

Civil Society Advocacy Paper

Multi-level Governance

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Background

Over the course of the 2023-2024 Global Forum for Migration and Development, under the French Chairmanship, civil society engaged in all the official GFMD activities as well as conducted various global, regional and thematic consultations. This encompasses participation and engagement from large and small NGOs, CSO networks, trade unions, migrant community groups, migrant and diaspora-led organisations, faith-based organisations, research and academia. A calendar of activities can be found [here](#).

This paper is a compilation and consolidation of the main priorities and recommendations around **Multi-level Governance** that have come out from these consultations, and represents the breadth and diversity of civil society, as well as the nuances across the regions.

Key Messages: Global

The GFMD Civil Society Mechanism conducted virtual global consultations before each GFMD Preparatory Meeting in April and October, as well as a consultation before the GFMD Workshops on Climate and Narratives in June. Across these global consultations, and in the Civil Society Preparatory Meetings leading up to the Summit, participants put forward the following priorities:

- **Ensure that multi-level governance includes and embraces a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, that embraces civil society as equal partners.** In particular, migrants should be included, and their representation prioritised, across all migrant-related governance processes.
 - Multi-level governance mechanisms and processes **must address the disconnect between national and local governments**, for example in the application of legal frameworks. To facilitate this, further engagement and participation of elected members of government is necessary.
 - Emphasise that **both technical knowledge and personal experiences** are valued equally in multi-level governance processes.

- **Ensure that migration governance maintains and upholds a human rights-based, gender-responsive, and inclusive approach that emphasises and centres the meaningful participation of impacted communities.**
 - This **should include regional, subregional and global environments**, and promote partnerships between governments for accurate exchanges of data.
 - Establish and further emphasise the **importance of effective monitoring mechanisms for international conventions and protection frameworks**. These should include the meaningful participation of civil society and migrant organisations.
 - **Inclusion of stakeholders and migrant communities must be from an intersectional perspective**, multicultural, and must consider all circles of life at all levels of governance, across all dimensions and stages of migration.
 - Multi-level governance processes must incorporate and contribute towards the further socialisation of migration issues at all levels.
 - Multi-level migration governance must consider migration flows throughout the policy cycle, and **incorporate transnational and transcontinental responses**.

- **Develop and implement independent monitoring and evaluation instruments** to accurately track progress and effective engagement of all different actors across governance processes and international governance objectives, with the full participation and equal valuing of civil society and migrant organisations.

- **Improve communication between, and coherence of, policymaking on issues of migration, development, and climate change.** This includes across the UN system, government actors, and civil society.

- **Improve the communication and coordination between all levels of the government**, in order to ensure governance is consistently conducted with international human rights protection standards for migrants.

- **Ensure partnerships with civil society are meaningfully included:** Governance is multi-stakeholder and multi-faceted. It is not just limited to specific themes such as labour and political rights but is instead a Whole-of-Society issue involving governance at all levels. Establishing civil society partnerships to contribute and co-design governance at local, national, and regional levels is therefore crucial. This should include acknowledging and supporting the work of civil society in contexts where ‘private social’ actors such as faith-based organisations and communities provide vital services and complementary support (e.g. dispensaries and medical services, welcoming centres).
 - **Governments and intergovernmental processes must prioritise the leadership of migrants themselves**, through concrete, equal partnerships with migrant and diaspora organisations, and prioritising their meaningful participation across governance processes and mechanisms. This includes facilitative mechanisms such as expedited visa processes.
 - **Increase accessible and flexible financial support for civil society:** The improvement of governance structures necessitates access to infrastructure for civil society and grassroots organisations. Participation in governance activities requires accountability, feedback, and coordination between all stakeholders. *Flexible, multi-year, non-project-based funding* should therefore be made available to civil society and migrant-led organisations – regardless of their registration status – to support their activities and increase their capacity without fostering competition between CSOs.

- **Address the shrinking space of civil society**, and meaningfully re-emphasise and centre the importance of migrant engagement and representation within participation processes.
- **Use governance to support labour rights / governance:** Expand the role of governance to support labour rights / labour governance through multi-stakeholder partnerships. This already happens in combating extremism and violence but is still not practised for improving access to labour rights.
- **Confront and address the lack of visibility of diaspora engagement:** Acknowledging their importance in providing on-the-ground support to migrants and including them in consultations.
- **Consider addressing important and difficult questions within multi-level governance contexts and processes**, such as: How does the political right influence migration today? How is migration governance conducted today and what are its challenges? How is the political right weaponizing migration and addressing how this is not happening in a vacuum but rather is a global phenomenon? How can we hold governments accountable in a meaningful way when we know that false and fear based narratives are fueling political campaigns across the world? Why are human rights being relegated to minor importance across the world?

Key Bibliography

- Civil Society Global Consultation Summary Advocacy Points (April 2023)
- Civil Society Global Consultation Summary Advocacy Points (October 2023)
- Civil Society Preparatory Meeting: Global Civil Society Priorities (January 2024)