

Meeting of the Friends of the Forum

22 November 2017, Geneva

Agenda items: [4A]: GFMD Inputs to Global Compact on Migration; [4B] Participation at Mexico Stocktaking December; and [8] Civil Society Process 2017-2108

### **Report from Civil Society**

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*As prepared for delivery;  
referenced civil society documents available  
at [www.madenetwork.org/documents](http://www.madenetwork.org/documents)*

#### ***H.E. Ambassador Schmidt-Bremme, Honorable Mr. Sissou, colleagues and partners:***

So the word of the moment is clearly “stocktaking”, both in the GFMD and in the process that is developing the Global Compact on Migration.

I don’t know if all this stock-taking makes us stock-*brokers*, but if the term “stock” expresses not only something we have come to own in these processes but also an investment for a better future, then civil society is very glad to be in this stock-market with you.

#### **Agenda item 4A: GFMD Inputs to Global Compact on Migration (GCM)**

As a major piece of stocktaking, the Global Forum’s ***“Input to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”***, dated today, is a full and smart contribution to the development of that Compact. Together with states and agencies, we were glad that civil society and the business mechanism were collectively involved in producing this input, and happy to see the results.

Beyond stocktaking: what a greenhouse *and* storehouse the report is! One of the most impressive things that jumps out of the report of these first ten years is how well the GFMD has worked even as it maintained its voluntary nature. The proof is the strong and steady participation of states and civil society, the eagerness of other actors to join—including the very pragmatic private sector; the exchange, the commitments, the multi-state and multi-actor partnerships, and the concrete action.

“Voluntary” is not the opposite of concrete, and action. We have seen this in the development of guidelines and now practices for Migrants in Countries in Crisis; in concrete inclusion of migrants and migration in the Sustainable Development Goals, and in not one but two declarations of UN General Assembly high-level processes focused on people on the move, including commitments to not one but two new Global Compacts.

Many of us in civil society connect that kind of progress *straight-line* to discussion, exchange and partnership in the GFMD. The world has come a long way from migration as a “no fly zone” issue for international attention. And the GFMD is clearly a key “address” for increasingly concrete discussion,

exchange and cooperation. Not to replace national sovereignty but to supplement it, and even exercise it: where global pieces of challenges need global pieces of solutions.

## **Agenda item 4B: Participation at Mexico Stocktaking December**

Next week many of us will all be arriving in Puerto Vallarta as the process to develop the Global Compact on Migration moves into its second, Stocktaking phase. We are glad that civil society will have a significant presence among the 90 non-state participants with states that Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. In fact, two widely recognized civil society leaders who have been active in the GFMD and other migration and development processes over the years will be part of a panel in the Stocktaking Monday morning: **Mr. Ignacio Packer**, Chair of the GFMD Civil Society Days in 2015, and **Mr. Mamadou Goita**, organizer of an Africa regional civil society consultation on the Migration Compact in August.

ICMC's MADE civil society Coordinating Office has been happy to work closely with IOM and with EU funding to organize a ***Civil Society Stocktaking and Strategy Meeting*** in Puerto Vallarta Saturday and Sunday 2 + 3 December. As reported to you in the October meeting of the Friends of the Forum, we will gather about 80 civil society leaders from around the world, chosen by the 20 civil society networks that have organized consultations or other processes specifically focused on the Migration and/or Refugee Compacts, including the GFMD Civil Society Days in Bangladesh and Germany.

**For our stocktaking at the civil society meeting**, we will synthesize what we have done ourselves, in the [7 regional civil society consultations](#) and some 8 organized global processes organized specifically on the Compact on Migration since last December. We will put particular focus on the civil society document [Now and How: Ten Acts for the Global Compact](#) that we introduced to you last meeting. I will touch on that further in a few moments.

**In our strategy work at the civil society meeting**, we will prepare ourselves for direct conversation with states, beginning in Puerto Vallarta, and continuing through the end of the stocktaking phase, through the third, Negotiations Phase, and into what we are now calling the "*fourth phase*", the *road to adoption* from August through December 2018.

Day 1, Saturday will be civil society only; but Day 2, Sunday, will feature small tables, lunch and other meetings directly with 30-40 states, who are invited from 8:30 am to 3 pm. These states were identified by civil society participants for this purpose.

As in the GFMDs since 2014, we are organizing these tables to be informal, with no documents, no hard agenda and no notes. It is for conversation, not confrontation. Each table will involve representatives of some 2-4 states and 6-9 civil society leaders, focusing on a specific issue or region. There will be two rounds of tables; the first before lunch, each of which will focus on one of the *Ten Acts*, and the second for lunch that generally will focus either on one of the *Ten Acts* or on a region.

My colleagues in ICMC's MADE (Migration and Development) Coordinating Office sent invitations to the states several weeks ago, for the most part, to GFMD focal points, and have heard positive confirmations from about half so far. In fact, no one has declined. Thank you! This week we have sent a second communication to the states that are coming, with the *Ten Acts*, the list of civil society participants who will be with us and a request for the states to register with us up to 4 representatives in an on-line process that takes just 4 minutes, by next Wednesday, 29 November. The registration form asks states to indicate to us which of the *Ten Acts* they are most interested in so that we can try and match the states to those tables.

We are also re-sending invitations to states that we have not heard back from as yet, just to re-confirm our hope that they will join us that Sunday.

## Agenda Item 8: Civil Society Process 2017-2018

I will focus one part of this report to you on substance, the other briefly on process.

**Civil society work in the GFMD toward the substance of the Compact on Migration.** As reported last meeting, every one of the plenaries, working sessions, and special sessions during the Civil Society days in Berlin and all of the tea tables that we organized with governments there focused directly on the Global Compact on Migration. Together with every session of the Common Space also focusing on the Global Compact, it was more than 50 hours aiming to identify key issues, mechanisms and timelines to bring the [New York Declaration](#) to life. There is a 5-page **booklet of the main civil society recommendations** from this year's GFMD on the side table and also on [www.madenetwork.org/civil-society-days-2017](http://www.madenetwork.org/civil-society-days-2017).

During the October meeting of the Friends of the Forum, we provided a “sneak preview” of a unified civil society document that brings together for the Migration Compact all of the principal civil society perspectives and recommendations from those GFMD discussions. The name of the document is [Now and How: Ten Acts for the Global Compact](#). We are grateful that the Support Unit shared the fuller document with all Friends of the Forum shortly after the meeting.

Please allow me not to repeat our presentation last time, which was also circulated by email with the meeting documents. Rather, to simply underscore the essential approach of the *Ten Acts*, and provide a few updates to you on its content and our next steps.

- The starting point of this civil society *Ten Acts* is that **rights already exist, and even many of the mechanisms also exist to implement the rights**. What is needed is not to “reinvent the wheel”, but to get it *rolling*. Implementation, multi-actor.
- **On a few of the harder questions in migration today**, it is difficult to imagine that there is enough time to take things concretely forward between now and when the Compact negotiations are finished next July. So, picking up and adapting recommendation # 7 of the Sutherland Report, regarding return and reintegration, the *Ten Acts* recommend two-year, states and multi-actor processes to develop principles and agreement in that area and also on migrants in vulnerable situations, climate change-induced displacement, and regularization.
- In all 7 of the regional civil society consultations on the Compact, and through all of the civil society processes that focused on the Migration Compact at global level, involving nearly 1,000 civil society actors from every part of the world, there was resounding consensus—so strong that it surprised us a little-- that **each element of the Compact on Migration would have clear relevance to refugees**. Of course, refugees have specific protection and rights under a binding convention and from one of the key UN agencies, and no Compact should forget or diminish that one bit. But from root causes and alternatives to migration, from safe journeys and protection of family unity, children, trafficked persons and other migrants who are vulnerable in contexts of migration to decent work and living conditions; from xenophobia and return to governance, the range of elements that the *New York Declaration* suggests for the Migration Compact to consider pertains to the realities we see on the ground every day—and that some of us experience personally—as refugees as well as migrants. The two Compacts are not just “complementary”, they should not just be “coherent”: they need to walk and talk together, like migrants and refugees do: in mixed migration, mixed location and workplaces and lives, *some* in a mix of urgent need.
- Lastly, please note that a small but **important revision to one paragraph** in the version of the *Ten Acts* that was first circulated last month. The problem was that the original Act 10.2 should not have referred to the post of Assistant Secretary General (ASG) for the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). The revision removes that reference to “ASG”, both in 10.2 and in the timeline on the last page. The revision also adds a call to provide resources for the SRSG's work, and breaks the long original sentence into two, shorter and more readable sentences. We have asked

the Support Unit to circulate this revision— marked “Revised 3 November 2017” on the last page—to you with the records of this meeting.

Immediately however, the **revised Ten Acts is available** in [English](#) and [French](#) and [Spanish, on-line](#) and on the table at the side of the room. Translations in Arabic and Chinese and Russian will be available on-line within the next ten days. It is currently in circulation for civil society sign-on and advocacy, now and through the negotiations and road to adoption of the Compact. Over 160 civil society organizations and networks have signed on so far.

As mentioned, the *Ten Acts* will serve as a central focus in the Civil Society Stocktaking and Strategy meeting in Puerto Vallarta next weekend.

**GFMD Process.** After 7 years now—and 7 is a lucky number, this is my **last meeting** with you as global Coordinator of civil society activities for the GFMD. ICMC’s fine MADE Coordinating Office will continue to serve in that role with energy and capacity—I also believe with a new Coordinator that is not only fresher, but smarter and better, for civil society, and working directly with the Chairs, with you and other partners, and with Estrella Lajom (Star) and the incredible Support Unit team she leads. It is all a high privilege, a great cause, and urgent work. Thank you for your trust, partnership—and your patience with me personally.

As “stocktakings” go then, may I take leave of you for now with just two final thoughts.

1. You know, **there is a pronoun for this Global Forum, as well as a lot of essential action verbs. The pronoun is “we”.** Sure the Forum is “states-led”, but it has never been states-only. Why is that? Because the work—and the worry and the world—are not only for states alone to carry. “We” is not soft—or dangerous; it is the key—and the strength of this Forum, among others. Back to looking at what has been accomplished here, the best and most of that accomplishment has truly been when the “we” has broadened to bring into the exchange and the response civil society, especially migrants, refugees and the diaspora, business, and others. In the early days of this Global Forum, so many were afraid that the GFMD was so fragile: “be careful!” Well maybe like most migrants and refugees, this Forum has journeyed through that kind of thing. So let’s act with greater confidence—never expecting that every country or civil society actor or business is needed to be fully in step or accord along the way. But a big, wide “we”. Recommendation 15 of the Sutherland report calls to **“repurpose” the GFMD**, suggesting that the GFMD *“consider governance reforms to encourage joint ownership by States, civil society and the private sector.”* Joint ownership does not always mean equal ownership, nor does it contradict or weaken “states-led.” It’s simply the “we” in this Forum that can make things happen.
2. Finally, as you consider re-purposing the Global Forum, a simple suggestion that takes a next step in one of the directions that Switzerland, many of the Chairs, and others like Kathleen Newland have urged, for many years: **to recognize and encourage partnership and creative exchange of concrete practice in migration and development. Institute a Sutherland Award.** In fact two Sutherland awards, at each GFMD. Possibly connected to the new Global Compact. One for *Excellence in Partnership*, the other for *Excellence in Exchange that Widens Implementation*. In each category, give a first prize of USD \$25,000, and a second prize of USD \$10,000. Put the “we” in that, too: civil society would be happy to contribute some of the funds we raise toward that award, hopefully the business mechanism too.

With that, *thank you*.