

CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT

THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND
DEVELOPMENT (GFMD)

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)
CHAIRMANSHIP

1 FEBRUARY 2020 – 31 JANUARY 2021

“BUILDING FORWARD TOGETHER:
CIVIL SOCIETY PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE
END OF THE GFMD 2020 CHAIRMANSHIP.”



Global Forum on
MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

CIVIL SOCIETY - UAE 2020



GFMD Civil Society 2020: Resources

- ❖ [2020 GFMD Regional Consultations and 2020 six thematic priorities](#)
- ❖ [2020 GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting](#)
- ❖ [Civil society Participation in the 13th GFMD Summit](#)
- ❖ [GFMD reference documents \(GFMD Official website\)](#)
- ❖ [Information on the GFMD Summit](#)

Acronyms

GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
CSPM	Civil Society Preparatory Meeting
CSD	Civil Society Days
CSO	Civil Society Organization(s)
RCPs	Regional Consultative Processes on Migration
UAE	United Arab Emirates

Civil Society Report¹

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
Civil Society in the GFMD 2020	4
OUTCOMES & RECOMMENDATIONS	7
Civil Society Thematic Priorities	7
Recommendations for the GFMD	8
DETAILED REPORT	9
INTRODUCTION	10
I. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZING AND REPRESENTATION	12
II. CIVIL SOCIETY AS A GFMD STAKEHOLDER AND LONG-TERM PARTNER.....	13
III. THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS	15
IV. TOWARDS THE SUMMIT.....	20
V. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PREPARATORY MEETING (CSPM).....	23
VI. THE GFMD SUMMIT	29

¹ Prepared by the International Catholic Migration Commission, in its capacity as GFMD Civil Society Coordination Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civil Society in the GFMD 2020

Through a year of unprecedented turmoil and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13th GFMD year-long process held under the Chairmanship of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) brought together **the GFMD community in a crucial moment for international migration**, as governments, civil society, business leaders, local authorities, and youth representatives, came together virtually throughout 2020. This culminated with the GFMD Summit at the end of a year of GFMD activities, which provided the **space for essential multi-stakeholder discussions on the response to COVID-19 and other urgent global migration issues**. Throughout the range of sessions, all participants recognized the unique character and relevance of the GFMD as creating a conducive environment for a constructive dialogue geared towards true partnerships and collective solutions – even more so in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. GFMD participants restated the **responsibility of the GFMD to provide a strong international leadership** in responding to the COVID-19 health crisis and its social and economic consequences on migrants and societies.

For Civil Society, the 13th Summit was of particular importance.

As political spaces for civil society continue to shrink, the GFMD has become a standout example of how self-organized engagement by all stakeholders should look like, and how this enables us to reach our shared goals together.

Stella Opoku-Owusu

Civil Society delegates participated actively in the GFMD's Regional Consultations and Summit, and brought forward the key priorities and inputs they had consulted about prior to each main activity. This was especially elaborated in our [Civil Society Preparatory Meeting \(CPSM\)](#) held for all civil society delegates just before the Summit, calling upon the GFMD Community to be bold and courageous to ensure all are protected. In particular, it was felt that the COVID-19 pandemic **offers a unique window of opportunity to rebuild boldly and create equitable, inclusive societies that benefit all and do not leave migrants behind**, as delegates concluded at the final plenary of the GFMD CSPM.

At the same time, this Summit forever changed the way civil society interacted and participated in the GFMD, as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) introduced or crystallized a number of forward-looking changes when they took over the GFMD Chairmanship in January 2020. The UAE – a very engaged member of the GFMD Steering Group for years and a vocal advocate of structural changes to the GFMD – proposed the GFMD to be a **year-long process, with six GFMD Regional Consultations** to be held over the course of 2020, in partnership with State-led Regional Processes. These brought together governments and the three GFMD mechanisms (civil society, local authorities and the private sector). Each Regional Consultation focused on three of the six 2020 GFMD themes, providing the substance for the thematic background papers which were discussed in the [Summit Roundtables](#). This allowed civil society to participate actively in all GFMD events and engage in in-depth discussions on the six GFMD themes throughout 2020. By meeting prior to each regional meeting, consulting

The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development

1. The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes
2. Skilling Migrants for Employment
3. Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants
4. Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection
5. Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration – What Works? What Doesn't?
6. Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Managing the Future of Human Mobility

broadly with civil society organizations at the regional level, and having the possibility for a civil society rapporteur to present the results of these preparatory meetings during the GFMD Consultations themselves, civil society was able to build up a **strong incremental process towards the 13th Summit**. A civil society representative was also invited to contribute to the elaboration and finalization of each of the GFMD Thematic Background Papers under the leadership of the thematic leads (experts) and roundtables' co-chairs (governments), thereby ensuring that the key civil society advocacy points were reflected in the final papers. The Regional Consultations thus provided the **space for regional and multi-stakeholder contributions and perspectives to feed into global priorities**.

At the same time, the UAE also introduced a major change for civil society by agreeing to **open the entire Summit to all GFMD stakeholders**. This meant that all civil society delegates were invited to attend *all* the GFMD Summit program instead of only participating in some selected sessions, as it used to be the case in the past. In addition, for the

Summit program, the UAE introduced a series of **'Networking Meetings'** wherein non-states delegates met and dialogued directly with government delegates through each of their respective non-state mechanism.

Finally, an **Advisory Group** for the 2020 GFMD (which included all the GFMD mechanisms, representatives of former chairs, and independent experts in their roles as thematic leads) was established by the UAE Chair, already in July 2019, with the aim to support the development of the GFMD vision for 2020. Two NGOs were invited to join, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), in its official capacity as the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office, and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), providing an opportunity for regular and direct contacts with the Chair and for civil society proposals to help shape the GFMD Summit and other activities throughout the year. The Advisory Group also provided a space for an immediate reflection on the pandemic, which led to the creation of an **ad-hoc working group on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants**, migration and development in April 2020, as proposed, among others, by civil society.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all regional consultations, and eventually the GFMD Summit itself, had to be held online. While this proved to be challenging in a number of ways and required everyone to adapt very quickly to the new online reality, all the events were maintained and became accessible to all delegates regardless of their location and public health restrictions.

As such, civil society adapted its organizing and activities **to the year-long process introduced by the UAE and the online format induced by the pandemic**. The GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office worked closely with its International Steering Committee (ISC) - a body composed of 30+ civil society organizations from all over the world, which provides direction and guidance to ICMC, and a smaller ad-hoc Program Committee. To reflect the fact that all civil society delegates could now participate fully in the entire GFMD Summit, it was decided by the ISC and Program Committee to rename the traditional “Civil Society Days” (a designation established by the Chair of the first GFMD when civil society met separately from the GFMD). The civil society meeting preceding the summit was thus named the **GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting (CSPM)** instead and was developed **to build on the regional consultations, and to brief, consult with, and develop joint civil society inputs with all delegates prior to the Summit**.

183 civil society delegates (out of some 250 initially identified based on their participation in the regional consultations as well as in prior GFMD Civil Society Days) attended the GFMD CSPM and subsequent Summit. During four days between 7 and 15 January 2021, they met online and held in-depth discussions in both plenary and breakout sessions. To facilitate the process, the [6 GFMD themes](#) were consolidated into three themes, and a fourth one on COVID-19 was added, for a total of **4 thematic areas**:

1. **The Governance of Labor Migration and Skilling Migrants for Employment**
2. **Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection**
3. **Discussing Approaches to Irregular Migration**
4. **COVID-19 – Building Back Better for Migrants**

These discussions, led by a group of co-facilitators and thematic rapporteurs, supported by breakout group moderators and the coordinating office team, helped identify **four key priority areas** that were brought to the GFMD Summit and which constitute civil society thematic priorities beyond the Summit (see details below).

OUTCOMES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil Society Thematic Priorities

The following **four thematic priority areas were agreed upon by all civil society delegates** as a result of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting, and were presented as follows in [the closing session of the GFMD Summit](#) by our civil society representative, Helena Olea, who urged their **inclusion in GFMD programs and discussions going forward** :

A. Xenophobia and discrimination against migrants

The criminalization of migration and racism, which may have unfortunately influenced some of the most restrictive immigration policies, **must be challenged and addressed**. Particular forms of discrimination suffered by specific groups must be tackled through an intersectional approach. The **narratives on migrants and migration** are essential and we welcome the work that the Ad-hoc Working Group of the GFMD and their “It Takes A Community” campaign have been doing on this matter. The discussion during the side event reflects the importance of bringing it to the forefront.

B. Regular pathways, including regularization

Understanding the factors contributing to irregularity is essential in order to address them. Most irregular migration is not the result of unauthorized entrance, but rather stem from the impossibility and inability to extend regular status, and the limited regular pathways available. **Temporary labor migration programs are not the solution**. It is necessary to overhaul the regular migration channels and **ensure decent work as a key priority**, addressing needs in various sectors, and not overlooking some sectors while favoring others in bilateral agreements. It is critical to **recognize different contributions made by migrants**, not only economic contributions, or those made by high-skilled workers. Finally, there needs to be an **acknowledgement that regularization is part of the solution**, and that pathways towards long-term residence are necessary. This topic merits further discussion and the GFMD is uniquely positioned to host those exchanges.

C. Due process and access to justice

Due process rights are central in immigration proceedings and in all relationships between migrants and the State. **Accessing justice and legal remedies is essential for migrants**, particularly in labor and family matters, and when they have been victims of crime. **Firewalls and minimum standards that ensure access to information, legal representation, and addressing language barriers, are essential to guarantee access to justice**. We must discuss this important topic in the GFMD to consider different contributions and perspectives, and propose solutions.

D. Social protection for all migrants

Migrants are being left out of social protection networks, having to fend for themselves. This enhances inequality and conditions of vulnerability. The need to ensure **access to services** without the fear of immigration enforcement has become a pressing issue. The **public health challenges of the pandemic reinforce the need to understand that our collective wellbeing depends on the inclusion of all**. We must find ways to include and rebuild together. We cannot continue leaving people behind.

Recommendations for the GFMD

Throughout the Summit, including in the [Future of the Forum Session](#), civil society also made the following recommendations regarding the future of the GFMD:

1. **The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that the GFMD is more meaningful and purposeful than ever.** The formula adopted in 2006, when the GFMD was created, remains valid today, precisely because the pandemic has created a global crisis, including a migration and development crisis. During a crisis, international cooperation is of paramount importance, in particular when it is supported by an informal and transparent dialogue, during which the focus is on best practices. We therefore **call upon the GFMD Community** – in particular through its ad hoc Working group on COVID-19 – **to continue to provide a joint response to COVID-19 and its impact on migrants, and with a particular focus now towards recovery efforts post-pandemic** (i.e. building back/forward better). In addition, the Working Group’s role is essential now to ensure that all people worldwide, regardless of status, have access to an effective COVID-19 vaccine in a timely and comprehensive manner.
2. **A truly multi-stakeholder approach**, which has increasingly become the footprint of the GFMD, is also essential when the international community is collectively confronted with massive and brutal losses of lives, jobs and livelihoods. In such a context, solutions can only be built collectively. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships should be developed by all GFMD actors around shared responsibility, honesty and transparency for the well-being of migrants and societies.**
3. **The three innovations brought by the UAE**, following years of an increased collaboration between governments and the other stakeholders, i.e. the GFMD becoming a year-long process with robust regional consultations; the creation of an Advisory Group open to the three mechanisms and independent experts providing inputs throughout the year; and the Summit being entirely open to all delegates, must become **permanent features of the GFMD.**
4. In addition, the **year-long GFMD process should include strong, organized and impactful youth engagement through each stakeholder group**, as proposed by the UN Major Group on Children and Youth (UNMGCY), and begun to be realized this past year in both the Regional Consultations and Summit.
5. **The lack of a GFMD Chair for 2021 and the first part of 2022 is of particular concern to civil society**, as this may lead to a transition year without clear focus or real ownership. A GFMD without a chair is also likely to be a year without a summit, regional consultations or thematic workshops. **Civil society stands ready to continue to invest and contribute to the process this year, to offer our full support to any potential Chair during this vital period, and to work with our vast civil society base to ensure its success.** A potential chair could ensure the implementation of a **thematic roadmap** for 2021-summer 2022, even in the absence of a full GFMD Summit, including through regional or thematic webinars, and possibly a “mini-Summit” (a smaller scale event in-person or virtual) in November or December 2021.
6. With the Troika and the Steering Group in charge of ensuring a meaningful transition, the three mechanisms also **now risk losing their capacity to provide substantive input to the GFMD agenda and shape its future**, since the Steering Group membership is limited to governments only. While civil society does not request full membership, it would appreciate having an **observer status** and being regularly consulted. This should also be extended to the Business and Mayors Mechanisms.

DETAILED REPORT

Contents

INTRODUCTION	10
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Chairmanship.....	10
Main focuses of this report.....	11
I. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZING AND REPRESENTATION	12
II. CIVIL SOCIETY AS A GFMD STAKEHOLDER AND LONG-TERM PARTNER	13
III. THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS	15
Introduction	15
Opportunities and pluses provided by the online Regional Consultations	17
Challenges	19
IV. TOWARDS THE SUMMIT	20
The six Practitioner Groups and the thematic papers	20
Civil society organizational dilemma.....	20
Civil Society planning and proposals.....	21
V. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PREPARATORY MEETING (CSPM)	23
Program Goals and Objectives.....	23
Program Format.....	23
Division of Labor	24
The Closing Plenary	25
VI. THE GFMD SUMMIT	29

INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Chairmanship

When the UAE was confirmed as the 2020 GFMD Chair on 29th May 2019, all the elements were in place for a well-organized, forward looking and innovative 2020 GFMD. **First**, it was almost unprecedented for a new Chair to be identified more than six months before the end of the mandate of the current one, paving the way for a smooth transition and for building bridges between one chair and the other. **Secondly**, the UAE had been a very engaged member of the GFMD Steering Group for years, and was one of the most vocal and articulate countries to propose structural changes to the GFMD to ensure its continued relevance in a changing migration and development international landscape. **Thirdly**, the UAE was one of the main destination countries for millions of migrant workers, mainly from Asia.

The incoming UAE Chair rapidly developed its vision for 2020, but it did it through a consultative process, involving all stakeholders as well as independent experts. An **Advisory Group**, in which two NGOs, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), in its official capacity as the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office, and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) were included, was formed for the first time in the 14 years of GFMD history. It started to meet under the UAE leadership as early as 29th July 2019. All background documents were submitted as drafts ahead of the meetings, giving the possibility to any member of the Advisory Group to provide comments or make suggestions. While the **six** following **themes**

1. **The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes**
2. **Skilling Migrants for Employment**
3. **Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants**
4. **Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection**
5. **Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration – What Works? What Doesn't?**
6. **Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Managing the Future of Human Mobility**

had been selected by the UAE Chair, the members of the Advisory Group were able to influence the content of each of the themes. Civil society, with its combined expertise in labor issues and migrant protection, and its daily interaction with undocumented migrants, played an important role, in particular, in shaping themes 1, 4 and 5.

Apart from the decision to have an open consultation prior to finalizing both the vision paper and the agenda for 2020, the UAE, following in the steps taken since 2011 by the successive chairs, to progressively turn the GFMD into a fully inclusive and multi-stakeholder process, took two additional initiatives, both very much welcomed by civil society.

First, the UAE proposed that **six GFMD regional consultations** be held over the course of 2020, with the assistance of state-led regional processes. The regional consultations would elaborate on the six thematic priorities, which would then inform two Friends of the Forum

meetings to be held in June / July and September / October of 2020 in Geneva. The Friends of the Forum meetings would then finalize background documents for the Summit.

Secondly, the UAE promised that the **entirety of the Summit would be open to all stakeholders**. Recognizing the need for some stakeholder groups to hold internal consultations, time and space would also be provided prior to the opening of the Summit. The 2020 Summit would therefore comprise three key elements: Stakeholder Consultations; Thematic Round-Tables; and Open Space, where partnerships' initiatives would be discussed. In addition, the UAE proposed to facilitate a series of 'Networking Meetings' to enable non-government participants (each mechanism separately) to meet with government delegates.

Having witnessed social unrest in October 2019, Ecuador, the 2019 GFMD Chair, had to postpone the Quito Summit to the second half of January 2020. As a result, the UAE started its chairmanship on 1 February 2020 and took the decision to postpone its Summit to January 2021.

As the UAE was just starting its chairmanship, the news on the global health were becoming extremely concerning. The **COVID-19 pandemic**, apart from the destructions it brought to human lives, jobs, livelihoods and migration governance, would also impact the GFMD, like almost any single international forum or summit, and this impact would be felt at all levels, organizational, programmatic, substance wise and in the way people interact. The UAE, in early March, took the decision to postpone the regional consultations before confirming, a few weeks later, that all the regional consultations would be online.

Main focuses of this report

This is not the official GFMD 2020 report and this document does not pretend to cover all events which took place between 1 February 2020 and 31 January 2021. It rather aims at **highlighting the contributions made by civil society**, at various levels. How civil society helped shape the agenda, how it organized itself both at the global and regional levels, how it ensured meaningful and diverse participation, how it identified its own priorities within the framework designed by the UAE Chair, and above all how it worked throughout the year to ensure a coherent, meaningful and coordinated representation at the Summit, building on what was mainly achieved during the regional consultations, the meetings of the Advisory Group and the Working Groups, and the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting.

To avoid being repetitive, since each event was directly related to the others, but also given the incremental character of this year's GFMD, with all events during the year leading to the Summit, we will not elaborate on everything, but rather put emphasis on civil society's thematic contributions and priorities. These were gradually built, starting with the regional consultations, then with the comments provided to the thematic leads, followed by the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting held a few weeks before the Summit, and finally during the

Summit itself (mainly the Opening Ceremony, the six Roundtables, the Civil Society Networking Sessions, Open Space and the Closing Ceremony). The report will also focus on civil society organizing and representation in the context of the 2020 GFMD. Finally, the report will be relatively detailed about civil society's interaction with the Chair, other governments, and the other mechanisms, as well as its engagement to ensure that the GFMD has a viable and meaningful future.

I. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZING AND REPRESENTATION

From its inception in 2006, but above all from 2011 on, the **GFMD** has been a **platform for an open dialogue**, shaped and led by governments, but where civil society, as well as the other mechanisms, the Business Mechanism and the Mayors Mechanism, are treated as equal partners. Such a dialogue is possible, as long as it is based on some pre-agreed premises. **First**, civil society participants and representatives are designated by their peers. **Secondly**, they must be selected through a transparent process, ensuring that all segments of civil society and all regions are represented, and that gender equality is respected. **Thirdly**, there can be no vetoing of civil society participants by governments or the other mechanisms. **Fourthly**, civil society participants can be critical, but must be respectful. The whole philosophy of the GFMD is constructive (as well as critical) engagement. **Fifthly**, civil society should be well-organized, with clear divisions of labor and responsibilities, proper representation when speaking slots are identified (panelists, discussants or moderators) and such a representation must reflect civil society's diversity.

Beyond these premises, which are part of the GFMD DNA, there are a number of challenges which must be met. While all the organizational aspects are **coordinated by the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office** (since 2011, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)), ICMC is NOT the voice of civil society, neither its representative. It is an enabler and a facilitator, on behalf of global civil society. Therefore, ensuring that checks and balances are in place must be a priority. Part of these checks and balances is a Civil Society Steering Committee (ISC), composed of 30 + NGOs from all over the world, which provides direction and guidance to ICMC.

This year, given a more ambitious program, full fledged regional consultations, with 19 meetings over a two months' period, themselves preceded by civil society preparatory meetings, a Summit entirely online, and a four days' global civil society online preparatory meeting, an additional "layer" of checks and balances was added in the form of **an 8 members' Program Committee** (all of them members of the ISC with all regions being represented). From the start, the Program Committee was fully involved, with ICMC, in the designing of the program and the identification of the various resource persons and

considerably strengthened the civil society preparatory process. Indeed, all its members were extremely engaged, both collectively (in designing and finalizing the agenda of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and helping identifying moderators and rapporteurs), but also individually (four of them were thematic leads during both the Preparatory Meeting and the Summit, two out of the four were also the Civil society speakers respectively at the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Summit, and the four others acted as moderators or rapporteurs during the Preparatory Meetings' breakout sessions, or the Summit's Civil Society Networking Sessions). The Program Committee also brought specific expertise to the discussions coordinated by ICMC, reflecting their grassroots engagement and advocacy, regional diversity (Africa, North and Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe), and the perspective from diaspora and migrant-led organizations.

Beyond shaping the content and identifying civil society priorities with the support of the Program Committee and the ISC, one of the main responsibilities of the Civil Society Coordinating Office (ICMC) was to ensure fair, transparent and diverse civil society participation in the three main GFMD events, i.e. the regional consultations, the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and the Summit. As we will see below, and given some of the specific constraints this year, the selection process proved to be at the same time simpler and more complicated than during the previous GFMDs.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY AS A GFMD STAKEHOLDER AND LONG-TERM PARTNER

The first GFMD Summit took place in Brussels on 9-11 July 2007 with real but rather symbolic civil society's participation. It was a government meeting, open to civil society and international organizations, but not yet a multi-stakeholder platform. Civil society participation grew exponentially, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and as of 2011, civil society was able to self-organize, provide advice on the agenda and organization of the GFMD events, and be consulted on the future directions of the Global Forum. It is also in 2011 that ICMC was recognized by the chair (and subsequently by all the other chairs, including the UAE) as the primary interlocutor of the chair and the Steering Group, as civil society main representative in meetings discussing GFMD organizing and future activities, and as the entry point for all discussions and conversations involving civil society, but with the clear understanding that ICMC would facilitate and guarantee broad civil society consultation and ownership. It is respectively in 2015 and 2018 that the Business Mechanism and the Mayors Mechanism officially joined the GFMD as stakeholders and full partners. To date, international organizations actively participate in the GFMD, but as experts and observers.

Partly for reasons already mentioned and partly for additional ones, the **level of interaction between the GFMD Chair and the Steering Group on one hand and civil society**, represented by ICMC, on the other, **increased in 2020**, compared to previous years. Firstly, the **creation of the Advisory Group**, which met several times during the UAE Chairmanship, but was also engaged in email exchanges before finalizing agendas or implementing decisions, enabled the three mechanisms and youth representatives, in a new and relatively informal setting, to indicate their priorities and the UAE Chair to build consensus whenever possible. In fact, most comments made by the mechanisms were accommodated by the Chair and no decision was taken “against” the three mechanisms. The fluid and open dialogue in the Advisory Group also prompted the three mechanisms to have more regular contacts amongst themselves, a move already initiated in 2018, in order if not to align their positions, but at least to reach, as much as possible, consensus on major issues. The exchanges between civil society and the organizers of the Youth Forum (the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY) also intensified, with, in particular, two youth representatives joining the ISC. Secondly, **ICMC was given a speaking slot in each of the three Friends of the Forum meetings** (respectively on 22nd July, 1st October and 4th December 2020), which are the plenary sessions during which the Chair report back to governments and the three mechanisms about the progress made in the organization of the various GFMD events, seek their endorsement (from governments, not from the mechanisms) for a number of decisions (such as a new chair or structural changes in the GFMD), and flag or solicit new ideas. These meetings are often a mix of urgent programmatic or organizational issues, and more forward-looking initiatives, focusing on the identity of the GFMD, its pluses and minuses compared to other migration fora, and its relevance in the broader migration and development landscape. During the first two Friends of the Forum meetings, ICMC delivered a formal statement, prepared after consultation with the ISC². During the third meeting, which was mainly focusing on finalizing the preparatory work for the Summit, the mechanisms were not given a specific slot but had the possibility to intervene on each item on the agenda. It is interesting to note **that three main threads emerged** during the Friends of the Forum meetings, but also during other exchanges with the UAE Chair and the Steering Group. First, the **COVID-19 crisis and its impact** on migrants, migration and development created a new dynamic, new priorities, and above all a renewed sense of emergency. All agreed that **this would not be a “normal, “business as usual” GFMD**. Secondly, it became obvious that the regional consultations (which coincided with the first wave of the pandemic) and the Summit (occurring in the middle of the second wave) could **not be held in-person**. The only alternatives were cancellation, postponement or online-meetings. Very wisely, the UAE chose the latter option

² Both statements can be found on the GFMD Civil Society website at respectively <https://gfmdcivilsociety.org/first-2020-gfmd-fof/> and <https://gfmdcivilsociety.org/second-2020-gfmd-friends-of-the-forum/>

for both. Thirdly, while the GFMD had a strong and experienced chair in 2020 with the UAE, it became more and more clear, as we were gearing towards the January 2021 Summit and the end of the UAE Chairmanship³, that **no replacement** was in sight, in spite of many countries being approached and sounded out to succeed the UAE. So, the very future of the GFMD was at stake, regardless of the Steering Group and the three mechanisms calling for immediate measures to ensure its long-term viability. A dedicated session of the “Future of the Forum” took place on 22 January during the Summit. The proposals made during that session will be reported below. We will see below how the three threads mentioned above ran through the regional consultations and the Summit.

III. THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Introduction

The Regional Consultations, which were initially contemplated as in-person one day meetings, moved to online meetings when the COVID-19 pandemic forced most governments around the globe to impose lockdowns. In February 2020, the plans were still to have the first in-person regional consultation meeting (in Abu Dhabi on 25 March 2020 for the Bali Process). But on 4th March, the UAE Chair took the decision to postpone the in-person meetings, before deciding, a few weeks later, that all regional consultations would be moved online. As a result, the regional consultations had to be rescheduled, with the first online consultation starting almost two months later.

The original idea of having six regional consultations was maintained, as well as the concept of having each consultation co-organized by the UAE as GFMD Chair, and a regional body, whether migration-focused or not.

- ❖ **2 consultations were organized for Africa, one in English and one in French, with the African Union as co-lead.**
- ❖ **1 consultation targeted Central and North America and was co-organized by the Regional Consultative Process (RCP) on migration, better known as the Puebla Process.**
- ❖ **The two migration processes in Asia and the Middle East, the Bali process and the Abu Dhabi dialogue, were involved separately in the co-organization of 2 other regional consultations.**
- ❖ **The European regional consultations were organized in collaboration with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).**

Given that the dynamic of online meetings is quite different, the UAE took the wise decision to spread the initial one-day meeting into three two-hour long online meetings. The format of all consultations was similar, with an Opening Plenary, followed, a few days later, by Thematic Breakout Sessions, and finally, again a few days or a week later, by a Closing Plenary.

³ The UAE had indicated that it would not extend its chairmanship.

Since the UAE had to accommodate 19 meetings within a two-month period, involving different regions with significant time differences, and with five different co-organizers, it was not always possible to have a well-paced agenda. As a result, while the three online meetings of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue took place within a week (6-13 July 2020), both African Consultations needed six weeks to be completed (respectively 12 May - 23 June for English, and 14 May - 25 June for French).

Each of the Regional Consultations had to choose three out of the six thematic priorities, identified by the UAE at the end of 2019 (see above, page 9). The only variation took place in the context of the Puebla Regional Consultations, which added a special session on “Public Narratives on Migration”, facilitated by Canada and the Mayors Mechanism.

The **opening plenaries** started with introductory remarks by the UAE Chair and the regional co-organizer, followed by a relatively detailed presentation by the three thematic leads, highlighting the salient points of the background papers. Then, a representative of the three mechanisms (Civil Society, Business, and the Mayors) were invited to provide comments on the three themes. Finally, there were closing remarks by the UAE Chair and the other co-organizer. The Opening Plenary was not restricted in terms of participation and was organized as a webinar, with a limited number of pre-identified speakers and a muted audience (but with access to a chat box for comments).

The three **thematic breakout sessions** were organized in parallel. For each parallel session, governments and observers (mainly international organizations) could have up to two participants and the three mechanisms up to five⁴. The parallel sessions were facilitated by the thematic lead and were kept relatively informal, focusing on substantive comments, concrete examples, and good practice. Any of the participants was able to take the floor for about three minutes (a cap not always respected!). The thematic lead could either follow up with a question or give the floor to another participant. There was no “protocol” part during the breakout sessions, just the thematic lead and the selected participants.

The **closing plenaries** started very much the same as the opening plenaries, with the introductory remarks by the UAE and the regional co-organizer, a summary of the discussions in the breakout sessions by the thematic leads, as well as short inputs by the three mechanisms. For this first part of the session, only pre-identified speakers were able to take the floor. For example, in the case of civil society, only the designated civil society spokesperson would be able to provide comments. But after that initial part, the novelty was a roughly one-hour segment on “partnership matching”. The idea was that participants would be able to come up with any relevant proposal for partnership, under any possible configuration (two or three governments together across borders; civil society and local authorities; business and central governments; academia, local authorities and business; etc.), as long as the initiative contributed to solving a problem or improving the situation in one of the thematic priorities.

⁴ i.e. 15 in total for each regional consultations.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that the Regional Consultations were not regional meetings focusing on regional priorities or specificities, but a regional contribution and a regional perspective feeding into global priorities. Consequently, the regional consultations did not lead to a regional report or to regional proposals, but to helping improve and clarify each of the themes, enabling the thematic leads to complete their paper, using examples and lessons learned from the various regions. The **“incremental” nature** of the exercise was precisely the trademark of these Regional Consultations. It is for this reason that we are not reporting separately on the thematic discussions, since the latter are an integral part of the Summit inputs and outcomes (see below). We will limit ourselves to a few remarks about the dynamic created by these regional consultations, which were, as already mentioned, a first.

Opportunities and pluses provided by the online Regional Consultations

- ❖ **The UAE Chair successfully met three very serious challenges.** The **first** one was to convert, at the last minute, in-person meetings into **online meetings**, with a different setting, very different dynamics and a number of technical question marks (what platform to use, difficult internet access in some parts of the world, online simultaneous interpretation, etc.). The **second** one was to have a **broad worldwide coverage and inputs** from, ideally, all regions. With the notable exception of South America (symbolically and minimally represented in the Puebla process Consultations, more focusing on Central and North America), all regions were represented, including Europe, which was added at the last minute through a partnership with the OECD. The **third** challenge, also successfully overcome, was to ensure that **the six pre-identified themes** were not discussed *in abstracto*, but that recent developments, in particular the health, social, and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, **were fully incorporated in the discussions and recommendations** of the regional consultations. Not surprisingly, the impact of COVID-19 was both at the forefront and in the mind of almost every single speaker.
- ❖ All the **meetings were generally well attended**, with an average participation of 150 to 250 people from governments, the three mechanisms and observers.
- ❖ Thanks to excellent inputs from the six thematic leads (initial short paper with concrete questions to ensure a focused discussion, a good summary during the Opening Plenary, very good facilitation during the breakout sessions, and refocusing the presentation during the Closing Plenary, based on the interventions made during the breakout sessions), the **conversation** was most of the time **interesting, concrete, focused** and not “pre-cooked”.
- ❖ **Both the business mechanism and the mayors’ mechanism had very active participants**, with very pertinent comments. We could see a real upgrading of the contributions of both mechanisms compared to the previous years. The fact that representatives of both mechanisms were most of the time on the front line during the COVID-19 crisis, respectively as employers and local authorities, played an important role.

- ❖ Both the UAE Chair and the thematic leads were able to **capitalize on the inputs provided during each of the regional consultations**, so at each subsequent regional meeting there was some building up on the previous meeting. The incremental character of the regional consultations was therefore not only an objective, as mentioned before, but also a reality. This was not a small achievement.
- ❖ There was a very **strong interest and participation from regional civil society networks and organizations**, who all really welcomed the occasion to meet at the regional level, and 1) consult among themselves 2) prepare collective inputs for the GFMD consultations. Regarding the latter, for each of the regional consultations, there were at least two civil society preparatory meetings or civil society internal consultations (nine in the case of the Abu Dhabi and Bali processes, with 250 civil society participants). There was also a strong call for follow-up and continued similar engagement and interaction.
- ❖ At the same time, many civil society organizations and networks were overwhelmed with work on the ground/response to the COVID-19 crisis, so the **coordination role of the Civil Society Coordinating Office** was important and recognized as it worked together with its representatives in the various regions. Overall, there was a very positive interface and synergy between regional focal points (leadership and content) and the Civil Society Coordinating Office (briefing/debriefing, organizational support, liaison with the UAE Chair and some of the co-organizers, technical support during consultations etc.)
- ❖ The online formula made it **possible for a larger audience to attend** and, from a civil society perspective, for small NGOs with a very limited budget to be able to participate at little to no cost, both in the GFMD regional consultations and the preparatory civil society meetings. In the initial in-person configuration, the UAE had contemplated 10 civil society participants with five to be financially supported. With an online participation of 15 (but unlimited for the opening plenary), we were able to reach out to additional participants, broadening the number of countries, grassroots experiences and situations represented.
- ❖ While civil society had already taken the decision to accommodate youth representatives within its 15-quota, upon advocacy of the UN Major Group on Children and Youth (UN MGCY) and with support by the Civil Society Coordinating Office, the **UAE took the decision to give an additional and separate quota to youth participants**. This was a powerful decision, recognizing that youth are those to be most affected by migration policies and by the current economic crisis, and that none of these policies should be decided without proper prior consultations with youth.

Challenges

- ❖ Though there were differences from one region to the other, **member states' participation and engagement was**, in general (there were exceptions), **not as proactive as they could have been**. In many instances, the most innovative and solution-oriented comments came from the three mechanisms or international organizations.
- ❖ The fact that it was **impossible for participants**, at the exception of the organizers and resource persons, **to see the list of attendees** was probably a handicap, compared to an in-person meeting. It probably led some of the speakers to take “less risk” during their interventions, not knowing who they were engaging with.
- ❖ There were a few **technical challenges** to organize such consultations online, but thanks to the incredible work of the UAE team and the GFMD Support Unit, all meetings took place, and all speakers were able to intervene, including those who had internet problems. Compared to in-person meetings, there was a sense that the interaction was more limited, the interventions, including from the three mechanisms, were less spontaneous, and there was less in-depth discussion. There was also, unavoidably, no room for side events, bilateral or informal gatherings, which are also an important aspect of a conference-type meeting.
- ❖ Most civil society representatives from Latin America resented the **de facto exclusion of South American and Caribbean countries from the regional consultations**, in particular after the dynamics created by the GFMD Summit in Quito in January 2020 and the importance of the Venezuela crisis. That was perceived as both marginalizing an entire region and a missed opportunity.
- ❖ A number of civil society participants found that the **interaction between the thematic leads and the participants in the thematic sessions** would have benefitted from a more structured discussion, with the thematic leads really leading the discussion and coming with recommendations and new guiding questions. There was a sense that the thematic leads, after a solid and substantive start, were primarily interested in receiving inputs in order to expand and amend their paper. While legitimate, this approach made a real dialogue difficult and allowed some long and relatively unfocused interventions.
- ❖ The **need for effective partnerships** was highlighted by everyone, but it was sometimes difficult to move beyond the description of issues, and to propose actual solutions. Very often, examples that were given were good projects, but with a limited impact on migrants' lives, and not necessarily addressing some of the core problems mentioned above. There was very little reference to the joint designing of policies, to joint accountability and ownership. It was “we work together”, rather than “we are all in the same boat” and “we must have a shared responsibility” to improve the lives of migrants and their host communities. Migrants themselves had often not been consulted regarding these partnership initiatives.

IV. TOWARDS THE SUMMIT

The six Practitioner Groups and the thematic papers

After the conclusion of the Regional Consultations, during which the six thematic leads had presented their short papers and taken note of the hundreds of contributions, comments and sharing of good practices made by participants in all regions, the months of August and September 2020 were dedicated to finalizing the drafts of the thematic papers⁵, ensuring at the same time government ownership, inputs by the three mechanisms and expert advice by the thematic leads (independent experts or experts from international organizations). The other objectives were to identify two government co-chairs for each of the themes, and to form six “practitioner groups”, composed of various government representatives, one representative of the three mechanisms, and the thematic lead, to steer the drafting process, and to have the six papers presented during the second Friend of the Forum meeting on 1st October. It was indeed understood that the governments volunteering to be thematic co-chairs would be confirmed as the co-chairs of the roundtable discussions at the Summit. Civil society was able to identify six representatives, with the right level of thematic expertise, to attend the meetings of the Practitioner Groups and make drafting suggestions and contributions.

Civil society organizational dilemma

The evolution of the pandemic, with ups and downs, as well as significant regional or national differences, led to months of uncertainty regarding the Summit. Would it be postponed? Would it be held in-person? Would it be held based on a hybrid formula, with some participants attending in-person and others joining online? Would it be entirely online? Finally, the latter option prevailed, with stakeholders being informed about it in mid-October 2020. While the responsibility for an entirely online event and the logistical nightmares associated with it were mainly on the UAE Chair’s shoulders, these months of unknowns were taxing on all, including civil society.

Apart from the relief to have a final decision, we were now able to plan and had avoided the scenario - the hybrid formula - which would have been the most complicated one in terms of organization and logistics (how do you select the participants attending in-person, and those joining online? How do you offer health guarantees to those traveling in the middle of a pandemic? Etc.). It goes without saying that an **online meeting** has different organizational challenges than an in-person summit. It also has a number of **minuses**, including the lack of direct and personal interaction, the impossibility to have “corridor” or informal discussions, a greater difficulty to adjust the agenda or re-shape the discussions as the meeting proceeds, and the sense of togetherness, which is difficult to obtain online. Managing different time zones and ensuring that people don’t get video-exhausted are other logistical puzzles. At the same time, an online meeting has huge **advantages**. It is cheaper, with all the savings on travel, hotel reservation, food and conference expenses. More people can join, including those who otherwise would have not traveled. Linked to that, it is also easier to mobilize

⁵ The papers remained drafts until early December, enabling the stakeholders to provide additional inputs and also to start a process of consultation with international organizations.

senior officials for a meeting online, sparing them a tiring journey, when their agendas are usually packed.

With the decision taken and the final dates set (though some adjustments would be made until early December), the Civil Society Coordinating Office, with the full support of the Program Committee and the ISC, went ahead with **organizing both the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and the various civil society inputs and representations in the Summit.**

Civil Society planning and proposals

The following were the steps taken and the choices made:

- ❖ In all previous GFMD Summits, Civil society had its own “Civil Society Days”, which were part of the Summit’s agenda. In addition, there was one day of exchange between governments and the three mechanisms, called “Common Space”. Finally, civil society participants were able to attend the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The former Civil Society Days used to combine civil society mobilization and a get-together (very often the GFMD Summit was the only time of the year, during which most civil society actors would be available and have an opportunity to meet and exchange among themselves), on one hand, and preparation and coordination of their inputs for Common Space, on the other. This year’s GFMD Summit was the first one to be **entirely open to all stakeholders**, including the thematic roundtables, the most substantive part of the Summit, which used to be out of reach for the three non-government mechanisms. This year’s restructured and more inclusive program meant that Civil Society had to rethink its participation and the way it organized itself. Participating in the whole Summit entailed new and additional responsibilities, as well as increased expectations from governments and the Business and Mayors Mechanisms. In short, Civil Society had to be well prepared and deliver.
- ❖ Civil society felt that there was a need to have a **preparatory meeting**, building on the dynamic created by the regional consultations, but above all in order to come up with well-coordinated and substantive inputs to be shared during the Summit with governments and other stakeholders. The “Civil Society Days”, in this new approach, would be primarily focusing on the thematic priorities identified by the UAE Chair, but with the civil society perspective, including the views of migrants, diaspora, trade unions, and women-led organizations. Civil society would, as much as possible, avoid parallel discussions and introducing new themes or priorities. Based on this new focus, the decision was taken to rename the “Civil Society Days” and to call them “Civil Society Preparatory Meeting” (CSPM), clearly indicating their objective and main purpose, i.e. to feed into the Summit (see the detailed agenda below).
- ❖ Regarding civil society participation in and **selection for both the CSPM and the GFMD Summit** (the same people attended both), it was decided that a maximum of 250 people would be identified, based on the following **criteria**. **First**, the people who had already participated in the regional consultations (15 people x 6 consultations = 90 people) and had been identified through the regional focal points and networks, and

the members of the ISC (around 35 people) were automatically included. **Second**, organizations, actively involved during the past GFMD Summits and in other migration and development processes, such as the Regional Migration Review Forums, were be prioritized. **Third**, the participation aimed to be fair and balanced, in terms of gender, thematic priorities, migrant, refugee, and youth participation. Youth representation was particularly important, since youth had its own platform, the Youth Forum, but was also part of civil society. Key participants in the Youth Forum were invited to attend the CSPM, to make sure that youth priorities were reflected and included in the civil society inputs for the Summit. **Fourth**, in principle, only one person per organization was selected. **Fifth**, the CSPM took place as a separate, stand-alone event, though fully related to the GFMD Summit. As a consequence, the Coordinating Office declined the offer made by the UAE Chair to use its platform during the Summit to have a separate civil society meeting. Civil society wanted to have such a meeting ahead of the Summit, to have it spread over four days, and to have time before the Summit to have consensus-building around its recommendations.

- ❖ For the organization of the Summit, entirely the responsibility of the UAE Chair, Civil Society, as a member of the Advisory Group, made a number of **concrete proposals**, most of them being favorably considered by the Chair. They included adding a number of days to the Summit agenda to accommodate not only all the events, but also the various **time zones**, and the difficulty for participants to focus and concentrate during online meetings. As a result, the UAE accepted first to extend the Summit by two additional days, secondly to have all the Networking Sessions being replicated to accommodate participants from different time zones, and thirdly to have all the main sessions (the six roundtables, the Future of the Forum meeting and the Closing Ceremony) during “prime time” (i.e. the best or least bad time for everyone across the globe). The UAE Chair also offered expanded interpretation services for the Networking Sessions, and an excellent **online platform**, with very professional and competent administrators. The platform was not only user-friendly, but also very “transparent” since it listed all the names of the participants. This latter point was a major improvement compared to the regional consultations, where the platform used had a number of limitations, including not releasing the names of those attending, which discouraged some participants, in particular from governments, to be candid in front of an unknown audience.

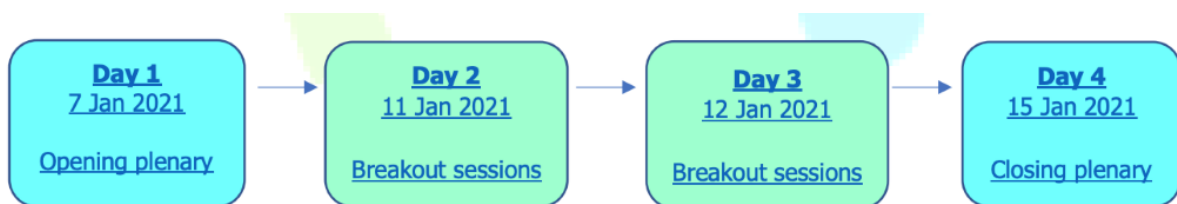
V. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PREPARATORY MEETING (CSPM)

After consultation with the ISC and several substantive meetings with the Program Committee, it was decided that the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting would take place from 7 to 15 January 2021, based on the following premises:

Program Goals and Objectives

- To brief and prepare civil society delegates to fully engage in the 2020 GFMD Summit, including briefings on all the regional consultations and other preparations leading up to the Summit, as well as the 2020 GFMD themes.
- To collectively (with all civil society delegates) develop a set of broad civil society inputs and recommendations on four key thematic areas.
- To prepare civil society delegates to carry these civil society inputs and recommendations as key messages and talking points through the entire GFMD Summit, to dialogue and advocate for with member states and other stakeholders.

Program Format



- The 2020 CSPM program followed the same general outline and flow as previous GFMD Civil Society Days (CSD), but with major adaptations undertaken to accommodate it being online instead. Since all civil society delegates participated in the entire 2020 GFMD Summit, the CSPM was used as a broad preparatory meeting and consultation for all the civil society delegates, instead of a separate GFMD meeting for civil society delegates (as when civil society delegates were not able to attend the full GFMD Summit).
- A typical 8-hour (1 day) CSD program was detached and spread across 4 days from 7-15 January 2021.
- On Days 1-3 of the CSPM program, 2 identical sessions – at 10h CET and at 17h CET, took place to accommodate various regions and time zones across the globe. Each session was approximately 2 hours long. On Day 4 (closing plenary), there was only one session at 15h CET, given the importance of having all the delegates present when agreeing on the main recommendations and takeaways.
- **Themes** – The six GFMD themes were “consolidated” into three themes, and a fourth one on COVID-19 was added, for a total of four thematic areas for the CSPM to focus on. These four thematic areas were:

- a. The Governance of Labor Migration and Skilling Migrants for Employment (*de facto* the combination or consolidation of the Summit Thematic Roundtables 1 and 2)
- b. Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection (similar to Summit Thematic Roundtable 4)
- c. Discussing Approaches to Irregular Migration (similar to Summit Thematic Roundtable 5)
- d. COVID-19 – Building Back Better

It is to be noted that two out of the six GFMD Summit themes were not formally discussed by civil society, not because they were less important than the others, but for reasons of time constraints, lack of across-the-board expertise (“leveraging new technologies...”) and due to the fact that Summit Roundtable 6 on “fostering partnerships...” is the bread and butter and the very *raison d’être* of civil society.

- The CSPM **program** followed four general segments:
 - *Day 1* (Opening Plenary): Introduction and briefing on the 4 themes and regional consultation processes + open discussion.
 - *Day 2* (Breakouts 1 & 2): Small breakout groups (up to 15 people, but ideally not more than 10), divided by language (English, French and Spanish), focusing on Theme 1 for an hour, and then Theme 2 for another hour.
 - *Day 3* (Breakouts 3 & 4): Small breakout groups focusing on Theme 3 for an hour, and then Theme 4 for another hour.
 - *Day 4* (Closing Plenary): Wrap up of key inputs and recommendations, followed by a plenary discussion on COVID-19 and Building Back Better for Migrants with invited speakers.
- Guiding questions were prepared for discussion during the breakouts, designed for each breakout group to come up with inputs and recommendations for that theme. Breakout group Moderators cum Rapporteurs lead the discussion and recorded the main outcomes and recommendations from each session in a breakout group reporting form.

Division of Labor

- The ISC provided general guidance and broad decisions on the overall program, while a smaller ad-hoc Program Committee (drawn from ISC members and regional focal points) helped to develop the program details with the Coordinating Office team.
- As we did not have a Civil Society Day but a different program format for 2020, rather than having two new co-chairs, the CSPM had four Co-Facilitators. They were longstanding global civil society leaders, very experienced and familiar with the GFMDs and previous Civil Society Days, and who had been particularly engaged with the 2020 process since the GFMD Regional Consultations. These Co-Facilitators facilitated and guided the entire program and civil society delegates to reach our collective goals and objectives. This model of co-facilitation followed the December

2017 Puerto Vallarta Global Compact on Migration Stock-taking Meeting, rather than previous Civil Society Days.

- The Co-Facilitators were also the four Thematic Rapporteurs who presented the opening briefing for their respective themes and then followed the thread of discussion of those themes throughout the program from opening to closing. Finally, they synthesized the main inputs and recommendations from the discussions on their respective themes.
- The Co-Facilitators and Thematic Rapporteurs were supported by a team of breakout group Moderators, as well as the Coordinating Office team. The Moderators were drawn from the ISC, regional focal points, and other key civil society leaders as in previous years. They were responsible for moderating the breakout groups and compiling the main inputs and recommendations from the breakouts into a reporting form for the Thematic Rapporteurs to synthesize.
- Much of the work of the Co-Facilitators, Thematic Rapporteurs and Moderators was done in between segments, supported by the Coordinating Office and other ISC members. There was a specific meeting of the Co-Facilitators, Thematic Rapporteurs and Moderators on 13 January to synthesize and summarize the inputs and recommendations from all the breakouts.

The Closing Plenary

Advocacy priorities and civil society recommendations for the GFMD Summit

The Closing Plenary of the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting took place on 15 January 2021. Following four days of intensive online debate and discussion, the plenary adopted joint civil society advocacy priorities for the GFMD Summit. The four top ones, with strong links across thematic areas, are:

- ❖ **Ensuring social protection for migrants regardless of their status;**
- ❖ **Expanding migrants' regularization and legal migration pathways;**
- ❖ **Fighting xenophobia and discrimination; and**
- ❖ **Promoting safe access to services and to the judicial system.**

Stella Opoku-Owusu of the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) described the challenges of developing joint recommendations that reflect the full range of civil society priorities and concerns. Thanking participants for their preparatory work, Stella Opoku-Owusu noted “the value of a joint approach to ensuring a consistent voice for civil society” throughout the upcoming Summit, which takes place online on 18-26 January 2021. During the session, thematic leads reported specific advocacy priorities for each of the four thematic areas.

1. THE GOVERNANCE OF LABOR MIGRATION AND SKILLING OF MIGRANTS

William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) presented five key advocacy messages in this area:

- **Skills recognition**, in which recommendations for States include acknowledging prior learning for returnees, granting skill level certification and expanding opportunities for training and skills upgrading.
- **Access to justice**, so as to redress wage theft, and to remedy the impacts of undocumented status for access to COVID-19 healthcare and assistance.
- **Expanded social protection**, to address the particular vulnerability of migrant workers during COVID-19, enhance reintegration support for returnees and improve the pandemic preparedness of countries of origin and destination.
- **Ensuring representation**, by upholding freedom of association for migrant workers, including their right to join or form trade unions, and promoting the participation of migrant representative groups in destination countries.
- **Recognition of migrants as essential workers**, by prioritizing decent work across sectors, and regularizing seasonal and cross-border migrant labor.

2. ADDRESSING GAPS IN MIGRANT PROTECTION

In her report, Helena Olea of Alianza Americas noted that the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted how “migrants are seen as expendable...which is our biggest challenge.” She identified four protection gaps as priorities for civil society advocacy at the GFMD Summit:

- **Xenophobia and discrimination**, intensified by COVID-19.
- **Barriers to accessing nationality and risk of statelessness.**
- **Social protection measures that exclude migrants**, in terms of both policy and inadequate implementation.
- **Access to justice**, including legal representation, workplace protection, family reunification and due process in detention.

3. DISCUSSING APPROACHES TO IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Michele LeVoy of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) outlined three advocacy priorities emerging from discussions in this thematic area:

- **Reorienting the policy framework on irregular migration**, aimed at closing the gap between international standards supporting the human rights of irregular migrants and security- and return-oriented national policies in this area.
- **Access to services and justice**, in which policymaking is supported by a civil society sector gathering data on access to services by undocumented persons, amplifying promising practices, whether they are at city/local, regional or national level, and advocating for data-sharing “firewalls” between service providers and immigration authorities.
- **Sustainable, migrant-centered solutions**, in which permanent regularization is consistently presented as “part of the solution,” and States move away from temporary labor programs and put civil society and migrant voices at the center of rights-based policymaking.

4. COVID-19: BUILDING BACK BETTER FOR MIGRANTS

Stella Opoku-Owusu described existing and new challenges for migrants caused by COVID-19. She highlighted increased xenophobia, stigmatization and discrimination, the exclusion of essential migrant workers from many national pandemic assistance packages and the impacts of a decline in global remittances.

She noted the strong civil society consensus on the opportunity to use the knowledge and awareness created by COVID-19 to build a “new perspective on migration and migration policy.” She outlined civil society recommendations for States to:

- Ensure a **rights-based approach to public policy**, aimed at protecting all including the most vulnerable.
- Improve **public health preparedness**.
- Take a **holistic approach to policymaking**, linking labor migration issues with public health to effectively identify and remedy gaps.
- **Improve communication with migrant populations** on public health measures and assistance.
- Make **regularization programs** more sustainable.
- Create the **conditions for remittances to continue**.

Panel discussion on COVID-19: Building Back Better for Migrants

The second part of the Closing Plenary was dedicated to a panel discussion on “COVID-19: Building Back Better for Migrants”, further developing the fourth thematic priority, but also bringing the different perspective of two experts. It was in particular felt that the COVID-19 pandemic offered a unique window of opportunity to rebuild boldly, creating equitable, inclusive societies that benefit all and do not leave migrants behind, delegates concluded at the final plenary of the GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting.

During his intervention, **Gregory Maniatis**, director of the International Migration Initiative of the Open Society Foundations, underlined that due to COVID-19 the world is at a crossroads moment with regard to migration governance. He urged civil society to take advantage of the window of opportunity the pandemic has created by “not just telling others what to do,” but by taking action and proposing solutions.

This is the moment to seize power on behalf of migrants, working in cooperation with supporters at all levels.

Gregory Maniatis

A core focus must be the health of migrants, which is the biggest impact of the pandemic, Gregory Maniatis said, quoting health outcomes for migrants two to three times worse than for the general population. In the short term, this means ensuring access to vaccines and health care regardless of migration status, while targeting deeper structural inequalities in

the longer term. He noted that currently there is a “wellspring of public support” for migrants already present in communities. This is due to their visibility as essential, front-line workers in healthcare and agricultural work, in particular. It is critical that civil society focus its energies on harnessing this social and political capital to secure vaccines for migrants and earmark a portion of recovery funding for development aid. This immediate action can drive structural change, rooted in the perspective that what is good for one person in the society is good for all.

For **Lidy Nacpil**, coordinator of the Asian Peoples’ Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD) and co-coordinator of the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice, everyone has a right to receive effective vaccines. In response to Lidy Nacpil’s call for solidarity for migrant workers, Genevieve Gencianos of Public Services International said that the global trade union federation is advocating for access to vaccination on all fronts, including at the World Health Organization.

We cannot accept simply building back to pre-COVID-19 systems. We must be bolder, more courageous in aiming for a world that is much, much better.

Lidy Nacpil

In this regard, Lidy Nacpil noted the importance of campaigning against the use of personal data. She argued for an approach like that used for food aid distribution so that undocumented migrants in particular are not made more vulnerable by having to disclose their migration status or personal information that could be used to detain them or deny access to other basic services.

Strategies to ensure access to vaccines need to be both top down and bottom up, Gregory Maniatis said. With national strategies, civil society can determine where power is locally and work together with local authorities to provide solutions. He cited the example of the Emma Lazarus Campaign in the United States. The campaign worked initially with New York City to provide essential support and healthcare for undocumented workers and has since expanded to 30 locations across the country. He encouraged delegates to take an immediate moment and translate it into change at the local and national levels.

Lidy Nacpil voiced her deep concern about the pandemic’s impact on the fight for economic equality, climate justice and democracy. “We cannot accept simply building back to pre-COVID-19 systems,” she emphasized. Looking at the intersection of migration and development, she called for a focus on “rebuilding” in a way that creates equitable, resilient economies. Such rebuilding would mean re-orienting economies to stop the exploitation of developing countries by rich countries and the flow of wealth – including the labor of migrant workers – from the global South to the global North, she said. Development should promote jobs that secure better futures for the economies of developing countries and enable people to earn a livelihood without having to migrate. With regard to civil society’s message to the GFMD Summit, she encouraged delegates to “be bolder, more courageous in aiming for a world that is much, much better.”

As delegates prepared to engage in the GFMD Summit, they commemorated those who have been lost to COVID-19. Among them there are many migrants, but also members of the civil

society community, such as former migrant advocates from Bangladesh, India, Mexico and South Korea. Moderator William Gois of MFA expressed the hope that delegates would walk together to bring about “what we dream of for a better world, for a world that is transformed for migrants and all, so that indeed no one is left behind. May we find courage and strength to continue the struggle in [the] memory [of those who have gone before us].”

VI. THE GFMD SUMMIT

Contents

Civil society representation during the Summit	30
The Opening Ceremony	31
The Roundtable on the Governance of Labor Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes (Theme 1)	32
The Roundtable on Skilling Migrants for Employment (Theme 2).....	35
The Roundtable on Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants (Theme 3)	36
The Roundtable on Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection (Theme 4).....	38
The Roundtable on Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration – What Works? What Doesn’t? (Theme 5).....	39
The Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Managing the Future of Human Mobility (Theme 6).....	40
The Civil Society Networking Sessions.....	42
Civil Society-organized Side Event: “Non-Payment of Wages and Benefits: Impact on the Life of Migrants and their Families Post-COVID.....	44
Side event: It Takes a Community: Building a Global Movement to Balance the Narrative on Migration	45
Side event: The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development	46
The Future of the Forum Meeting	49
Open Space: Migration and Development Partnerships through 2020 and Beyond	50
The Closing Ceremony	52
The Dialogue on the Global Compact on Safe, orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) / the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF).....	54
Civil Society takeaways	55

The Summit took place online from 18 to 26 January 2021, spread over 7 working days, with a number of events running in parallel and other events being scheduled twice to accommodate different time zones. The Summit included a total of 35 sessions.

This report is not an official account of the Summit, which is the responsibility of the UAE Chair, but rather contains a description of civil society participation and inputs, general trends regarding specific themes and discussions from a civil society perspective, and an overall civil society assessment of the Summit and its achievements.

The 35 sessions can roughly be put into four different categories:

1. CORE EVENTS

- The Opening Ceremony
- The six Roundtables
- The Future of the Forum meeting
- Open space, focusing on partnerships
- The Closing Ceremony

2. THE NETWORKING SESSIONS

Each mechanism was offered by the UAE Chair a space to engage in a bilateral dialogue with governments. Like the other mechanisms, civil society was in charge of organizing its Networking sessions (see below)

3. THE SIDE EVENTS

The majority of the sessions were side events, organized or co-organized by different constituencies. Most of them were well attended.

4. After the Closing Ceremony, therefore not strictly on the official GFMD agenda but indeed related to it, the UAE Chair added a **“DIALOGUE ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION (GCM) / THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORM (IMRF)”**, following the formula adopted a year ago by Ecuador during the January 2020 GFMD Summit in Quito.

A snapshot of civil society participation

Out of a total of **248** registered participants, **183** civil society delegates (**74%**) were actively engaged in the Summit / Civil Society Preparatory Meeting discussions.

They were made up of:

- ❖ **53%** female, **47%** male
- ❖ **42%** migrants, refugees, diaspora or representing organizations led by migrants, refugees or diaspora members
- ❖ **12%** trade union representatives
- ❖ **12%** youth (less than 30 years old)
- ❖ **28%** delegates from Europe; **22%** from Asia and the Pacific; **16%** from Latin America; **12%** from Africa; **12%** from North America; and **10%** from the Middle East.

Civil society representation during the Summit

The role of **ICMC as Civil Society Coordinating Office**, with the direct support of the Program Committee, was to:

- ❖ entirely organize both Networking Sessions on 20 January;
- ❖ identify the civil society speakers for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, and the civil society thematic leads / discussants for each of the six Roundtables;
- ❖ help identify the civil society project which would be showcased during the partnerships discussion in Open Space;

- ❖ identify the civil society panelists for both side events organized by the Co-Chairs of the GFMD Working Groups (“narrative” and “COVID-19”), and ensure that the space was created for a side event fully organized by a civil society partner;
- ❖ draft and deliver the civil society statement in the Future of the Forum meeting; and
- ❖ designate both a moderator and a panelist for the GCM/IMRF Dialogue.

All of that meant a total of 17 civil society representatives, not counting the 15 civil society speakers who had been separately and directly invited by the organizers of side events. In addition, there was the possibility for any registered participant to ask for a short intervention from the floor during all the roundtables and side events.

The Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony took place on 18 January 2021. The Ceremony featured keynote addresses from senior political and institutional leaders from around the world. The various interventions focused strongly on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for migrants and mobility, and the need for an effective response to be underpinned by strong cooperation and dialogue. As 2020 GFMD Chair H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al-Hamli noted, the pandemic “calls us to act as a global community. This is why the GFMD was invented, and why it has enduring value.”

Stella Opoku-Owusu, from AFFORD, presented civil society advocacy priorities, developed in the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting. Stella Opoku-Owusu acted as co-facilitator for the preparatory meeting, following from her role as co-chair of the Civil Society Days at the 2019 GFMD. She reminded all delegates that this 13th GFMD Summit was the first to be open to all civil society delegates.

As political spaces for civil society continue to shrink, the GFMD has become a standout example of how self-organized engagement by all stakeholders should look like, and how this enables us to reach our shared goals together.

Stella Opoku-Owusu

She urged that the Summit maintain a focus on “recurring fundamental principles: that movement and mobility is a human right, and protection is ensuring that the human rights of people are respected, fulfilled, and implemented.”

Interventions also focused on the opportunities presented by the COVID-19 crisis. Opoku-Owusu identified several examples of “good practices that have given us all some hope and a glimpse into a future of possibilities of building back better,” including expanding regular pathways for migration, visa extensions and the recognition of the essential nature of many migrant workers and remittances. Echoing this perspective, Mr. José Ángel Gurría Treviño of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development urged the Summit to “seize the opportunity presented by the pandemic to change our approach on the global challenge of international migration.” “The years of co-creating this space together will lead to progress and overall building back better for migrants.”

Speaking on the **Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection** theme, Stella Opoku-Owusu noted the strong focus of civil society discussions on “the vulnerability of those who need social protection the most, including the need for access to health services.” Describing how COVID-19 has caused “a protection crisis for migrants and refugees, not just a health pandemic,” she noted the “additional impact of measures to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, such as restrictions on movement, which in itself have inadvertently put migrants and refugees in precarious situations.”

Stella Opoku-Owusu urged that access to public health assistance and vaccinations “be done without discrimination or lack or breach of safeguards or firewalls...to build a safety net that leaves no one behind.” Ms. Carola Gunnarsson of United Cities & Local Governments and Lord Mayor of Sala, Sweden, noted the specific perspective of local and regional authorities, in which “migrants are our neighbors first. They live and work in our cities, and need to use the same public services as other citizens.”

Stella Opoku-Owusu noted how civil society had dealt with the GFMD Summit themes of **Governance of Labor Migration** and **Skilling of Migrants** together, because “we felt strongly that in addressing them as one, solutions for one would complement and enhance the other.” She gave several examples of the benefits of this approach, such as ensuring that the labor migration component includes protection for migrants, and the skilling component includes decent jobs. She particularly highlighted the issue of wage theft, a pre-existing issue that has been exacerbated by the economic shocks caused by COVID-19.

On **Irregular Migration**, Stella Opoku-Owusu emphasized two core civil society advocacy messages for the Summit:

- That many migrants migrate regularly and then lose their status and become undocumented; and
- Emphasizing return policies is not effective in addressing the root causes of irregular migration.

She urged that the GFMD Summit move its focus away from irregular migration, and instead “delve deeper into understanding the systemic structures that often result in migrants becoming undocumented.”

Stella Opoku-Owusu pointed to the linkages across the Summit’s thematic areas, and the importance of strong partnerships and an empowered civil society sector to producing effective cross-cutting solutions. She particularly highlighted the “unavoidable intersectionality that needs addressing and unpacking...to go much further in our understanding of the various levels of discrimination faced by migrants and develop policies to remedy this.” Echoing other speakers’ calls to make use of the opportunities presented by the COVID-19 crisis, she encouraged delegates that “the years of co-creating this space together will lead to progress and overall building back better for migrants.”

The Roundtable on the Governance of Labor Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes (Theme 1)

This first roundtable, which took place on the second day of the Summit, was co-chaired by Egypt and Zimbabwe.

It is high time that we adapt labor migration governance to the realities of the labor market, including changes in demand brought about by COVID-19.

The Roundtable Co-Chairs

They called on delegates to emphasize the importance of strong partnerships and cooperation to improve global labor migration governance.

The roundtable agenda focused on the background paper, prepared by Michelle Leighton of the ILO, who highlighted in particular:

- The increasing proportion of migrant workers who are women, including 11.5 million domestic workers worldwide;
- Intensified governance challenges, such as the increasing wage gap between migrant and non-migrant workers; and
- The extensive impact of COVID-19 for migrant workers, including job losses, large scale returns and lack of access to social protection and pandemic assistance measures.

On the first thematic area of **Human-centered Approaches to Addressing Future of Work Challenges and Opportunities for Labor Migration**, Michelle Leighton emphasized the core principle of labor migration governance as “making migration a choice.” She outlined a range of rights-based measures, including universal social protection, fair recruitment and equality of treatment, as central to “ensuring that migrant workers’ rights are protected, and they can reap their fair share of benefits.”

The **civil society thematic lead and representative, Julius Cainglet** of the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers identified decent work as the central objective of labor migration governance. “The missing pillar here is rights at work,” Julius Cainglet noted, “which are crucial to avoiding the multiple common challenges faced by migrant workers.”

He insisted that decent work must be respected and implemented in all its dimensions, including fair and ethical recruitment, the full recognition of migrant workers’ right to establish or join a trade union of their choosing for collective bargaining at various levels, non-discrimination and end of “slave-like conditions at work”.

Roni Pradha of Helvetas similarly noted the need to ensure access to justice for wage theft, including social protection measures for migrant workers returning to their country of origin following job losses.

Addressing **Data & Migration Governance**, there was a strong consensus amongst presenters and delegates on the need to strengthen data collection, sharing and analysis in order to support effective policymaking. Youth speaker Damilola Oyelade described how “the absence of data synchronization across key stakeholders limits effective responses and assistance.”

Expanding on this point, Brian Okengo of the African Union noted how “when it comes to migration data, different States and organizations use different definitions and systems that are in need of harmonization.”

Leighton here highlighted the potential for new global standards and definitions produced by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians to assist States, pointing to emerging good practice as States begin to implement them. She further emphasized the need for State investment in labor market information systems, in countries of both origin and destination, in order to better map skills, project skills gaps and plan education and training.

On the third theme of **Regular Migration Pathways, Skills and Job Matching**, Youth speaker Alicia Lelwic urged delegates to focus advocacy efforts on good practice developed in COVID-19 responses. Focusing on the “lengthy and costly qualification recognition procedures” that in many cases limit migrant mobility, she pointed to States’ temporary acceptance of overseas qualifications in sectors implementing pandemic responses as an example of what is feasible as recovery moves forward. Shirin Lira of the British Council urged that recovery measures prioritize recognition of the essential nature of domestic work, including by “changing the narrative of domestic versus highly skilled migrant labor.”

Crystallizing the roundtable consensus on the final theme of **Partnerships, International and Bilateral Cooperation for Improved Labor Migration Governance**, Gita Murti of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “all stakeholders must join hands in this task, at national, regional and local level. No government can work unilaterally in the area of migration.”

Representing the local and regional authority perspective, Mohamed Wajdi Aydi (Adjoint au Maire in the Tunisian city of Sfax) described how “cities have many tasks in relation to migrants and can assist in data collection. We therefore cannot be discounted as partners in labor migration governance.” He urged that delegates “listen to cities, as we have the material and substantial means to improve the situations of migrants and support effective governance.”

Concluding the discussion, rapporteur Kristof Tamas of the Swedish Ministry of Justice noted the value of partnership, dialogue and cooperation at all levels, and the need for “a whole-of-society approach to labor migration governance.”

The Roundtable on Skilling Migrants for Employment (Theme 2)

Over 150 delegates gathered for the roundtable discussion on **Skilling Migrants for Employment** on the fourth day of the Summit. The round table took a closer look at the issue through the lenses of building back better during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and holistic approaches to skills-based mobility. This roundtable was co-chaired by the Philippines and the United Kingdom.

The Co-Chairs highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic had made the global dependence on labor mobility even more apparent, as well as the need to address labor gaps at all levels. In addition, the digital revolution was a further factor of complexity.

COVID-19 has exposed systemic inequalities and social deficits in our societies. It has deepened the vulnerabilities of those who are already vulnerable, such as marginalized groups, including migrants, internally displaced people and refugees.

Moradeke Abiodun-Badru

Moradeke Abiodun-Badru, Trade Union representative from Public Services International Nigeria, emphasized that “The pandemic has highlighted the weakness of our public health care systems, which are our strongest and remaining frontiers that are crucial in saving lives and fighting the virus. It has underscored the imperative for universal health care (UHC) in protecting public health, promoting inclusion, and building the resilience of our communities in the face of a health crisis”. She added that trade unions remained critical towards the migration-led recruitment strategy being used by some high-income countries of destination as a means of solving their health workforce shortages. The cut in public spending and public sector wages, as well as privatization models, often advocated by international financial institutions, were also very problematic since they led to more poverty and forced migration. She concluded by advocating for social dialogue in all global governance initiatives that impact on migration. “There should be full engagement of trade unions to ensure the protection of human and labor rights and mutual benefits for both countries of origin and destination. Trade union rights should be guaranteed to all migrant workers regardless of their status”.

Speaking for the civil society mechanism, Stella Opoku-Owusu, from AFFORD, linked the skilling of migrants with labor migration governance. The pandemic has highlighted how a lack of legal pathways for low-wage migrant workers in particular results in irregular migration or the loss of regular status. She noted that there had been little development of pathways for skilling for employment and for regularization.

Gaps in skills recognition and in training opportunities for migrants represent a further challenge, Opoku-Owusu said. When their qualifications are not accredited, migrants are at increased risk of being exploited and undercompensated for their labor. Irene de Lorenzo, from UNICEF, highlighted the agency’s work to develop platforms that cover recognition for informal qualifications. She also pointed to the potential of skilling before, during and after migration to reduce patterns of irregular migration, especially for children and youth.

Stella Opoku-Owusu called for skill partnerships as an integral part of bilateral agreements and a whole-of-society approach that involves civil society, with migrant and diaspora communities at the center. She lifted up a rights-based, transnational agreement that enables nurses in the Philippines to be trained in Germany for future employment and allows migrants to bring their families with them. The agreement should be seen as a best practice model. Opoku-Owusu also highlighted the two-fold importance of technology in building back with better economic resilience: digital skilling and upskilling are needed, particularly in the face of mobility restrictions, and digital technology can serve as a tool for skilling processes.

Other delegates seconded the need to focus efforts on soft and secondary skills like communication, financial literacy and marketing. Michele Klein-Solomon, from the International Organization for Migration, noted that training requirements go beyond the technical skills for a specific job. Basic soft skills are actually survival skills that migrant workers will carry with them wherever they go, added Stephen Yee, Singapore National Employers Federation.

Core to any skilling strategies should be **the recognition of migrants as contributors to their communities, emphasized Opoku-Owusu**. Migrants are not only employees but also job creators and knowledge bearers. Opoku-Owusu concluded her remarks by urging a new approach for sustained economic recovery that prioritizes development of countries in the global South by creating jobs, developing skills and strengthening economies. “We need to find creative ways to provide people with the work that is needed and ensure that it is rights based and human centered” she said.

The Roundtable on Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants (Theme 3)

This roundtable took place on Day 3 of the Summit. It was co-chaired by Kenya and the Philippines, and Switzerland acted as rapporteur. The thematic expert and main drafter of the background paper was Professor Gibril Faal, Visiting Professor in Practice at the London School of Economics. After highlighting some of their best practices in providing or promoting technological tools to migrants, the Co-Chairs gave the floor to the thematic expert.

In practice, technology is neither neutral nor is it necessarily always a good thing. It can be a double-edged sword, and it is amenable to being used for good or bad, relating to migrants. As such, it should be seen as a tool rather than a panacea, and be used with alertness, positive purposefulness, and with necessary checks and balances from diverse stakeholders.... Leveraging technology to empower migrants is predicated on generating policy and practice that expands and enhances actual and potential benefits, whilst eliminating and mitigating the ever-evolving nature of attendant negative factors.

Gibril Faal

The benefits of technology and of migrants being technology-savvy are numerous, since technology can potentially simplify and make cheaper almost every step in their migration and work process (visa and work application, online education and upskilling, cash and remittances, legal and administrative support, contacts with peers and family, emergencies, participation in trade union activities, etc.). But the risks are also real and many. First, there is a huge “digital divide”. Those with a limited capacity to use technology, already often less educated and more vulnerable, will become even more vulnerable, more marginalized and more discriminated in a world where access to technology becomes an indispensable entry point for the work market. Secondly, technology is access to both information and disinformation / fake news. Thirdly, tech platforms and services are prone to algorithmic bias, negative profiling and discriminatory features. Fourthly, technology can be used to collect personal data against the interest and well-being of migrants.

In his intervention, **Onyekachi Wambu**, the Executive Director of AFFORD and **Civil Society thematic lead**, started with a very important point, i.e. the recognition that many migrants are still not tech savvy or suffer tech exclusion. It is important to always offer them a non-tech option, which is not only viable but also non-discriminatory. As an indication of non-discriminatory good practice in the context of COVID-19, he mentioned representations made by AFFORD to the UK government during the country’s first lockdown in 2020 for Money Transfer Organizations to be treated as an essential service, thus exempting them from lockdown restrictions. Lockdown legislation was subsequently amended providing an alternative to those who prefer not to use online platforms.

The Executive Director of AFFORD also gave a number of examples where migrants, diasporas, tech companies and governments have developed successful partnerships, in particular to access and aggregate diaspora savings for investment in diverse sectors of the African social economy. He noted in particular the development of the African Union’s legacy project, the African Diaspora Finance Corporation (ADFC) which proposes to use technology to make it easy for individual remitters and MTOs to contribute to a Diaspora Trust Fund through normal remittance transactions.

Many participants gave other examples of technological platforms or support which empower migrants and their families. But there was also broad recognition that technology can only empower migrants when properly monitored and regulated, through transparent checks and balances, when affordable and when options and opportunities are made available in a “non-threatening” and non-discriminatory manner.

The Roundtable on Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection (Theme 4)

This roundtable took place on 19 January, the second day of the Summit. Weighing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it focused on identifying areas of concern, highlighting best practices and examples of partnerships, and determining protection strategies that could underlie sustainable recovery. With governments, international organizations and the three mechanisms in the “room”, the discussion offered a “360-degree perspective,” said the Moroccan Co-Chair. The roundtable underlined that COVID-19 has and continues to exacerbate existing gaps in protection for migrants in what UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called the “protection crisis.”

Speaking for the civil society mechanism, Helena Olea of Alianza Americas lifted up the link between the failure to guarantee human rights, and gaps in protection. Human rights standards “recognize the humanity of all people regardless of their nationality” and must be defended. The Mexican Co-Chair echoed this call as a key element of the discussion: “We need to keep a human rights-centered approach, thinking first of vulnerable people and communities.”

Structural conditions such as the global economic system, views of migrants as replaceable and increased authoritarian tendencies in response to COVID-19 must be considered when addressing gaps in protection, Helena Olea said. She highlighted **xenophobia and discrimination** as a key area of concern for civil society, with migrants being perceived as a threat and often being criminalized as a result. She underlined that promoting pro-migrant and migration narratives must be a priority, an action seconded by a number of delegates including Ruthra Mary Ramachandran, youth representative of Malaysia National Working Body for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Human Rights.

Olea said **barriers to regularization and nationality** are a necessary second focus and emphasized the need for strengthened international protection. She said there is a lack of special protection for a number of vulnerable groups such as climate-displaced people, women and children. In his introduction of the roundtable’s framework paper, consultant to the GFMD John Bingham noted that the top emphasis of meetings leading to the Summit discussion was expanding and simplifying regular pathways, with a logic of regularization. Helena Olea observed that migrants are being left out of **social protection** networks, in particular migrants with irregular status and families with mixed status. A lack of documentation underlies many protection gaps and results in an accompanying fear of detention and deportation. She called for firewalls between public service access and immigration or law enforcement controls. “No one should have to choose between medical treatment and deportation,” Helena Olea said.

Lack of protection also takes the form of the **denial of due process and a lack of access to justice**, Helena Olea said. Partnerships with universities, legal associations and local authorities can provide free legal services for migrants. Ending detention practices would “close an important gap” in protection, she noted.

Helena Olea named **labor protection** as a final priority protection gap to address. Here, firewalls are needed as well to ensure safe working contracts, and the monitoring of recruitment systems to stop exploitative practices. Addressing wage theft is central to building a just recovery from COVID-19, said Ellene Sana of the Center for Migrant Advocacy, pointing to the hundreds of thousands of migrants who have been denied their wages due to the pandemic. Helena Olea noted that the absence of a culture of human rights is creating an even greater crisis at the global level and called for new approaches. “Gaps in the protection of migrants can be overcome and should be one of the goals of reconstruction.”

The Co-Chairs closed the roundtable by affirming the need to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all migrants, whatever their status or the stage of their migration.

The Roundtable on Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration – What Works? What Doesn’t? (Theme 5)

On day three of the Summit, some 240 delegates gathered for a roundtable discussion on **Approaches to Preventing Irregular Migration**. Opening the discussion, the Spanish Co-Chair described irregular migration as “contentious, divisive and unavoidable,” and emphasized the need for stakeholders “to build a common ground to find common responses.” The Venezuelan Co-chair described the topic as a “global and multi-sectoral issue, which must be tackled in order to ensure the inclusion of all migrants in our societies.”

Introducing the session background paper, Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute echoed the Co-Chair by stating: “Irregular migration is one of the most difficult issues to take up in a multi-stakeholder environment, as discussion is often highly polarized.” Newland urged that returns should not be seen through the lens of migration management, and that countries of destination should instead recognize the challenges it presents for both countries of origin and irregular migrants themselves. She also pointed to the scarcity and disputed nature of data on irregular migration, stating that “without good data, we are condemned to grope in the dark for good policy choices.” Newland concluded by emphasizing the importance of partnerships at all levels to tackling irregular migration, and urging policymakers to better understand both the magnitude of irregular migration and the motivations of irregular migrants.

Roundtable speakers and participants addressed discussion questions set out in the background paper in three focused sessions.

Addressing the question, **what actions or processes lead to a decline in irregular migration, and what role does policy play?** Michele LeVoy, the Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) and Civil Society thematic lead, highlighted three key points:

- ❖ The human rights of irregular migrants have long been confirmed by international standards and guidelines, and the task is now to “close the gap between international standards and national and regional practice”;
- ❖ Policymaking should reflect the reality of irregular migration, in which the majority of undocumented persons migrate regularly and lose their legal status post-arrival; and
- ❖ Ensuring access to healthcare and COVID-19 vaccination programs for undocumented migrants is “smart public health policy,” and data-sharing firewalls must form part of this provision.

Reflecting on the question, **what is the relationship between increased opportunities to migrate through regular channels and the prevalence of irregular migration?**, panel speakers uniformly acknowledged the lack of reliable data on which to base policy responses to irregular migration. Youth speaker CS Akhil stated that “the lack of data causes countries of origin and destination to use ‘guesstimates’ in order to make policy,” and emphasized the need for better information on regular pathways for potential migrants in countries of origin. Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen stated that “it is low-paid, unskilled and informal workers who are the most vulnerable to loss of rights, and increasing regular pathways will decrease this vulnerability.” Sara Al-Khatib of the Solidarity Center identified a failure to impose penalties on employers that violate migrant rights as causal in forcing migrants to choose to move irregularly.

Addressing the final question, **What characteristics of national migration laws and practices encourage irregular migration, and how can these be changed?**, speakers highlighted weaknesses in asylum and immigration systems of destination countries that encourage irregular movement and entry, including:

- Asylum systems that are slow to adjudicate claims;
- Unclear immigration regulations and misinformation;
- Regular migration pathways that do not respect the right to family unity; and
- Widespread informal work and a failure to enforce legal requirements for work.

The Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Managing the Future of Human Mobility (Theme 6)

Day four of the Summit saw some 170 delegates come together for a roundtable discussion on **Fostering Partnerships to Realize Migration-Related Goals**.

Opening the discussion, the Salvadorian Co-Chair reminded delegates of the extensive consultation and dialogue undertaken to produce the background paper that set the framework for the session. “We have to recognize that effective migration governance is a multi-sectoral and multi-level task and to create a win-win for both economies and migrants requires new partnerships and the substantial engagement of different actors.”

The Gambian Co-Chair stated that “both partnerships and sustainable financing are critical elements in finding solutions to achieve migration-related goals.”

Presenting the session background paper, Dilip Ratha of the World Bank provided an overview of global migratory movements and highlighted the ongoing impact of COVID-19 for mobility, remittances and migrant access to rights. “Partnership is needed in migration,” Ratha stated, “but the willingness to partner is not enough. We need to enable partnerships with sustainable financing, and move from ‘millions to billions’ in terms of State contributions.” He highlighted several ways in which financial support to third countries could benefit migration-related goals, including:

- Provision of vaccines and healthcare assistance to migrants;
- Services and assistance for migrants returning to countries of origin; and
- Enabling a transition from humanitarian relief to development-oriented solutions.

Moving to the session’s central proposal for a Concessional Financing Facility for Migration (CFF), Ratha outlined the lessons that can be drawn from the existing Global Concessional Financing Facility for Refugees.

Several Member States provided examples of innovative partnerships at all levels that have enabled the realization of migration-related goals. Bettina Etter of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation highlighted how Switzerland “is prioritizing partnerships to work towards the realizations of the Sustainable Development Goals from a migration perspective.” Ambassador Khalil Hashmi of the Pakistani Permanent Mission in Geneva noted that “partnerships are absolutely essential to achieving migration-related goals,” but urged that the proposed CFF proposal be “situated in the wider context of the massive impacts of COVID-19, and reflect the reduced fiscal space and capacities of many countries of origin and transit.”

William Gois of Migrant Forum in Asia, the Civil Society thematic lead, described partnership as “the very core of our being in the civil society sector.” Gois welcomed the CFF proposal, stating that “it is high time to experiment with pulling together resources to realize the aims of the GFMD and ensure its ongoing legitimacy.”

Gois presented four key civil society priorities for the proposed CFF:

- ❖ Ensuring social protection for all migrants regardless of status;
- ❖ Expanding regular migration pathways and regularization schemes;
- ❖ Fighting xenophobia and discrimination; and
- ❖ Promoting safe access to services for all migrants, including access to justice for wage theft and non-payment of benefits.

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi of United Cities and Local Governments Africa urged that financing mechanisms ensure resources reach local and regional authorities, which “have daily contact with migrants and are best placed to maximize the benefits of funding for migrant populations.” Noting both the importance of partnerships between cities in countries of origin and destination, Martijn Plum of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development also outlined the need for partnerships at all levels to be based on “shared interest, trust and clearly defined roles for a wide range of stakeholders and actors.”

The session concluded with the Co-Chairs’ proposal to establish a GFMD Working Group “to develop a detailed CFF proposal”.

The Civil Society Networking Sessions

Both civil society networking sessions took place on 20 January 2021, at different times to accommodate participants living in different time zones, in particular Asia / the Pacific on one hand, and the Americas on the other.

Civil society invited government delegates to join these networking sessions of open and informal discussion on **Building Back Better after COVID-19: Regular Pathways and Solutions for Recovery**. To ensure that the discussion was indeed open and informal, the networking sessions took place under strict Chatham House Rule. Both sessions were facilitated by civil society representatives (the Pan-African Network in Defense of Migrants' Rights and the Global Coalition on Migration for the first session and the International Council of Voluntary (ICVA) and ACT Alliance for the second session). Both government representatives (Bangladesh, Nigeria and Switzerland for the first session and Argentina, Canada and Germany for the second session) and civil society delegates (the African Trade Union Migration Network, INSAN association Lebanon and WARBE Development Foundation Bangladesh for the first session, and Alianza Américas, Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes, and Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho for the second session) were invited to share their views in panel discussions, which were then followed by interventions / questions / comments from the floor. Between both sessions, more than 250 people participated.

The sessions began by outlining the challenges and impacts of COVID-19 for migrants and refugees, including:

- ❖ Lack or insufficient access to social protection, healthcare and pandemic assistance measures, particularly for undocumented migrants;
- ❖ Job losses, including impacts on families and children supported by migrant worker incomes and remittances;
- ❖ Insufficient support for migrants returning to their country of origin;
- ❖ Border closures, mobility restrictions and expiration of legal residence;
- ❖ Exacerbated individual vulnerabilities, such as disabilities;
- ❖ Homelessness or precarious housing conditions, caused by prolonged lockdown and evictions by former employers; and
- ❖ Increased instances of wage theft and other rights violations, particularly for women migrant domestic workers;
- ❖ Over 90% of the COVID-19 cases are in urban areas, where the majority of migrants live;
- ❖ The pandemic has a huge gender impact;
- ❖ The recovery is unlikely to be for 2021, given the second / third wave of the pandemic.

The discussions highlighted a range of possible short and longer-term solutions to mitigate these impacts and “build back better” for migrants in the global recovery from COVID-19. Suggested immediate measures included:

- ❖ Ensuring vaccination programs are open to all migrants, including those who are undocumented;
- ❖ Prioritizing migrants in essential roles for vaccinations;
- ❖ Facilitating access to justice for migrants who are the victims of wage theft or other rights violations by employers;
- ❖ Imposing penalties on employers violating the rights of migrant workers;
- ❖ Skills and qualification recognition for migrant workers returning to countries of origin;
- ❖ Including provision for assistance to vulnerable migrants in fiscal and monetary policy in response to COVID-19;
- ❖ Expanded and more accessible mental health and psychosocial support for migrants;
- ❖ Recognizing that local governments are best placed to lead transformative recovery.

The sessions additionally pointed to the need for State assistance for small and medium-sized businesses, many of which employ migrants, and the need for such assistance to be accompanied by measures to promote workplace rights and safety for migrant workers. Relatedly, delegates also emphasized the need to ensure migrant collective representation and participation in trade unions, with a particular plea for trade unions in countries of destination to be more inclusive of migrants of both regular and undocumented status.

In the medium to long term, discussions concurred on the crucial importance of expanded and more accessible regular migration pathways. Interventions highlighted the positive outcomes of such an expansion for migrants’ access to rights, for employers seeking recruitment, and for the prevention of trafficking. In the context of reduced global remittances caused by COVID-19, delegates also pointed to the need for reform of the global remittances system to maximize its development benefits.

There was a strong consensus amongst participants on the need to identify and replicate good practices adopted by States in COVID-19 responses. Of particular note here are:

- ❖ Temporary relaxations of labor regulations that prevented migrants from changing employers;
- ❖ Visa extensions for migrants unable to return to countries of origin;
- ❖ Extended time limits for migrants to regularize their stay by finding new employment; and
- ❖ Right to apply for a work visa without having to leave the country.

These measures are largely temporary, and delegates provided several examples of how the closure of similarly time-limited measures in the past had in fact increased irregular migration. Civil society participants expressed their strong wish that such measures are made permanent, and that additional States build on this new evidence of feasibility to implement similar, permanent measures.

The sessions concluded with a broad agreement on the key principles and approaches that should underpin policymaking and action in the global recovery from COVID-19. Here delegates concurred on the need for strong and inclusive partnerships at all levels, based on the principle of solidarity, and whole-of-society and rights-based approaches to assistance and recovery.

Civil Society-organized Side Event: “Non-Payment of Wages and Benefits: Impact on the Life of Migrants and their Families Post-COVID

On 18 January 2021, the second Side Event of the Summit highlighted non-payment of wages and benefits to migrant workers. It was unique in the GFMD agenda, being the only side event **organized by civil society organizations (Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and the Council of Global Unions (CGU) / Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI))**.

Framing the issue, event chair William Gois of MFA emphasized that the issue of wage theft is “not about charity or humanitarian provision; it’s about wages that have been earned by and are due to workers.” Gois noted the lack of data to support effective policy responses in this area. His analysis was echoed in the appeal to civil society by Ellene Sana of the Center for Migrant Advocacy to “do our homework” by collating and disseminating data evidencing instances of wage theft and non-payment of benefits. Gois agreed that data collection will not be a short-term task but is a crucial step in ensuring that the issue can move beyond the case level and be dealt with more systematically. Lara White of the International Organization for Migration (ILO) similarly highlighted how better data collection could improve understanding of the root causes of wage theft, noting “it could be business failure, it could be opportunism, or both; we just don’t know.”

William Gois also identified the lack of collective representation and freedom of association of many migrant workers as barriers, both to understanding the phenomena of wage theft at a systemic level and for migrant workers to obtain legal remedy. While acknowledging insufficient data, Ryszard Cholewinski of the ILO described how many wage complaints are collective in their nature, often involving thousands of workers employed by the same company. He highlighted how such cases are best resolved through robust worker representation and collective bargaining, both of which are limited for migrant workers.

Several speakers highlighted the need to consider wage theft and non-payment of benefits in the wider context of the multiple challenges faced by migrant workers. Cholewinski outlined how legal redress for non-payment is “tied up with the need to provide fundamental human rights and labor rights to migrant workers,” and the challenges for access to justice where these rights are not guaranteed. This was powerfully echoed by the Regional Representative of BWI Asia Pacific Region, Mr. Apolinar Z. Tolentino, Jr., who stated that “perpetrators of wage theft must be put into account and justice. Recognition and respect of fundamental worker rights on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining of migrant workers is paramount in all countries of destination to protect workers from exploitation by

recruitment and employment agencies as well as unscrupulous employers.” Ellene Sana noted the lack of legal clarity for undocumented migrant workers waiting for wages in country of destination, and the need for “whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches” that ensure social protection for undocumented migrant workers while they seek legal redress. Hans Peter Wyss of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation similarly highlighted the absence of social protection for many migrant workers, and their subsequent intensified vulnerability due to COVID-19.

Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, Member of the Bangladeshi Parliament, underlined the lack of an international mechanism to register and pursue cases of non-payment of wages and benefits. He highlighted the advantages of a transnational approach, including for issues such as compensation, and the crucial nature of longer-term support for migrant workers returning to countries of origin following wage theft.

Ellene Sana reminded delegates of the extensive impact on Gulf migrant workers of the 2016 oil price crisis, many of whom were victims of non-payment of wages and end-of-service benefits, and emphasized the pluses of drawing on experiences of this kind to form and

It Takes a Community

With the help of communications experts, the Narratives working group developed an international and multi-stakeholder campaign called [“It Takes a Community”](#), which was launched on 18 December 2020.

The campaign aims to promote balanced messaging on migration and help counter the scapegoating of migrants, by targeting countries and groups of people referred to as the “mixed middle”, i.e. Groups and individuals who don't have a clearly positive or negative attitude towards migrants, but whose opinion varies based on the circumstances (e.g. They would be willing to assist those in need but might be worried migrants have a negative impact on job opportunities in their country). The working group is also compiling good practices and sharing information of successful messaging on migration with the entire GFMD community.

advocate for effective contemporary responses, highlighting in particular diplomatic representations by countries of origin in support of wage and benefit payment. She concluded by highlighting the importance of engaging governments via existing frameworks for dialogue, urging delegates to “take the opportunity to do things the right way – this cannot again be a race to the bottom.”

Side event: It Takes a Community: Building a Global Movement to Balance the Narrative on Migration

The GFMD Working Group on Narratives was established following the January 2021 GFMD Summit in Quito, where the GFMD Community, including civil society, discussed the issue of negative narratives on migration as one of the three sub-themes of the Summit, and came to an agreement that collective action to counter the increasingly negative narratives on migrants and migration in the public discourse was urgent. It is co-chaired by the governments of Canada and Ecuador, as well as the Mayors Mechanism, and brings together governments, international organizations, local authorities, civil society and migrants themselves. **Civil society is represented in the Working Group by OXFAM and ICMC**, both bringing the experience of civil society experts on

narratives and migrants themselves, but also the networking capacity of more than 3000 organizations or networks.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group also organized a side event on 25 January 2021 during the GFMD Summit to showcase the campaign, promote evidence-based discourse on migrants and migration, and discuss various grassroots initiatives related to the campaign.

ICMC Policy Officer, Clara Keller-Skupień, was the civil society representative in the panel discussion. She highlighted that during its GFMD preparatory meeting, the civil society mechanism had named combatting toxic narratives and xenophobia as one of its top priorities. She underlined that the campaign was crucial as the global community was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and considering recovery strategies. Balanced narratives that focus on the wellbeing of all of society – including migrants – were needed to help ensure access to vaccines and prevent migrants from being seen as a public health threat. For civil society, the campaign can serve as an important channel to address not only the narratives themselves but structural causes of xenophobia and inequalities as well. Clara Keller-Skupień shared an open call to the GFMD community to join in the discussions on race and migration that the Civil Society Action Committee is planning in the coming year. The side event moderator Hannah Murphey (IOM) added that the campaign can serve as a platform to support migrants in denouncing discrimination and racism. Clara Keller-Skupień insisted on the whole-of-society approach:

The conversation on narratives on migration really is about all of us – individually and collectively.

Clara Keller-Skupień

Migrants are not only in need of support. They are “actors of change, entrepreneurs and leaders, part of communities and societies.” She also emphasized the transformative nature of participants’ engagement as migration advocates, pointing out, in the words of Eva Garzón Hernandez from Oxfam, that “every time we talk about migration, we shape the narrative.”

Side event: The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development

Fully aware that the COVID-19 crisis had a huge impact not only on migrant lives, livelihoods and jobs but also on the governance of migration, the UAE Chair decided to organize two webinars precisely on the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development, respectively on 28 and 30 April 2020, the first one focusing on the immediate challenges, solutions and good practices, while the second one did discuss the mid- to long-term responses, including recovery packages. In each of the sessions, there were two panels with three panelists, coming from governments, the three mechanisms, and international organizations. In the first session, civil society was represented by INSAN Lebanon and in the second one by Alianza Américas. In addition to providing panelists, civil society had been directly involved in the organization of the webinars but had also been pushing for an increased GFMD leadership and the recognition that the pandemic had created an unprecedented crisis which forced all of us to think and act anew. During this initial phase,

civil society advocacy was very much based on the Civil Society Action Committee's⁶ Statement, "[First, Save Lives: Solutions for the COVID-19 Pandemic and New Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees](#)", which was issued on 7 April 2020 and signed by 323 networks and organizations.

The webinars were almost immediately followed by the creation of the Working Group, which first met on 7 May 2020, while its [Terms of Reference \(TORs\)](#) were approved on 15 May. The Working Group is co-chaired by Indonesia, Switzerland and the Business Mechanism. Civil society representatives are MFA and ICMC. While the TORs include sharing of information and discussing "effective ways in which to advance multi-stakeholder dialogue", it also makes explicit reference to more ambitious objectives such as:

"Exploring the creation of a broader GFMD platform for the collection and sharing of information on best practices; and

Developing processes to promote the establishment of concrete partnerships between diverse actors working to address the impact of pandemics on migration and development."

The Working Group also adopted an action-oriented strategy and a workplan, and coordinated the drafting of a working paper, which was published on 17 January 2021. [The paper](#) includes, in a separated chapter (p.15-18), the civil society perspective, prepared by ICMC with inputs from MFA.

The Working Group got an additional impetus during the GFMD Summit, with seven out of 11 side events directly dedicated to the impacts of COVID-19, one of them organized by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group, precisely focusing on the call to the Working Group to continue its work in 2021 and possibly beyond. **ICMC was among the panelists and highlighted some of the reasons why it was imperative to extend the mandate of the Working Group, including:**

- ❖ The impacts of the pandemic have been global, far reaching, devastating and they will be felt during the years to come. It is likely that lockdowns or restrictions will remain in place in many countries for at least a good part of 2021. The economies around the globe may keep losing jobs in 2021 and the jobs lost may not be recovered for years.
- ❖ The pandemic has reshaped the debate around migration and development. Many countries of origin had to "absorb" returning migrant workers who had lost their jobs, while not being able to provide them with significant social support beyond emergency humanitarian assistance. Induced returns have taken place without proper consultation between countries of destination and origin, and often in violation of migrants' fundamental rights. Lockdowns have created a renewed culture of border controls and restrictions.

⁶ The Civil Society Action Committee is the largest Civil Society Migration Network. ICMC also serves as its Secretariat.

- ❖ While still deep into lockdowns, we are now considering and planning for the “recovery” phase, that sees, for the time being, the COVID-19 vaccines being unevenly administered and unfairly distributed among countries, and various recovery packages adopted at national or regional levels with hugely different financial envelopes and priorities or strategies.
- ❖ Beyond the unique nature of the GFMD, as an informal, transparent and open government-led platform generating a frank and necessary dialogue among all stakeholders, its relevance is also in its ability and agility to focus on real priorities. In 2021, ignoring the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development would be sheer blindness.
- ❖ Civil society is convinced that the only way to prioritize and focus is to have a dedicated Working Group taking the time to reflect, document best practices and inform the broader membership. In addition, **not** having the COVID-19 Working Group would be sending a strong and unfortunate signal that all is “business as usual” for the GFMD, while the pandemic has created unprecedented suffering, damages and uncertainties.
- ❖ Largely because the pandemic took almost everyone by surprise and left us with more questions, fears and doubts, than certainties, the initial response to the pandemic, in many countries, was a form of isolationism and a focus on purely domestic parameters. International cooperation came much later and there is now a momentum to ensure that the responses to both the pandemic and the economic depression are both forward and outward looking.
- ❖ Without a strong international leadership, migrants, migration and development will be the first victims of a “national interest” approach. [As the president of the Brookings Institution wrote recently](#), *“In truth, COVID-19 represents a complex series of interconnected transnational problems that demand leader-driven, multilateral solutions. To address issues such as systemic racism, climate change, and the need for a global economic recovery, it is truly imperative that we seek to strengthen, not weaken, our shared international order. While science will ultimately save us, there is no hope for coordinated action against the disease—and for our ultimate recovery—without leadership.”*
- ❖ The pandemic has unfortunately accelerated a trend of more restrictive migration policies and increased violations of the fundamental rights of migrants. The GFMD has the responsibility to collectively ensure that the progresses made in the past are not lost and fundamental pre-COVID 19 deficiencies are being discussed with the aim to offer solutions to address them.
- ❖ Since 2021 could be a year without major migration and development events, the extension of the mandate of the COVID-19 Working Group makes ample sense and contributes to shaping the international agenda around the most fundamental issue, while further demonstrating the GFMD relevance and centrality.

During the side event, almost all interventions were in support of the extension of the Working Group’s mandate.

The Future of the Forum Meeting

Day five of the Summit brought together key stakeholders for a discussion on **The Future of the Forum**. The Future of the Forum is held annually as an integral component of each GFMD Summit, to take stock of progress and achievements from one Chairmanship to the next and to consider priorities for the year ahead. It is open to member State Heads of Delegations and the coordinators of the three GFMD Mechanisms for business, civil society and mayors.

The meeting started with a “Lookback at 2020: Challenges and Opportunities”, a report by the GFMD 2020 Chair, H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, highlighting at the same time the many innovations brought by the UAE Chair, innovations unanimously recognized and appreciated, including increased consultations with all GFMD partners throughout the year, broad and outcome-oriented regional consultations and, above all, a Summit, which for the first time, has been entirely open to all the participants. Inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder consultations have been the trademark of the UAE Chair. But 2020 was also marked by the unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic and the lack of long-term financial sustainability for the GFMD. In part for the reasons just mentioned, the UAE Chair has not been able to formally handover to a new Chair since no country has volunteered yet to take over. Nevertheless, the UAE clearly indicated that it would remain actively engaged with the other members of the Steering Group to ensure a proper transition, including the continuation of the ongoing GFMD activities, in particular the Working Groups, and hopefully the identification of a new chair in the near future. The UAE Chair concluded by thanking the members of the Steering Group as well as other governments for fresh financial contributions and for their commitment to help pilot a proactive and smooth transition.

The civil society perspective was presented by Stéphane Jaquemet, the Head of the Civil Society Coordinating Office. “The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that the GFMD is more meaningful and purposeful than ever, if such a reminder were necessary,” Stéphane Jaquemet stated, “though it has so unfortunately come at the cost of millions of lives, jobs and livelihoods destroyed.” At such difficult moments, “we all need a place where we can discuss without undue pressure, without being judged; where a real dialogue can take place; and where all who should have a voice are invited to sit at the table, speak their mind and make a contribution to find solutions. As civil society, we are convinced that the GFMD provides not only such a place but also the conducive environment for a constructive dialogue geared towards best practices, true partnerships, shared responsibilities and, not least, the recognition of each stakeholder’s strength”, added Stéphane Jaquemet. He also mentioned that “the GFMD really brings something essential and different, in particular, for us civil society, how much the successive Chairs and members of the Steering Group have encouraged, since 2011, Civil Society self-organizing. Building on the increasingly inclusive approach from previous Chairs, the UAE has also set a very good precedent where all the mechanisms can now participate in the entire summit, which, we hope, will become a permanent format for future GFMD’s. This should certainly be recognized as a best practice”.

Stéphane Jaquemet recognized that each of the three mechanisms and governments had different responsibilities but that their interaction was precisely the uniqueness and DNA of the GFMD. “Governments have the ultimate responsibility for almost everything. They adopt policies, implement laws, adhere to human rights standards, are in charge of internal security, manage borders and issue visas and work permits. Business leaders are the ones to create jobs, and without job creation we will never recover. Migrants live in cities or small communities, as fully engaged members of the society, as enablers, implementers, and as part of the solutions to building back better. The local authorities interact with them on a daily basis, and many municipalities have important social budgets that can benefit migrants. Grassroot civil society organizations provide vital services, including health, education and humanitarian assistance, to often vulnerable or marginalized communities, contributing to their empowerment and inclusion.”

Stéphane Jaquemet concluded by insisting that:

“The fundamentals of the GFMD must be preserved. These are governments in the driving seat; business, mayors and civil society as full and self-organized partners and stakeholders; international organizations in a vital and indispensable expert support; as well as transparency and focus on replicable best practices – must be preserved. We also believe that the UAE’s very strong support for youth engagement must continue. Finally, our frequent exchanges and consultations with the Business and Mayors Mechanisms have helped us being more pertinent and focused.”

The other mechanisms, the youth representative and many governments took the floor, all highlighting the importance and the unique character of the GFMD, and expressing their unwavering support for making sure it would continue. Some speakers (including civil society) deplored that the mandate of the Support Unit would be terminated, precisely at a moment when administrative and logistical backing, as well as institutional memory, were essential for both the Steering Group during the transition period and the incoming / future chair.

France and the USA made important announcements for the future of the forum, which would be repeated during the Closing Ceremony, in front of a larger audience. Both statements are reported below under “Closing Ceremony”.

Open Space: Migration and Development Partnerships through 2020 and Beyond

On the penultimate day of the Summit, the Open Space session celebrated GFMD partnerships established during 2020, and highlighted lessons learned for the future.

The session aimed to celebrate partnerships that have emerged through the GFMD process via the Migration Labs and other streams. The agenda therefore included presentation of key partnerships emerging in 2020, and a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities of partnership development.

Opening the session, H.E. Abdulla Al Nuaimi of the UAE Ministry of Human Resources outlined the extensive work of the GFMD on identifying and establishing partnerships leading up to the Open Space session. “Partnerships do more than improve outcomes for migration,” Al Nuaimi stated. “They also build trust amongst stakeholders for cooperation and collaboration.

I believe today's session will demonstrate how far the GFMD has travelled in supporting and realizing this area of work."

Overall facilitator Rebekah Smith of Labor Mobility Partnerships also acknowledged delegates' work in this area throughout 2020, stating: "We are here to celebrate the outcomes of your work, and discuss how the lessons learned can be built into the GFMD's work going forward."

The session agenda began with the announcement of the winners of the second GFMD Migration Challenge, a competition designed to support impact-driven ventures focused on tackling global migration problems with the help of technology. Announcing the winner DignifAI, a Colombian start-up training and matching migrants with digital work opportunities, Bettina Etter of competition co-sponsor the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation stated her wish that "this inspiring endeavor grows into a global solution that will change the world for the benefit of migrants and their communities."

Opening a dedicated panel presenting partnerships designed within the GFMD structure, panel chair Michael Clemens of the Center for Global Development emphasized that "it is by learning about what these partnerships are and how they came about that we hope to help the process of making more of them happen in the future." The panel introduced five good examples of partnerships:

- Partnership on entrepreneurial mobility between Senegal and Belgium (Belgian Development Agency and Consortium Sénégal Jeunesse);
- Update on the Knowledge Hub for Migration and Sustainable Development (United Nations Institute for Training and Research);
- Partnership ideas on labor mobility schemes and on diaspora contribution for up-skilling in countries of origin (African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO));
- New features of the Migration EU eXpertise+ (MIEUX+) initiative in the area of capacity development partnerships (European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development); and
- Partnership to increase youth participation at the GFMD (UN Major Group for Children and Youth).

Presenters highlighted the potential for the work and impacts of successful partnerships to be scaled up across sectors, countries and stakeholders; the crucial importance of funding support for partnerships; and the central role of diaspora communities and organizations in ensuring that benefits are maximized for migrant populations.

The session concluded with an expert panel discussion, **Reflections on Partnerships 2020: What Has Worked, and What Hasn't?**, chaired by Head of the United Arab Emirates GFMD Taskforce Alex Zalami.

Summarizing the nature and purpose of partnerships, Michael Clemens stated: "It is so important that partnerships are not just between governments. Civil society, youth, international organizations and the private sector are all critical to breaking down the many barriers that exist to collaboration and cooperation."

There always needs to be a 'triple win', so partnerships benefit migrants, create positive development outcomes for country of origin and benefit countries of destination.

Anne Hitzegrad, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Addressing the impact of COVID-19, Bettina Etter noted how planning for recovery has been supported by strong existing partnerships that enabled “an early assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on existing projects, and solid information on new needs arising from the pandemic that we can use to make the required changes to projects and to our allocation of funds.”

Concluding with thoughts on how the GFMD should support partnerships in future, presenters pointed to the value of the global network and community provided by the GFMD to developing partnerships, and identified regular pathways, skills partnerships and COVID-19 recovery as key areas to be addressed by the GFMD in this area going forward.

The Closing Ceremony

The Summit’s Closing Plenary took place on 26 January 2021. The agenda reflected on the Summit’s outcomes, looked back over the work of the GFMD in 2020 and, to some extent, set out plans and priorities for 2021.

Opening the plenary session, 2020 GFMD Chair H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, UAE Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation, outlined the work of the GFMD throughout 2020 and thanked all those who had contributed to this year’s Summit. “The GFMD is a space for difficult discussions,” Al Hamli stated, “where we can focus on concrete outcomes, and come together in a spirit of trust and mutual exchange.” Referencing the UAE’s decision to make the full GFMD agenda open to all stakeholders, H.E. Al Hamli urged that “all future GFMD Chairs build on this significant success by retaining this approach.”

The Chair introduced the following four individuals and organizations that the UAE Chair wished to honor for their exceptional contributions to the GFMD:

- Ambassador Pietro Mona, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development;
- Estrella Lajom, Head of the GFMD Support Unit;
- Madelaine Yorobe Alfelor, Mayor of Iriga City, Philippines (on behalf of the GFMD Mayors Mechanism); and
- Marta Verani, United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth (on behalf of Youth Participation).

Accepting his award, Ambassador Mona emphasized the many contributions of the colleagues and organizations he had worked within the GFMD process, amongst others highlighting “the great support of those in the civil society community.” Marta Verani acknowledged the “crucial support of our long-standing civil society partners in enabling us to facilitate the active participation of 100 young people in this year’s Summit.” Estrella Lajom noted “the enduring success of the GFMD, which is our collective achievement,” but urged all

stakeholders to work collectively to address the challenges faced by the GFMD and “ensure its continuity, which is our collective calling and responsibility.”

Helena Olea of Alianza Americas, the Civil Society speaker, outlined the below joint Summit priorities developed during the GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting, and urged their inclusion in GFMD programs and discussions going forward:

- ❖ Ensuring social protection for migrants and their access to services, regardless of their status and without the fear of arrest or deportation;
- ❖ Expanding migrants’ regularization and legal migration pathways, with a particular focus on decent work in all its dimensions, including freedom of association and the right of migrant workers to join trade unions;
- ❖ Fighting xenophobia and discrimination;
- ❖ Promoting due process and access to justice.

In a late addition to the agenda, Daniel McNicholas of the United States Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva outlined a commitment from the United States (which withdrew from all international fora related to migration in 2017) to “work together to face common migration challenges, and find solutions that protect the human rights and dignity of all people.” Highlighting the GFMD as an opportunity for the United States to re-establish global relationships and alliances, McNicholas concluded by informing delegates that “we will undertake a review of our participation in the GFMD and other migration fora that support the Global Compact on Migration, we will be showing up, we will be listening, we will ask questions and we will be working closely with all of you.”

Ambassador Pascal Teixeira da Silva of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs emphasized the importance of diaspora populations and organizations within French migration policy, as “major stakeholders in international development, with their ability to transfer expertise to countries of origin, and contribute to human relations between countries of origin and destination.” Ambassador Teixeira Da Silva highlighted the impact of climate change on migration and development as a key priority topic for the GFMD going forward. He also highlighted “necessary reforms of the GFMD’s funding and governance to ensure that the Summit is ‘futureproofed,’” including the potential for some GFMD meetings to follow the example of 2020 and move online. The French Ambassador concluded by proposing that France partner with a Sub-Saharan African State to form a “fruitful and inclusive GFMD Co-Chairmanship in place from mid-2022 until end of 2023.” He urged that the GFMD “preserves its role as a unique platform for exchange, dialogue and proposals, and bring a real added value both on current issues, and for issues that are gaining ground – such as climate change – where the GFMD can also bring a major contribution.”

Closing the session, H.E. Al Hamli welcomed the French commitment to the 2022-23 GFMD Co-Chairmanship. He concluded by informing delegates that “pending the appointment of a 2021-22 GFMD Chair, the United Arab Emirates will work together with the Troika and the Steering Group to put forward a program of reform and ensure a meaningful transition.”

The Dialogue on the Global Compact on Safe, orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) / the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)

This dialogue consolidated a recent practice initiated by the previous GFMD Chair, Ecuador, to strengthen the role of the GFMD as a platform “to exchange experiences on the implementation of the Global Compact, share good practices on policies and cooperation, promote innovative approaches, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships around specific policy issues (Para. 51 of the GCM). Given that a number of States actively participating in the GFMD have not endorsed the GCM, this dialogue took place “at the margin” of the GFMD, formally after the Closing Ceremony. It was co-organized with the UN Network on Migration. It aimed to 1) inform about the state of play of the GCM process and sharing good and innovative practices, policies and cooperation mechanisms towards the review of the GCM; 2) offer a platform to discuss how the GFMD Friends of the Forum and all relevant stakeholders contribute to GCM implementation; 3) to discuss emerging challenges in 2021 and how the GFMD and the UN Network on Migration can contribute to the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022.

Civil society contributed to two of the three sessions. **Colin Rajah, the Coordinator of the Civil Society Action Committee, moderated the first session on “GCM implementation, review and follow-up in 2020”.** The panel was comprised of Jonathan Prentice (UN Network on Migration Secretariat), Stefanie Scharf (BMZ, Germany), Vinicius Duque (City of Sao Paulo, Brazil), David Joy (UN Resident Coordinator, Saudi Arabia), and Seung Jin Baek (UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, Kuwait). The session covered the state of play of the GCM process, sharing practices, policies and cooperation mechanisms for the GCM, particularly in the lead up to the first Regional Reviews. Mr. Prentice shared the setting up of the “bricks and mortars” of the UN coordination for the GCM, including country-level coordination, the launch of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund and other important setups. He also expressed how overall stakeholder engagement has been deep and substantive in the midst of a shifting political landscape. Ms. Scharf contextualized how Germany looked at this period as a “poly-pandemic” that is not only a crisis for health and economy, but also for conflict, human rights, mobility, women's rights etc. Germany set up programs to harness diaspora engagement and contributions in their COVID response, and also for their state report for the regional review. Mr. Duque described how Sao Paulo issued pledges in their local policies that address at least eight of the GCM objectives. Both UN resident coordinators’ representatives then described the various standard operating procedures that have been setup for national level implementation of the GCM, including involving relevant UN agencies with national ministries and departments.

The second contribution was by **William Gois**, who was a panelist in the third session, dedicated to “emerging Issues in 2021 and towards the IMRF in 2022”. William Gois made it clear that “what is important in the GFMD is the self-organizing process of civil society and coming to these spaces and leveraging the concerns of migrant workers and migrants. As we move towards the IMRF, what is the space for this self-organizing process of civil society which can leverage in bringing realities on the ground, and also moving an implementation program that is grounded in reality and transformation?”

Both the GFMD and the GCM would need to look at how nimble or stiff they are in terms of bureaucratic response. Let our processes not be an indictment on us. This is going to be very crucial in our processes. The GFMD has solid years of 14 years of trust-building and the GCM has gone through a rigorous process of negotiations, we have all the credentials we need, it is time to translate it into action. This is going to be proof of our commitment and being courageous enough to rise up to this moment of crisis in a way that transforms the world and life for migrants.

William Gois

Civil Society takeaways

As already mentioned, the UAE Chairmanship has been appreciated for a number of innovations, making this year's GFMD a truly multi-stakeholder process. It has also been impacted by the pandemic, affecting migrants, migration and development, but also the GFMD itself, with several necessary adjustments in the agenda, the first ever fully online regional meetings and summit, and financial uncertainties. So, when trying to summarize the main takeaways for civil society, it is important to take into account the fact that the GFMD is not a stand-alone process, that can be scrutinized in isolation and out of context, but a contributor, among others, at a specific time and under specific circumstances. This latter point has been particularly important in 2020. Based on these premises, the civil society takeaways include the following:

- ❖ When the GFMD was launched in 2006, it was meant to “be informal, voluntary and led by Member States operating in a transparent and open manner. It would not produce negotiated outcomes or normative decisions, but it would promote closer cooperation among Governments”⁷. It was also created at a time when a dialogue on migration was both a necessity and a difficult and undertaking. Migration was, and still is politically charged. Migration was, and still is divisive, both internationally (mainly between countries of origin and countries of destination) and domestically (because of the noise made by populist and extreme right movements). The formula adopted in 2006, remained valid in 2020 and January 2021, precisely because the pandemic had created a global crisis, including a migration and development crisis. During a crisis, international cooperation is of paramount importance, in particular when it is supported by an informal and transparent dialogue, during which the focus is on best practices. A truly multi-stakeholder approach, which has increasingly become the footprint of the GFMD, also makes sense when the international community is collectively confronted with massive and brutal losses of lives, jobs and livelihoods. In such a context, solutions can only be built collectively. Partnerships developed around shared responsibility, honesty and transparency will yield better results than a slightly

⁷ Summary of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development Note by the President of the United Nations General Assembly, 13 October 2006, A/61/515.

Manichean logic of insiders (governments) and critical outsiders (business, civil society and local authorities).

- ❖ Having briefly assessed the discussions in the various roundtables, which remained the core of the Summit but were for the first time open to non-government participants, we found that governments were generally engaged and speaking their mind. On a number of occasions, they openly and respectfully disagreed with non-government participants. Alternatively, they were willing to explore new avenues or non-traditional approaches. More generally they recognized that the pandemic had left profound wounds and had shaken governments, institutions and communities. Such a level of openness, frankness and honesty did not exist yet during the Regional Consultations, which were useful in terms of building a momentum and collecting information and data for the background papers, but fell short of expectations when trust building was concerned. Six months later, the situation had evolved with most participants being happy to consider that the GFMD was offering a real opportunity for a constructive dialogue in the middle of a global emergency.

- ❖ What happened during these six months that changed the “group dynamic”, something which was not necessarily expected, in particular when we learned that the summit would be purely online? Some elements were probably exogenous. First, after some respite here and there, the pandemic witnessed a second or even a third wave in many countries, postponing any hope of a relatively quick economic recovery. The deepening and expansion of the crisis made an international dialogue focusing on cooperation, partnerships and good practices more palatable. Secondly, almost everyone used to participate in international gatherings got accustomed to online meetings, mastering the technology, but above all feeling at ease to exchange virtually and somehow injecting a socializing element through the technology. But a number of changes made by the UAE Chair were equally important, including a profound adjustment of the agenda to an online event, a different online platform, more user friendly and with very good administrators, and the formal acknowledgement that each of the thematic priorities would be dealt with from a “COVID-19 angle”. In that sense, sticking to the six themes identified in 2019, but recognizing that they had been profoundly re-configured by the pandemic, was an important decision. While there had been a lot of work and investment to build a coherent program prior to the COVID-19, all the themes chosen proved to be very relevant in a completely different and devastated landscape. This mix of pre-COVID 19 planning and COVID-19 adaptation may have been the main ingredient for a successful summit.

- ❖ The inclusive character of this GFMD, in particular the organized dialogue with regional partners, the consultation of all the stakeholders and thematic experts before finalizing agendas, thematic papers and the Summit’s methodology, also injected positive vibes during the summit. The reality is that everyone came to the meeting well-prepared, possibly better prepared than during the previous GFMD. This was particularly true of the three mechanisms, including civil society, which

had an ambitious, focused and well-attended Preparatory Meeting. But many governments were also genuinely engaged, being both propositional and willing to listen. There was also during the last months preceding the summit increased governmental ownership through the designation of the thematic co-chairs and rapporteurs, and their involvement in the finalization of the background papers, as well as the steering group meeting more frequently to identify a new chair, improve the GFMD finances and ensure a post UAE-transition. Though we are only authorized to speak for civil society, we do believe that the three innovations (the consultative process through the advisory Group”, the regional consultations and the Summit “open to all”) brought by the UAE Chair should now becoming the very foundation of the GFMD, part of its identity and what makes it different from other international processes.

- ❖ While the number of roundtables could have been reduced to four in order to have more focused discussions, the six themes identified by the UAE, with four axes in reality (labor, migrant rights, irregular migration and partnerships), proved to be relevant for most participants, but also “resilient” to the new COVID-19 reality. They will easily remain priorities for the years to come, whether for the incoming GFMD Chair or in the context of other processes, such as the IMRF in 2022.
- ❖ The lack of a GFMD Chair (or Co-Chairs) for 2021 and the first part of 2022 is of particular concern to civil society since this may lead to a transition year without clear focus or real ownership. A GFMD without a chair is also likely to be a year without summit (the latter also implying several “preparatory” activities during the year). With the Troika and the Steering Group in charge of ensuring a meaningful transition, the three mechanisms now risk losing their capacity to influence the GFMD agenda and shape its future, since the Steering Group membership is limited to governments. While civil society does not request full membership, it would appreciate having an observer status and being consulted. The real value added of the GFMD is that it is the only genuine multi-stakeholder international process. Under the current critical circumstances, we cannot afford losing it.

- ❖ Within the framework developed by the UAE Chair and building on it, civil society would like to propose the following **GFMD priorities for 2021- mid-2022** (until France takes over as Co-Chair):

E. Xenophobia and discrimination against migrants

The criminalization of migration and racism, which may have unfortunately influenced some of the most restrictive immigration policies, **must be challenged and addressed**. Particular forms of discrimination suffered by specific groups must be tackled through an intersectional approach. The **narratives on migrants and migration** are essential and we welcome the work that the Ad-hoc Working Group of the GFMD and their “It Takes A Community” campaign have been doing on this matter. The discussion during the side event reflects the importance of bringing it to the forefront.

F. Regular pathways, including regularization

Understanding the factors contributing to irregularity is essential in order to address them. Most irregular migration is not the result of unauthorized entrance, but rather stem from the impossibility and inability to extend regular status, and the limited regular pathways available. **Temporary labor migration programs are not the solution**. It is necessary to overhaul the regular migration channels and **ensure decent work as a key priority**, addressing needs in various sectors, and not overlooking some sectors while favoring others in bilateral agreements. It is critical to **recognize different contributions made by migrants**, not only economic contributions, or those made by high-skilled workers. Finally, there needs to be an **acknowledgement that regularization is part of the solution**, and that pathways towards long-term residence are necessary. This topic merits further discussion and the GFMD is uniquely positioned to host those exchanges.

G. Due process and access to justice

Due process rights are central in immigration proceedings and in all relationships between migrants and the State. **Accessing justice and legal remedies is essential for migrants**, particularly in labor and family matters, and when they have been victims of crime. **Firewalls and minimum standards that ensure access to information, legal representation, and addressing language barriers, are essential to guarantee access to justice**. We must discuss this important topic in the GFMD to consider different contributions and perspectives, and propose solutions.

H. Social protection for all migrants

Migrants are being left out of social protection networks, having to fend for themselves. This enhances inequality and conditions of vulnerability. The need to ensure **access to services** without the fear of immigration enforcement has become a pressing issue. The **public health challenges of the pandemic reinforce the need to understand that our collective wellbeing depends on the inclusion of all**. We must find ways to include and rebuild together. We cannot continue leaving people behind.

Published by:



Acknowledgements:

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society Coordinating Office would like to thank all those who contributed to making the GFMD Civil Preparatory Meeting (CSPM) and participation of Civil Society in the 13th GFMD Summit a success.

In particular, our sincere thanks and gratitude to the following persons and institutions:

- The donors of the GFMD Civil Society Program 2020: the Governments of Germany (GIZ), the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland (SDC), Canada



Federal Republic of Germany
The Federal Government

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Government
of Canada
Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

- H.E. Nasser bin Thani Al Hamli, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Chair of the 2020 GFMD
- The UAE Task Force, under Mr Alex Zalami's leadership
- The GFMD Support Unit in Geneva
- The members of the GFMD Troika and Steering Group
- The Co-Chairs of the Roundtables and the six thematic leads
- The Business Mechanism and the Mayors Mechanism
- The members of the International Steering Committee
- The Program Committee members, the four thematic leads, the six civil society thematic discussants, the co-facilitators, breakout moderators and rapporteurs
- All participants of the GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting 2020
- The team of the Civil Society Coordinating Office



International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Secretariat

1, rue de Varembe
P.O. Box 96, 1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 919 10 22

E-mail: gfmddcivilsociety@icmc.net

Online: gfmddcivilsociety.org

Reproduction of this report is authorized.

Credit for the source must be given.