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Agenda Item 9

Civil society report to GFMD Friends of the Forum

John K. Bingham, ICMC
GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office

*As prepared for delivery;
documents cited are at www.gfmdcivilsociety.org*

Ambassador Samsar, Secretary Haque, colleagues,

In this moment where our attention see-saws between images of historic forced migration and a global vision of sustainable human development, how helpful it is to have a productive Global Forum on Migration and Development five weeks from now. It is a defining moment. Civil society worldwide is looking forward to it with considerable hope and expectation.

As you know, the Civil Society Days (CSD) of this year's Global Forum take place Monday and Tuesday the 12th + 13th of October, followed by a series of breakfast tables and Common Space Wednesday the 14th, all in the same convention center in Istanbul. On behalf of the 40-member International Steering Committee of civil society, may I renew our **invitation to your governments** to participate in the full Civil Society Days programme Monday and Tuesday. For purposes of planning, including access and food, may we only ask you to register with us. A copy of the invitation with the registration site is on the side tables. We welcome the governments that have already registered with us, including very much the large delegation of Bangladesh!!

Civil society Preparations for the GFMD

Our Steering Committee has met five times (by telephone) since the last Friends of the Forum, completing civil society's concept paper and the draft CSD programme¹ making decisions on civil society delegates and other participants, and putting together recommendations for Common Space.

Together with others, we and members of the Steering Committee have organized and participated in a range of civil society activities that bring value directly to this year's Global Forum. Many of the activities revolve around all or specific parts of global Civil Society's "5-year 8-point Action Plan" [*copies on the side tables*] from the UN High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013 (HLD). As you know, civil society's Action Plan was explicitly directed to partnering with governments, and its 8 points closely matched the Declaration that states unanimously adopted at the HLD.

Among the activities:

- **Global thematic** work, in connection with ICMC's EU-co-funded MADE project: on the sustainable development goals, migrants in crisis and transit, reform of migrant recruitment, and diaspora and development. I am happy to share the good news that working together,

¹ Circulated to all governments by the Support Unit last month, with copies on the side tables in this room.

ICMC and partners in civil society's Global Coalition on Migration have secured a grant to work regionally and globally with governments in the very important MICIC (migrants in countries of crisis) initiative. Civil society increasingly welcomes the **Migrants in Countries of Crisis** (MICIC) initiative as an extremely important step forward. In that direction, civil society recently organized a second regional consultation on MICIC, focused on Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with direct input to the government consultation in Brussels. We look forward to similar participation in the next MICIC regional consultation, the first week in October, for North Africa and the Middle East.

- **Regional meetings and work** on migration and development, in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East;
- **National civil society consultations** specifically ahead of the GFMD: recently and within the next few weeks, in Bangladesh, Nepal, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States among others. Many of these national civil society meetings are organized in direct connection with the preparatory meetings their governments are organizing, with civil society's recommendations and representatives a valued part of the government meetings. That's natural, and productive—and again we urge inclusion as a model, not an exception, in all of these processes.

Civil society delegates to the Civil Society Days + Common Space

As reported at the last Friends of the Forum meeting, and as in prior years, civil society's International Steering Committee organized an open, global process inviting civil society leaders and organizations to apply to participate in this year's Global Forum. Indicating the importance that civil society worldwide puts on this Global Forum process, we received this year more than **800 applications**, from a **record 150 countries**.

As in prior years, the Steering Committee then made a selection among the applicants, aiming for a number that could "roll up the sleeves" as Working groups at the GFMD, not always in huge plenaries. This year however, we increased the overall ceiling by almost a third, to about **320 civil society delegates**.

The largest single number of civil society delegates invited—about 30%—represent migrant-run or diaspora organizations, another 30% human rights NGOs, 15% development NGOs, and the rest trade unions and labour organizations, academics and private sector. Regionally, there is even distribution of between 80-90 each from the Americas, Asia and Europe; then 61 from Africa and 20 from Turkey. Reversing the pattern of prior years, slightly more men than women are invited as delegates this year.

Thanks to funding pledged from governments of Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the EU, we have been able to **fund about 1/3rd** of the civil society delegates, many for both travel and hotel and some for one or the other. This proportion is about the same as our funding support for civil society delegates in GFMDs since 2011, and follows the same policy: only for civil society representatives whose organizations have annual budgets of less than USD \$300,000, and primarily for grass roots and migrant and diaspora groups.

Altogether, nearly 200 civil society delegates have registered already.

A quick walk through the Civil Society Days programme [*Copies of the concept paper and draft CSD programme are on the side tables.*]

Civil society always begins its planning of the CSD programme with commitments and recommendations we made in the prior GFMDs, plus reference to the current GFMD concept paper for the governments.

As in every year since the beginning of the Global Forum—and like your own government days, this year’s Civil Society Days programme is a sandwich of two plenaries, mostly organized “Davos-style”, and then a set of parallel Working sessions in the middle. Since the HLD, we have structured the focus of the CSD programme on the 8 points in civil society’s 5-year plan.

Picking up on suggestions made in the evaluations we conducted with participants in last year’s GFMD, there are several innovations in the CSD this year:

- an increase to **4 parallel Working sessions**
- **2 specific rapporteurs**: one on women + one on children in contexts of migration
- **5 tools**:
 - 4-page “**Action papers**” for each Working session
 - short “**Bridging papers**” that brings these aspects of women and of children in contexts of migration into each of the Working sessions
 - a **common Reporting template**, seeking, among other things, specific issues, practices and recommendations regarding women, children and local authorities
 - a **global “Movement” report**, independently prepared by a consultant at the University of Maastricht, to measure progress (or not) on civil society’s 5-year 8-point plan—as we finish “Year 2” of the Plan this year, just 9 days before the Global Forum!
 - a **global civil society actors “Survey”**—independently prepared from interviews with some 500 civil society organizations and worldwide
- **4 special sessions** with thematic focus, including on the 25th anniversary of the UN Migrant Workers Convention; and
- possibly some **regional teas** gathering small numbers of civil society leaders and governments

A quick look now at the major focuses in the CSD programme

- **Civil Society’s overall theme** is basically *Achieving Goals*. Not just the new sustainable development goals, but migration and development goals, including those in the new SDGs. Our shared goals, and civil society’s own goals.
- **The Opening plenary begins with recognizing (what will then be) the newly-adopted SDGs** as important hope and responsibility for solutions. Specific attention will be put on how the new goals and targets relate to migrants and migration, including those that relate explicitly.

Discussion then turns to ***Safe Migration: Root causes, route choices, and alternatives to forced and dangerous migration***. There could hardly be a more timely focus this year, picking up on the wisdom of the Chair and so many other governments in finally calling the whole GFMD to begin wrestling with this “elephant” in the migration room: forced migration. Together with the other elephant in the migration room: root causes. Not easy to wrestle with an elephant! But whether states, agencies, academics or civil society practitioners, we—all of us—have to wrestle with these two. Especially in any Global Forum on Migration and Development that is worth its name... and our time.

All with a view to solutions: alternatives to forced migration. Political solutions of course, but also the many more common contributing factors and commitments to improving migration and development, including the specific role and resourcefulness of migrants and migrant diaspora everywhere.

- **The CSD 4 parallel Working sessions** each pick up the theme of “Achieving Goals”, in short:
 - [1] **SDGs**: civil society’s role in creating, implementing and monitoring SDGs, including indicators
 - [2] **Needs-first**, then rights-based **protection**: for migrants in crises and transit, and solutions for forced migrants
 - [3] **Labour rights**: reforming policies and practices of migrant worker recruitment and employment

[4] Migrants + diaspora: materializing human rights, inclusion, job creation and social entrepreneurship

- **Civil society's Closing plenary** then returns to the SDGs, but with a focus on their implementation and measuring, by states and civil society, together, as an important part of solutions: hope plus responsibility.

Wednesday is organized for civil society-government interaction. As at last year's Forum, civil society leaders will be inviting a number of governments to join them in small **breakfast tables**, 5 civil society + 5 governments, to exchange perspectives and possibilities on specific issues.

After the government opening, civil society looks forward to participating with governments in **Common Space** plenaries and breakout sessions. As in past years, we were happy to work this year with the Chair and support the thematic focuses and format circulated by the Chair ahead of this meeting [*and on the side tables.*] Again we would emphasize that the way in which we together build Common Space focus and interaction should be the model for GFMD organizing, not the exception.

Last on the CSD programme:

- **Budget:** we are within US \$90,000 of meeting our budget for the 18 months of civil society activity and organizing through the end of this year. On behalf of the close to a thousand civil society groups involved in these activities, before, in, and after the GFMD, thank you to the governments that have contributed financially to this partnership with you.
- **PGA:** We are happy to report that once again, our close partners are organizing a parallel civil society event to complement and feed into the GFMD Civil Society Days. This event, the *Peoples' Global Action on Migration, Development and Rights* is taking place Sunday 11 October, the day before the CSD begins.

In closing, what a *defining moment* for the Global Forum this year.

The ink will not even be dry yet on the adoption of the new, 15-year global plan of sustainable development goals. But let us really see what we are looking at: the great potential for building solutions, with goals and targets aiming for people-centered, rights-based human development: integral development, not just economic. And this time, explicit reference to migrants and migration—especially **goals 8.8** on decent work and protection of migrant worker rights **and 10.7** on safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration. Concrete implementation of these goals and targets are key to solutions for so many of the worst of the problems in migration today. Other goals too—from eradicating poverty to improving health, education, equality and peaceful societies—are key to the very first migration right: which is the right not to migrate; to not be *forced* to migrate.

Civil society—beginning with migrants, refugees and the diaspora—is committed to achieving those **solutions, urgently**. Today we see the largest displacement of people since World War II, inside and across borders in the Middle East and Europe, with important movements, much of it also forced, in other parts of the world too. History reminds us that the last time that happened in this scale, states and others came together to write the 1951 Refugee Convention, and mandate UNHCR and IOM, among others, to be and build solutions.

Challenges and solutions. Last week, we saw the body of Aylan Kurdi, the three year-old boy, on the beach not far from where we will be meeting. Let us keep him not far from what we feel and consider and agree to move on in this Global Forum! Let us keep him not far.

/Thank you.