora delegates were reviewed through the Local Committee, following the same eligibility criteria and delegation principles applied throughout the process.

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Throughout both pathways, the CSM Secretariat ensured that principles of regional balance, gender diversity, organisational representation, and thematic coverage were respected. As in previous years, final deliberation and approval of the civil society delegation rested with the ISC.

In total, **747 invitation emails were sent to eligible civil society representatives, resulting in 357 submissions.**

Expressions of Interest for the  
Civil Society Delegation:  
Invitations Sent vs. Submissions  
Received







## Sponsorship and Allocation Process

Aligned with both the precedent set by previous years, combined with attention to the available budget, geographic, gender and grassroots considerations, sponsorships were allocated through evaluation of the following factors for each delegate:

- 1** Geographic representation, current and prior, with attention to historic inequalities. For example, historically under-represented and lower-resourced regions, such as the Pacific Islands, were prioritised for funding.
- 2** Size and income brackets of the delegate's respective organisation. This was intended to ensure that unfunded and underfunded grassroots actors, who need more resources and support for participation, could be prioritised.
- 3** Prioritisation for funding set by the own nominating network/organisation. This is submitted to the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism team as part of the nomination process to ensure the most democratic and self-selected process possible.
- 4** Requests for funding: delegates were asked to detail whether they needed full or partial (travel or accommodation coverage) funding in their nomination forms. This was considered both when selecting delegates based on the submitted nomination priorities, as well as when maximising the available budget to ensure the most inclusive delegation possible.

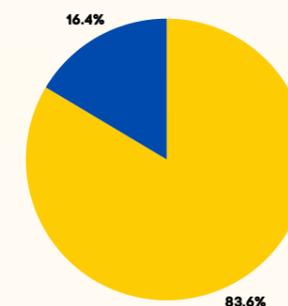
Due to funding restrictions and the significantly lower cost of living in Riohacha compared to the 14<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit's location of Geneva, DSAs were only offered to delegates who were 1) based in (and residing in) the Global South / Majority; and 2) were affiliated with an organisation with an annual budget under 100,000 USD.

To maximise Colombian civil society participation and in recognition of the difficulties associated with the mid-Chairship change of location, the Civil Society Mechanism covered flights and accommodation for Colombian and Colombian diaspora delegates, but did not provide a DSA.

Overall, **61 participants out of 73 received some level of sponsorship.**

**Legend:**

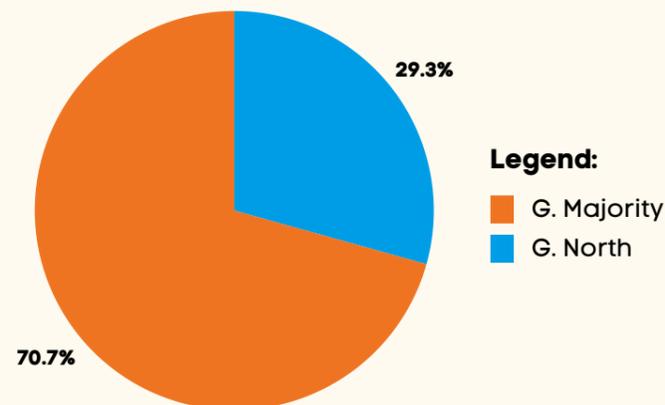
- Received Sponsorship
- Did not receive sponsorship



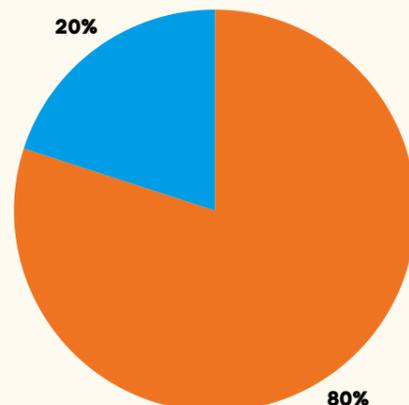
# Delegation Breakdown

The Civil Society Mechanism convened a delegation of 75 representatives for the 15th GFMD Summit. Due to last-minute travel constraints, 73 of the 75 delegates were able to attend the final Delegation Preparatory Meeting and the Summit in person. The delegation reflected a wide range of lived experiences and perspectives, with participants residing in 30 countries and originating from 31 countries across all regions. Throughout the Summit, civil society delegates participated in all Government-led Roundtables, contributed as panellists during Expert Panel discussions, and engaged in the Voluntary Dialogue on the Global Compact for Migration. Civil Society also took the floor during the Opening Ceremony and hosted and contributed to several side events, ensuring that rights-based, migrant-centred perspectives were visible and substantively integrated across the GFMD programme.

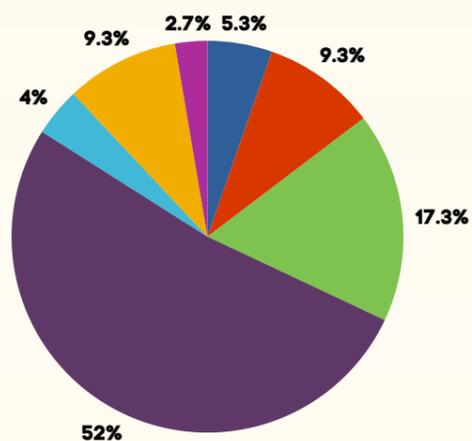
**Global Majority / Global North Split (Residence)**



**Global Majority / Global North Split (Origin)**



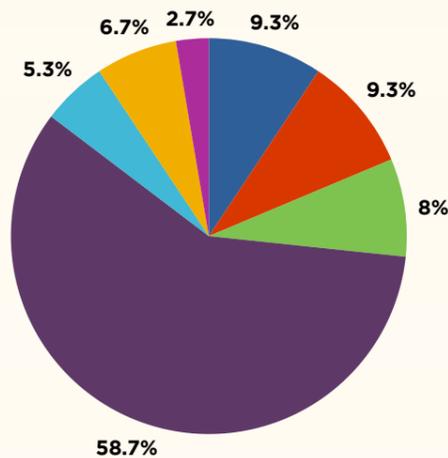
**Region (Residence)**



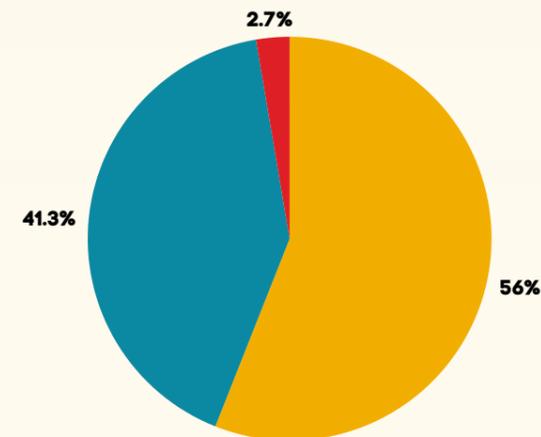
**Legend:**

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- North America
- Pacific
- South West Asia and North Africa
- Latin America & the Caribbean

**Region (Origin)**



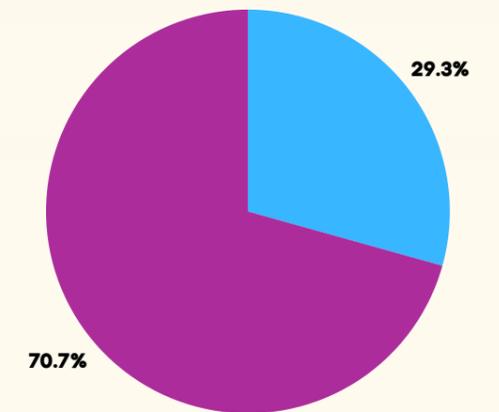
**Gender (via self-identification)**



**Legend:**

- Woman
- Man
- Another self-identified gender

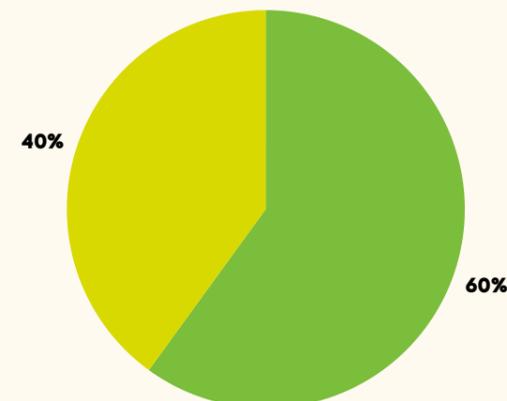
**Local Representation in the Delegation**



**Legend:**

- Colombian/Diaspora
- Rest

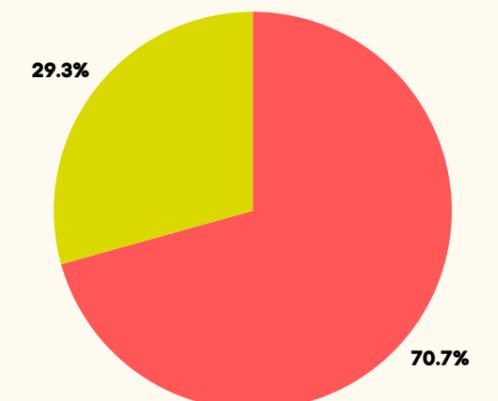
**Are you a migrant?**



**Legend:**

- Migrant / Diaspora
- Not

**Grassroots Organisations**



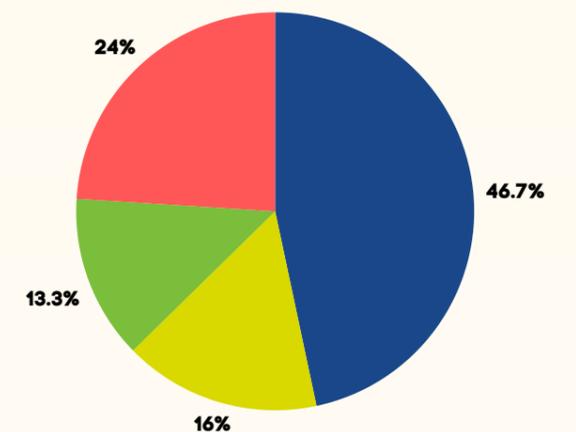
**Legend:**

- Grassroots
- Not

**Overlap Between Migrant/Diaspora and Grassroots Identification**

**Legend:**

- Migrant/Diaspora & grassroots
- Migrant/Diaspora, not grassroots
- Grassroots, not migrant/diaspora
- Neither



# Strategy Building and Civil Society in Action (CSPM4)

The final Civil Society Preparatory Meeting started with a welcome and opening ceremony, followed by a report back from the prior week's Jornada de Acción ('Colombia day') by Juan-Pablo Rangel, from Fundación Ideas por La Paz, who covered the main takeaways from the three main themes: forced returns, deportation and human dignity; regularisation and informal work in dignified labour mobility; and feminist intersectionality and migration. Read the full report [here](#) (Spanish only, for a summary in English, see the ICMC [article](#)).

The rest of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting 4, co-facilitated by Nidia Tarazona of the Confederación General de Trabajo (CGT Colombia), Cecilie Kern of the NGO Committee on Migration and Natalia Betancourt of Red Jesuita de Migrantes LAC, was themed around the principles of the **Resist, Reclaim and Realise** campaign, which had been gradually built over the previous months of the preparatory process- a distillation of the short to long term patterns of action that civil society had globally determined were crucial to turning the tide.

To aid this, Kati Garrison, from the NGO Committee on Migration, provided a recap of how the campaign came to fruition that resonated with the whole room, emphasising the crucial importance of building momentum, solidarity and collectivisation for our and our communities' survival.

## RESIST

**Centres around the need to push back against the facilitation, and weaponisation of discrimination, fear, and misinformation being used to threaten migrants and their families, divide our communities, and breach fundamental human rights and laws.**

This first panel, moderated by Colin Rajah, former Coordinator of the Civil Society Action Committee / GFMD Civil Society Mechanism, sought to highlight and bring into conversation practical examples, methods, and learnings of resistance against these actions from across the world. Pedro Ríos of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights drew powerful comparisons between the situation at the US-Mexico border and the struggle for Palestinian rights; Ema Vueti of the Pacific Migration Partners inspired with stories of resilience and survival from Pacific Island communities; Philippe Nanaga of Un Monde Avenir highlighted resistance methodologies from Cameroon; and Susana Barria of Public Services International spoke of the force that's possible through collective action led by migrant workers and trade unions.

## RECLAIM

**Focuses on understanding what has been lost or led astray in global understanding and narratives around migration, human rights, and community. It calls on civil society to deeply understand the root causes behind these, and strategically assert and/or re-affirm the terms, narratives and institutions that must be built for a just, equitable world.**

This session focused on facilitating the civil society delegation in building this understanding, underpinned by a preliminary discussion of the foundational principles of the planned Riohacha Civil Society Call to Action (formerly tentatively called the 'Riohacha Declaration'). Moderated by Elana Wong, Coordinator of the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism / Civil Society Action Committee, it featured William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia, and Michele Levoy of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM).



# REALISE

**Brings these together to create action, to ‘realise’ a better future where all migration-related governance and policy is rooted in respect for human rights and dignity. This calls us to work together in solidarity, mutual support and combined, collective strength.**

Based around moving towards concrete steps, this section consisted of two regional breakouts. These first mapped the most important issues in each region and discussing what tactics could be used to frame them, followed by a reconvening around how the campaign framework could be used as a tool to impact these key areas. These breakouts were facilitated by Paddy Siyanga Knudsen from the African Non-State Actors Platform, Sumitha Kishna from Our Journey (MFA), Adam Ariche from Fundación CEPAIM, Dina Habib and Lara Arabian from the Cross-Regional Centre for Migrants and Refugees, Berenice Valdez Rivera from Bloque Latinoamericano, Cecilie Kern, and Ema Vueti.

Finally, after a review of campaign actions by Abby Guevara from MFA, which included a memorial installation on the Summit grounds, the main programme concluded with a brief overview and discussion of the main points drawn from the day for civil society’s speech at the opening ceremony and the final announcements.

However, after receiving further information around logistics and restrictions on the number of civil society representatives who could be in the room for the opening ceremony, a large number of the civil society delegation stayed after the main programme concluded in order to discuss wider questions around restrictions and patterns of closure in civil society space. Following a vote that concluded in a general agreement to not attend the opening ceremony in person, as a statement calling for democratic and proportionate civil society representation in each session, key takeaways from this post-discussion were then incorporated into the opening ceremony speech.

Find the letter here:

[Letter](#)



This overall agenda, in particular the framing through the three ‘Rs’ campaign, was developed after the campaign focus and grounding messages became the main strong thread running throughout the civil society Dialogues of the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD process. From this overwhelming call for a ‘no business as usual’ approach to civil society presence at international, intergovernmental processes and conferences, **‘Resist, Reclaim and Realise’ became the three main pillars of the types of coordinated thinking, solidarity building, and collective action necessary for us to create change in these difficult times.**



## Highlight Side Event: **Securing lives through Regularisation**

Recognising the urgent need for more multistakeholder discussions on regularisation, particularly as hostile migration narratives increasingly sideline rights-based perspectives, the CSM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) came together to spotlight the significant benefits of expanding regularisation and to identify priorities for future action.

Supported by the Governments of Mexico, Canada, Morocco and Thailand, this side event, moderated by Elana Wong, presented data that supports a fundamental truth: when grounded in human rights, regularisation benefits migrants, their families and communities. As Hazel Contreras of Alianza Americas emphasised alongside Byron Cardenas Velasquez of OHCHR, “regularisation goes beyond policy – it empowers migrants and enables them to prosper in their communities”.

Michele Levoy of PICUM presented an analysis of regularisation practices across Latin America, the US and Europe, demonstrating that resolving irregular status leads to: better living conditions and mental health, freedom to move and travel safely, and the ability to find regular, more secure employment.

Academic research further supports the long-lasting impact of regularisation. Dr. Diego Acosta presented data from a diverse range of political and migration contexts analysed by the **Freemove** Project, showcased how regularisation can be embedded in migration frameworks, bilateral agreements and new legislations. Anna Azaryeva from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) highlighted a powerful example in Thailand, which regularised 420,000 people since implementing a regularisation legislation in late 2024. Moreover, perspectives from Dr. Víctor Hugo Mena Hernández, of the local government of Tlaxcala, demonstrated the vital role that local actors play in advancing regularisation to address barriers such as the lack of legal registration.



Key contributions and examples were also provided by the Governments of Morocco and Thailand, as well as various audience members from the floor, concluding with remarks from Fatima Diallo, Chair of the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW).

Key recommendations that emerged from the event include:

-  **Implementing** proactive and preventive policies to address the root causes placing migrants in irregularity;
-  **Strengthening** multilevel partnerships and effective international cooperation and
-  **Reclaiming** and normalising the narrative around regularisation.

[Read the Summary Article](#)



# Solutions-Oriented Discussions at the Government-Civil Society Chat Circles

As has become tradition for the GFMD CSM, one of the main flagship activities for civil society is the Civil Society Coffee Chats. These chats are informal, open spaces for governments and civil society to connect and explore potential partnerships.

This year, the discussions focused on pressing issues in the current global migration context, held under Chatham House\*. However, due to last-minute changes in the date of the chat circles and the room, many governments expressed interest but were unable to attend the session. Nonetheless, the focus on what is currently at stake allowed for nuanced informal conversations between civil society and the governments of Bangladesh, France, Mali, and Honduras.

The exchange in small groups looked at the following topics:

- 🍷 **Addressing** and finding complementarities to mitigate the impact of global financial cuts on migration governance.
- 🍷 **Building** political support for the development and implementation of regularisation and residence permit schemes.
- 🍷 **Exchanging** on mechanisms to strengthen partnerships between grassroots civil society and national governments to enhance human rights protection at the ground level.
- 🍷 **Identifying** key areas of collaborative action leading up to the 2026 International Migration Review Forum.



\*From the [Chatham House website](#): "The Rule reads as follows: When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed."



While each group addressed the questions more pertinent to their area of work, three guiding questions served as conversation starters:

- 1** How can we rebuild trust and accountability in a migration governance system, moving it away from border management, externalisation, and criminalisation, and towards human dignity, rights, and protection?
- 2** In light of global financial cuts affecting migration operations and government funding, what are areas for suitable and alternative funding to continue supporting migrants on the ground?
- 3** Looking ahead, where do we need to strengthen or build partnerships to hold firm on the principles and basic rights espoused by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and subsequent rights-based, migration-related standards?





The added value of the chat circles is that they allow for solutions to be discussed in a very honest and transparent manner, providing an opportunity for both civil society and governments to find common approaches and identify gaps. One representative of the Government of Bangladesh pointed out, "Together we talked about some very practical solutions, including alternative sources of funding and fighting corruption."

The Chat Circles offer a space to be ambitious and reflect on strategies to address the challenges of our time. A representative from France captured this collaborative spirit, stating, "I feel guardedly optimistic, because I can see that collectively we will be able to adapt. It's an optimism that I know will be tested in a much more difficult context in the future. But that's why we must maintain spaces for dialogue at all levels, including the GFMD, going forward."

Read the full impressions from governments :

[Read the Article](#)



## Key Takeaways and Reflections from the CSM at the 15<sup>th</sup> GFMD

Civil society delegates contributed a wealth of inputs, insights, recommendations, and best practices across the Summit. However, across the numerous discussions, a few key takeaways and reflections stood out.

- 1** That efficient, sustainable and inclusive regularisation, including the rights and access to basic life-saving services that accompany it, must continue to be held up as the essential standard necessary. This is not just for the protection and dignity of migrants and their families, but also to facilitate safer, more prosperous cities and decent, productive workplaces.
- 2** There remains an urgent need for concrete cooperative action across borders, migration routes, and regions. This must be conducted through systematised, coordinated and visible mechanisms and partnerships at all levels of governance and operations, maintaining localisation and contextualisation as a core principle to ensure efficacy.
- 3** That evidence and data is no longer enough to drive evidence-based policies and fair, factual narratives. What is needed is for policy and public discourse information to be communicated with a clear emotional core that prioritises understanding in alignment with policy motivations.
- 4** That human rights and dignity continue to be the essential cornerstone of all policies, programmes and innovations. Evidence continues to affirm that holistic investment in the development and uplifting of the most vulnerable, which recognises them as embedded in their wider communities, benefits both society and the economy.

For civil society moving forward, four points also became clear.

- 1** That civil society and rights-based entities, movements and groups must work together to reclaim the importance, as well as both the definitional and emotional meaning, of human rights and the rule of law. This starts with open, honest dialogue to build our own capacities, understandings and knowledge of key issues, concepts and developments- as well as that of our allies. It also includes coordinated, mutually supported pushes for accountability and fact-checking in an era of misinformation.
- 2** The urgent need for additional spaces and efforts to build solidarity and exchange, including creating systems and mindsets that foster mutual support and trust in common goals.
- 3** That there is power in civil society-led agendas and narratives when we build them with a deep understanding of the emotional and moral core, and when we push together. Messages of honest change do resonate across stakeholders, and we must evaluate and evolve our methods to ensure that all our advocacy reaches their maximum potential impact.
- 4** The need for migration to remain at the forefront of development dialogue and planning, to be depoliticised and recognised as an existing global phenomenon that has permeated the whole of human history.

With the knowledge that the world cannot develop, least of all in a way that preserves our humanity, without rights-based policies, governance, and narratives, civil society will continue to push for empathy, accountability and action as we head towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Migration Review Forum in 2026.



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# Acronyms

Acronyms	Meaning
CGT	General Confederation of Labour (Colombia)
CMW	UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CSM	Civil Society Mechanism
CSPM	Civil Society Preparatory Meeting
CSPM4	Fourth Civil Society Preparatory Meeting
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IDPAC	District Institute for Participation and Community Action
IMRF	International Migration Review Forum
ISC	International Steering Committee

Acronyms	Meaning
LC	Local Committee
MEG	Shaping Development-Oriented Migration (Global Programme)
MFA	Migrant Forum in Asia
MYCP	Migration Youth and Children Platform
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TD / TDs	Thematic Dialogue / Thematic Dialogues
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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