CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Swedish Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, Mr. Tobias Billström
Closing Remarks, 16 May

Ladies and gentlemen.

Three days of intensive discussions and networking have come to an end.

It has been a true privilege to host the 7th Global Forum on Migration and Development, here in Stockholm. Likewise, it has been a privilege to be the GFMD chair in office for a year and a half.

The fora where governments come together for voluntary and entirely informal discussions on how to make migration work for development are not many.

It is clear that much progress has been made since the first UN High level dialogue in 2006, which led to the creation of the GFMD.

We have been moving towards a common understanding of the development impacts of migration. The actors involved are many and the evidence base more solid. We have managed to deal with sometimes politically sensitive issues.

It is up to policy makers to make use of lessons learned.

For Sweden, chairing the GFMD has both provided an opportunity of advancing the Migration and Development agenda in an international context. But it has also proved a great opportunity to spark discussion and highlight the benefits of migration for growth back home.

I want to stress the responsibility we all have to better communicate the messages of the Global Forum; the vast contributions of migrants both to host societies and countries of origin.

Xenophobia exists in all countries. Against this backdrop, it takes political courage to advocate for migration and to allow migration policies to work for development.

Policies need to be based on evidence. The public debate on immigration is often not. We need to show leadership, think long term and add facts to the debate.

By continuing to focus on globally relevant issues, ensuring quality debate and concrete outcomes of Forum meetings, the accumulated knowledge of the GFMD can be shared with the broader international community and influence policy makers.

I take this opportunity to thank all of you for contributing to discussions.