



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Swedish Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy, Mr. Tobias Billström
Welcome address, 14 May

Your Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria
Secretary General Ban Ki-moon
Prime Minister Reinfeldt
Honourable ministers
Excellences Ambassadors
Ladies and gentlemen
Dear GFMD participants

It is a great honour to welcome you all to Stockholm.

Sweden has long been a leading actor in the global cooperation on migration. Since I assumed the post of Swedish minister with responsibility for migration and asylum, almost eight years ago, putting migration policy where it belongs – in the midst of discussions on how to face global challenges of the future – has been my objective.

The migration and development nexus has remained high on my agenda and formed the basis for national reforms and policies.

I am therefore extremely proud to be here today, hosting the 7th Global Forum on Migration and Development, together with my colleague, the minister for international development cooperation.

Back in 2006, the high-level dialogue in the UN General Assembly proved a key occasion in order to put the synergies between migration and development on the agenda of the international community.

Governments from all over the world jointly voiced a strong need for a venue to discuss these, sometime sensitive, issues in an open and comprehensive way.

In response, the UN Secretary-General – with the uniquely accurate advice from his Special Representative – Mr Peter Sutherland, proposed the creation of the GFMD. Since then Mr Sutherland, who is with us here today, has been instrumental to the GFMD process and a crucial link between the GFMD and the UN system.

Eight years later we know the outcome. The GFMD has been widely acknowledged as the key forum for holding frank and open discussions and sharing of experiences between countries in all phases of economic development and between countries with extremely diverse experiences from migration. The GFMD has built trust and helped shape the global debate on migration and development.

You have all contributed to this!

The Swedish chair has strived to make the Global Forum more development focused, more durable and more dynamic. In practise this means that efforts have been taken to increase the substantial contribution of the Forum to global, regional and national development agendas.

The process has been reenergized by the efforts to enhance the involvement and ownership by states while strengthening relations to the civil society and engaging the private sector as a separate stakeholder.

We have tried to make sure that the accumulated knowledge and good practice is shared and implemented more broadly in the global community. The evidence base of Migration and Development policies has been strengthened.

Ladies and gentlemen,

900 delegates from 145 countries together are present here today. Delegates representing a wide range of civil society organisations, the private sector, international organisations and governments, including Ministries and Departments of Immigration, Development, Labour, Foreign Affairs, Gender Equality, Justice, Integration and Nationals Abroad.

This is a unique setting and the momentum has never been bigger. More people than ever are living abroad. 232 million people or 3.2 per cent of the world's population are international migrants.

The timing couldn't be better either. Changing migration patterns leads us to even more mutual interdependence and to a need for cooperation in which the boundaries between traditional categories such as South/North and sender/destination countries are becoming blurred.

As chair in office, our focus has been "Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development". We have strived to push the agenda forward when it comes to making migration policies work for social and economic development and to inspire policy coherence in practise. I want to thank you for all your support this far.

We have a lot to learn from each other.

I wish us all fruitful and constructive discussions and networking. I hope this forum, like the previous ones, will inspire initiatives, policies and reforms, as well as cooperation and partnerships in managing the truly global issue of migration and development.

Thank you.