

Statement by H.E. Mr. Tobias Billström, Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy of Sweden, in his capacity as chair of the GFMD, on the Thematic Recollection from the GFMD 2007-2012: Input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we gathered here at the *High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development* in 2006, there was an overwhelming interest in the continuation of global dialogue on international migration and development. In response, the Secretary-General proposed the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development as a venue for discussing such issues in a systematic and comprehensive way. Belgium offered to host the first meeting the following year. Since then, the Philippines chaired the Forum in 2008; Greece in 2009; Mexico in 2010; Switzerland in 2011 and Mauritius in 2012. Sweden is the current Chair of the Forum.

The GFMD is thus the most important and tangible deliverable in the field of migration and development coming out of the last High-level Dialogue. More than 160 governments have taken part in these annual meetings with an aim to maximize the development benefits from migration and minimize its negative impacts especially on migrants. The GFMD has built trust and helps shape the global debate on migration and development.

The Forum has proven to be a successful and innovative process for holistic, frank and constructive dialogue. It offers a space for informal and voluntary dialogue among governments on current and emerging migration and development issues. It is also a state-led multi-stakeholder platform, which brings governments together with relevant stakeholders, including agencies of the Global Migration Group and other international organizations, civil society and the private sector. The Forum has been successful as it deals with substance relating to migration and development. It is open to all UN member

states, though it is a body that operates outside the UN System. Government teams have been established around each year's roundtable themes, where governments and other stakeholders share experiences and highlight examples of policies and practices and thus learn from each other and establish partnerships.

Over the years, states and relevant stakeholders have engaged in constructive dialogue around thematic issues like *strategies for minimizing costs/maximizing human development; labour migration and mobility; diasporas; remittances; strategies for addressing irregular migration and enabling regular migration; the rights of migrants; policy coherence and mainstreaming; data and research; and governance of migration and coordination of dialogue* as well as *ways of involving civil society and the private sector*.

As for concrete outcomes of the GFMD, we have records of good practice on bilateral labour arrangements; benchmarks, monitoring and licensing systems for recruiters and other intermediaries; sharing of legal frameworks that enable mobility and skills circulation; and sharing of practices to facilitate productive investments and spending on health and education through remittances, among other things.

When dealing with rights, the discussions in the GFMD have not only focused on international conventions, but also on the shared responsibility of protecting the rights of migrants and engaging with what measures are in place for migrants to access social and economic rights. In this regard, the Forum have addressed issues relating to portability of pensions, national examples of cost-effective health care models and brain waste as well as broader integration-reintegration development links by focusing on human and social capital of migrants and its contribution to development both at source and receiving countries.

From one year to the next, the GFMD has successfully discussed, in greater depth, selected themes and identified new themes such as South-South migration, links between environmental change and migration as well as the role of migration in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The substantive work conducted within the GFMD between the HLD in 2006 and now bears witness to the success of the Forum to engage with the evolving challenges and opportunities shaped by migration dynamics. This is also underscored in the recently concluded assessment of the first six years of the GFMD, in which some 80 per cent of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the GFMD process and an overwhelming majority of governments considered that the process brought value-added compared to other related fora. Indeed, the ever increasing number of governments that engage with the process testifies to this success.

This is a very positive development. By sharing experiences and lessons learnt in the GFMD, the Forum paves way for improvements in policy, programmes and practice. Ultimately this will bring benefit for countries of origin, destination and migrants themselves.

In conclusion, the GFMD is a major deliverable since the last High-level Dialogue. Its success in enabling dialogue, building trust and sharing experiences has been documented and its working methods, building on informal and voluntary exchange have been critical for this success.

As a global community, we should thus take further steps to strengthen this positive achievement and ensure its sustainability. The success of the Forum cannot be taken for granted. It requires strong and consistent engagement by governments and other stakeholders in the Forum process. We therefore encourage governments to maintain their ownership of the Forum, to support it, to engage actively through a broad range of ministries in the thematic discussions of government teams throughout the year and to continue strengthening the development focus of the forum. As the current Chair, we are working in close partnership with the outgoing Chair, Mauritius and the incoming Chair, Turkey, to forward this process. The Secretary General's Special Representative on Migration and Development has been an important link to the United Nations System and his commitment has been crucial for the success of the forum.

Ladies and gentlemen, we close this intervention by inviting you to read the Thematic Recollection submitted for this meeting, for an overview of the issues discussed in the GFMD over the years.

Thank you very much!