Civil Society Key Advocacy Messages
GFMD Roundtable 5: Regional Cooperation and Integration

Disclaimer: The following content reflects only the outcomes of the GFMD Civil Society Thematic Dialogues. Therefore, the challenges and opportunities outlined are limited to what emerged during the discussions. These ideas may evolve as further analysis and discussions take place.

Challenges

1. **Lack of real cooperation and monitoring of progress**

   a. Lack of cross-border cooperation and partnerships between neighbouring countries.
   b. Lack of ethical compatible systems and mechanisms for the sharing of information, data and policy coherence.
   c. Lack of policy cooperation and standardisation to provide a continuum of healthcare, portability of identity and qualification documents, regular pathways and safety at the borders.
   d. Little or no consideration that Indigenous People manage or hold tenure rights for a quarter of the world's land area and continue to protect and preserve the oceans for future generations.

2. **Competing priorities and differing or lack of political will** (all regions, but participants specifically highlighted Asia and the Pacific)

   a. Lack of clarity, coherence and effective implementation of Free Movement Protocols and Regional Agreements, leading to vast differences at the national level, and translation into local laws and policies. (Africa)
   b. Contradicting or incompatible policies within the same region.
   c. Differing respect of existing international instruments and laws.
   d. Unequal power balances in bilateral agreements between Global North and Global South countries (e.g. labour agreements between Canada and LAC countries, hegemonic countries and regional organisations- the USA and EU).
   e. Growing securitisation of migrant data and their usage for non-human rights-based policies.

3. **Lack of support, inclusion and integration of civil society, migrants, diaspora, and affected communities**

   a. Lack of clear, accurate, simple, and language-accessible communication around regional cooperation and integration efforts.
   b. Lack of investment in civil society development and lack of collaboration with frontline communities.
   c. Lack of safety and security for civil society and NGOs to operate, including from administrative barriers implemented by governments.

d. Lack of indigenous communities in regional cooperation and integration solutions (e.g. Pacific, LAC).
   e. Localisation agendas do not have mechanisms to ensure that national and local stakeholders and beneficiaries are not acting against migrant and refugee interests (e.g. Racism against Rohingya in host country CSOs- Asia; racism against Haitians and people of African descent on the US-Mexico border)

4. **Lack of prioritisation of human rights and migrant safety and rights protection within existing cooperation and integration bodies and programmes**

   a. Prioritisation of border management and security over saving lives has eroded migrant rights and endangered civil society and frontline communities (e.g. Europe pushbacks and pullbacks at the border, continued detention in Europe, North Africa, US border).
   b. Lack of cooperation on cross-border / regional access to justice and social protection. Cooperation being conditioned on restricting migrants and the rights of others in need.
   c. Lack of human rights prioritisation in labour agreements and lack of independent monitoring mechanisms to address rights violations and protection (e.g. Canada and LAC migrant workers, migrant workers in the GCC countries —MENA).

<u>Opportunities</u>

1. **Opportunity for meaningful participation:** Establish dedicated mechanisms for the inclusion of civil society, migrants, diaspora and affected communities in UN and intergovernmental processes.

   a. Establish CSO / stakeholder steering groups for the GCM Regional and International Reviews who can steer and support engagement mechanisms.
   b. Invest in and harness the mobilisation power of youth and civil society networks.

2. **Opportunity to save lives:** Establish cross-border and regional mechanisms to save lives, provide search and rescue operations, and provide protection to migrants and other affected communities.

   a. Include safeguards and protection policies in bilateral agreements (e.g. Africa).
   b. Create special visas and consular support for search and rescue purposes for missing persons.
   c. Establish clear global health frameworks that guarantee the right to healthcare and continuity of care across regions and borders.
   d. Establish policy coherence frameworks and cross-border cooperation for access to justice and protection of labour rights and wages (e.g. Asia, Middle East).

3. **Opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation and integration:** Deliver on and enhance regional cooperation frameworks, including free movement plans and mechanisms for protection in mixed migration situations.

   a. Assess and address the reasons hindering the effective implementation of existing free movement and regional cooperation agreements (e.g. East Africa).
   b. Create a regional legal framework in South America that allows free transit for study, work and commercial exchange (as stated in decision 878-2021 Andean Community).
   c. Promising examples:
        i. Africa Free Movement Agreement

        iii. Europe Schengen free movement agreement.
        iv. Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement and Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement for Australia, UK and NZ could be extended to Pacific Islanders.

4. **Areas of work identified as being urgently needed from regional cooperative bodies:**

    a. **Establish cross-regional dialogue spaces between Global South states.**

    b. **Enhance cooperation and standardisation of identity documentation.**

    c. **Invest in and develop Labour Rights and Initiatives**, including skills recognition and qualification portability mechanisms, standardised labour protection, harmonisation of training systems, and collaboration between regional trade unions.

    d. **Create Inclusive Financing mechanisms,** designed flexibly and directed towards migrant, grassroots and frontline communities.

    e. **Reform the Global Migration System,** which must include:
        i. Building a shared global responsibility to address root causes of forced migration and internal displacement.
        ii. Acknowledge the legacy and impact of colonialism on modern migration.
        iii. A human rights-based approach which welcomes Indigenous People and People with a disability.

    f. **Decolonise regional cooperation bodies and agreements for development**, prioritising labour and family rights in tandem with the protection of biodiversity, natural resources, acknowledging indigenous communities continue to protect and preserve the land and oceans and live sustainably for future generations.