



# **The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development**

Report on the 2020 Thirteenth GFMD Chairmanship under  
the United Arab Emirates

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## Foreword by the Chair

It is a pleasure to present to the GFMD community this report on the 2020 Chairmanship under the United Arab Emirates. The report provides an overview of all the activities that were undertaken throughout the course of 2020 – a year marked both by the challenges that were faced and the strength of engagement in the forum’s agenda.

When the UAE acceded to the chairmanship of the GFMD, there was an emerging consensus among Member States that the forum required significant reform if it was to continue to be relevant to the global migration community. However important the value created by the GFMD in the past, it was clear that the forum would have to re-evaluate its place in the evolving infrastructure of international migration governance if it was to remain relevant in the post-GCM era.

To that end, the UAE introduced a vision in Quito that outlined a number of programmatic innovations, which included providing a role for regional consultative processes to align themselves with the GFMD, greater focus on the identification and elaboration of migration partnerships and more in-depth engagement with the GFMD Mechanisms.

Alongside this, the UAE also took the first steps in implementing structural reforms, in line with the recommendations of the 10 Year Review. This began with greater transparency around the annual budget and commissioning a report on the GFMD’s financial sustainability. It is a process that remains ongoing, with a new way forward adopted by the Steering Group.

It has consistently been the UAE’s view that, given the politics of migration and development, it is vital that an informal space is maintained for trust building, the exchange of ideas and the development of partnerships, regardless of the progress on improving governance standards that is made within the constraints of the United Nations system.

However, the importance of the GFMD does not make its survival inevitable. Maintaining the GFMD requires a level of commitment from Member States, who in turn must see the benefits of engaging in the GFMD and contributing to its continuation. The challenge for the future is to ensure that the GFMD remains not just valued but indispensable to all its stakeholders.

In this respect, the COVID-19 pandemic presented difficulties for the GFMD; but it also spurred fresh thinking and new approaches. The absence of in-person meetings inevitably diminished the ability of participants to build inter-personal relationships. At the same time, the adoption of video conferencing technology may presage a vision of a lower-cost, more light-touch model for the GFMD. It allowed for more participation by experts from capitals – a priority of the

UAE's – and it encouraged the organisation of more frequent meetings that were more accessible to a wider range of stakeholders than ever before.

The result was the participation of over 800 people in the 2020 Online Regional Consultations and over 2000 in the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit: an exceptional level of engagement.

The opportunity is there for GFMD stakeholders to establish a truly year-long process that brings together a global community and allows participants to think more creatively about the challenges and opportunities of migration. But if that opportunity is to be grasped, we must spend some time thinking about what the GFMD offers that truly matters.

If the GFMD remains true to its founding principles as a state-led, informal and non-binding platform, then we believe that it has an important role to play. The UAE will continue to champion the GFMD throughout the years ahead and lend our support to future Chairs.

It has been an honour to have chaired the GFMD, and we very much look forward to the chairmanship of France, beginning in 2022. On behalf of the UAE, I wish the Government of France the very best of luck.

Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli  
Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization  
Government of the United Arab Emirates  
2020 GFMD Chair

## The GFMD 2020 Chairmanship: Executive Summary

The UAE set out a vision and plan for its Chairmanship at the 12<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit in Quito in January 2020. That vision incorporated a thematic agenda for the year, a series of programmatic priorities, and a budget.

### *Thematic Priorities*

The thematic agenda was focused in a significant way on labour migration. The UAE is a major destination for labour migrants, and two of the six thematic streams of the year therefore directly related to labour migration. One of those – the impact of the future of work on migration – was entirely new to the GFMD. The second – on skilling migrants for employment – has long been discussed in the GFMD but remains a critical issue in maximising productivity and the returns on migration.

The other four thematic streams reflected the ongoing global debate around migration and development: the empowerment of migrants through technology, addressing irregular migration, protecting migrants, and the fostering of migration partnerships. Taken together, these six thematic streams reflected the close links between migration and development.

### *Programmatic Priorities*

The UAE's vision also incorporated three programmatic priorities.

The first was to encourage stronger regional inputs into the thematic agenda. The conventional approach under previous Chairs had been for Geneva-based Missions to prepare the background papers over the course of the year, for presentation at the Summit. While experts in capital have often contributed substantively, they have rarely had the opportunity, due to constraints on time and travel budgets, to actively participate in the preparatory process.

Second, the UAE has long been an advocate of the view, put forward in the GFMD's 10 Year Review, that the development of partnerships is key to the GFMD's future. The UAE therefore committed to using its Chairmanship as a platform for the identification and development of partnerships in order to build trust and improve dialogue and ameliorate conditions for migrants around the world.

Third, the UAE committed to opening up participation in the entire Summit and preparatory process to stakeholders from the three Mechanisms and Observers, in line with its longstanding belief that the role played by civil society, business, local administrations and youth is an essential part of the value created by the GFMD.

### *Budget Priorities*

In the vision presented in Quito, the UAE also set out a comprehensive budget, which outlined anticipated costs and specified the extent to which the UAE, as Chair, was prepared to contribute its own financial resources, (excluding the cost of Summit venue and organisation). This budget was presented in response to requests from a number of Member States who, over previous years, had requested greater transparency in relation to the finances of the GMFD, including the burden imposed upon the chairing Member State.

### *The Impact of COVID-19*

The UAE Chairmanship faced two notable challenges over the course of 2020.

The first and most obvious was the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which took on global significance just weeks after the UAE assumed the chairmanship. The intrinsic value of the GFMD has always been that it offers a forum for trust-building among officials and other stakeholders on issues relating to migration and development. Core to that process of trust-building is the principle of in-person meetings, where face-to-face exchanges enable relationships to be built and new ideas exchanged. That was simply not possible during a pandemic, with global travel severely constrained.

Alongside many others around the world, the UAE was consequently forced to resort to the use of video conferencing as a substitute for in-person meetings. This has a number of consequences. For example, meetings of shorter duration and greater frequency were required than would be the case with in-person meetings. Each Regional Consultation had to be organized over the course of three separate days (four in the case of the RCM), rather than the one day originally anticipated. Likewise, the Summit itself stretched to seven days, rather than the typical five, in order to compensate for the disparate time-zones involved.

On the other hand, the use of video conferencing also significantly reduced the costs of organizing GFMD events. For example, the original budget presented in Quito had anticipated significant financial support to both Member State and civil society participants in the Regional Consultations and Summit. Once it was clear that this support was not required, the budget was revised accordingly.

### *Financial Constraints*

The second major challenge faced by the UAE chairmanship related to GFMD finances.

In 2019, the UAE co-Chaired the Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration. In that role, in coordination with Switzerland, the UAE oversaw the Steering Group's

review of the recommendations of the 10 Year Review. Throughout that process, in reviewing the recommendations of the 10-Year review relating to financial sustainability, it became clear that the GFMD was faced with significant challenges. The 10-Year Review noted that:

*“The GFMD has faced perennial challenges in securing predictable financing, which makes it difficult for the Chair-in-Office to plan ahead. Reliance on ad hoc and voluntary contributions from a limited share of Member States presents a real risk in terms of sustainability. If the GFMD is to be an engine of progress for the GCM that generates tangible outcomes, its financial arrangements will have to be revisited.”*

However, the recommendations relating to financial sustainability were either unlikely to receive consensus among Member States in the near-term – implementing membership fees, for example – or, in the case of expanding in-kind contributions, would not help the GFMD meet its fixed costs.

In light of this challenge, the UAE commissioned an independent consultancy (Graham Pelton) to look into the possibility of supplementing GFMD finances with funds from non-State actors, including businesses, and corporate and philanthropic foundations.

That report highlighted two notable findings:

First, that it was possible to raise funds from alternative sources; but doing so would require a re-examination of the skillset in the GFMD Support Function, to including a fundraising and stakeholder management professional. This would likely generate significant funds within a year or so. But in the meantime, the cost of an additional team member would add significantly to the Support Unit budget.

The other finding was more worrying. The report showed that fresh contributions to the GFMD have declined every year since 2015, from just under USD \$3 million to approximately \$800,000 in 2019. At the same time, in every year during that period, expenditure has exceeded fresh contributions. The result is that the funds available to incoming Chairs declined from over \$1 million in 2015 to around \$200,000 by the end of the Ecuadorean Chairmanship.

This is explained by a decrease in fresh contributions from donor Member States, on the one hand. On the other, there has been no reduction in fixed costs, namely human resources and overheads. The result has been budget over-spends every year for the last five years, with the ratio of fixed costs to fresh contributions ballooning from 20% in 2015 to over 80% under the 2019 chairmanship.

By half-way through the UAE’s chairmanship, it had become apparent that fresh contributions by donor Member States were poised to continue their slide. As a result, the UAE was forced



to notify IOM of the possibility of an end-of-year deficit and the employment contracts of half of the Support Unit staff were consequently not renewed.

Despite this action, which contributed to decreasing the GFMD fixed costs from a budgeted US \$800,000 dollars plus to about US \$600,000 dollars, the ratio of fixed costs to aggregate available fresh contributions during the UAE chairmanship ended up exceeding 100%. This yielded a negative reserve fund – i.e. a projected budget deficit – for the first time ever.

### *Delivering the Thematic Agenda through 2020*

As Chair-in-Office, the UAE engaged six Thematic Experts to take on responsibility for supporting the delivery of the thematic priorities. These were John Bingham (independent consultant on international migration), Gibril Faal (London School of Economics), Michele Klein Solomon (IOM), Michele Leighton (ILO), Kathleen Newland (Migration Policy Institute) and Dilip Ratha (World Bank).

The Thematic Experts began by developing briefing papers, which were in turn informed by the Regional Consultations. This formed the basis for the first draft of the Background Papers, which were then refined under the leadership of the co-Chairs of the Summit Roundtables. The volunteering Member States to co-Chair Summit Roundtables were the governments of: Egypt, the Gambia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, El Salvador, Spain, the United Kingdom, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Roundtable Rapporteurs were provided by the governments of Sweden, Botswana, Switzerland, Australia, the Netherlands and the UK.

### *Delivering the Programmatic Agenda through 2020*

The six Summit Roundtable papers were, as proposed in the original vision, informed by regional perspectives. Despite the challenge of COVID, the UAE was able to organise six regional consultations, including two in Africa, thanks to our partnerships with the African Union, the OECD, the Bali Process, the Puebla Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. These Regional Consultations were held online and attracted a total of 856 participants, including distinct participation from capital.

To drive forward the priority focus on partnerships, the UAE engaged Labour Mobility Partnerships, a new organisation under the umbrella of the Centre for Global Development, which aims to increase rights-respecting labour migration through the identification of new opportunities for cooperation.

Space was given in the Regional Consultations for the discussion of partnerships, and participants encouraged to think about innovative solutions to migration challenges. LaMP brought together the outcomes of these discussions and led a process that resulted in two

Migration Labs, held online as part of the preparatory meetings in September and December. The results of those Migration Labs, as well as other partnership strands of the GFMD community, were presented at Open Space at the GFMD Summit.

With regards to the third programmatic priority of opening up the preparatory process to stakeholders from the three Mechanisms and observers: together, the three GFMD mechanisms registered over 450 participants in 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. The UAE also encouraged significant participation by youth delegates, with over 100 registering for the Summit.

### *The 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit*

The 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit was held online over the course of seven days, from 18 – 26 January 2021, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The Summit was Chaired by H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, UAE Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation.

The decision to hold the Summit exclusively online was formalized in November 2020 and plans for the Summit previewed at the meeting of the Friends of the Forum in early December. The UAE took the decision to invest in a bespoke online platform to be developed for the Summit to improve navigation and participation. The online format meant that the Summit attracted over 2000 registered participants: more than twice the usual number of participants in an average GFMD Summit.

This platform provided a space for the hosting of all content and logistics relating to Summit participation, with Summit events being hosted through third-party online video conferencing. The UAE took in-hand the cost of the development of the GFMD online platform, and other Summit-related costs (including interpretation for four languages).

A number of notable global leaders made statements at the Opening Ceremony of the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit, including: Luis Gallegos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador, António Vitorino, Director General of the International Organisation for Migration, Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation, Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, and Luis Almagro, the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States.

The Summit included a total of thirty-four separate events, including six thematic Roundtable discussions, thirteen side events, nine networking sessions for the three Mechanisms, a Youth Leadership and Innovation Contest, a competition for new start-up businesses focused on migrants run by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and Switzerland-based incubator Seedstars.

### *The Future of the GFMD*

In the current absence of an incoming Chair until 2022, when France takes over the chairmanship, the GFMD is now undergoing a period of internal reflection and reform, under the leadership of the current Troika (Ecuador, the UAE and France). During this period, members of the Steering Group and wider GFMD community will consider questions relating to governance, financial sustainability and administrative support. The goal is to ensure that the GFMD continues to play a meaningful role in global discussions on migration governance.

## 2020 GFMD Preparatory Process

### 2020 – 2021 Calendar of Activities under the UAE Chairmanship

The calendar of events for the GFMD under the UAE Chairmanship was as follows:

- 12 February: First Preparatory Meetings of the Troika and Steering Group
- 28 April: First GFMD Webinar on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development
- 03 April: Second GFMD Webinar on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development
- 12 May: Opening Plenary of the African Union Regional Consultation (English Language)
- 14 May: Opening Plenary of the African Union Regional Consultation (French Language)
- 19 May: Online Breakouts of the African Union Regional Consultation (English Language)
- 02 June: Online Breakouts of the African Union Regional Consultation (French Language)
- 04 June: Opening Plenary of the RCM (Puebla Process) Regional Consultation
- 11 June: Online Breakouts (I) of the RCM (Puebla Process) Regional Consultation
- 15 June: Opening Plenary of the Bali Process Regional Consultation
- 18 June: Online Breakouts (II) of the RCM (Puebla Process) Regional Consultation
- 23 June: Closing Plenary of the African Union Regional Consultation (English Language)
- 25 June: Closing Plenary of the African Union Regional Consultation (French Language)
- 29 June: Online Breakouts of the Bali Process Regional Consultation
- 01 July: Closing Plenary of the Bali Process Regional Consultation
- 02 July: Opening Plenary of the OECD Regional Consultation

- 03 July: Closing Plenary of the RCM (Puebla Process) Regional Consultation
- 06 July: Opening Plenary of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Regional Consultation
- 07 July: Online Breakouts of the OECD Regional Consultation
- 09 July: Online Breakouts of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Regional Consultation
- 10 July: Closing Plenary of the OECD Regional Consultation
- 13 July: Closing Plenary of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Regional Consultation
- 21 July – 22 July: Second Preparatory Meetings of the Troika and Steering Group and First Preparatory Meeting of the Friends of the Forum
- 29 September – 01 October: Third Preparatory Meetings of the Troika and Steering Group and Second Preparatory Meeting of the Friends of the Forum
- 02 December – 04 December: Fourth Preparatory Meetings of the Troika and Steering Group and Third Preparatory Meeting of the Friends of the Forum
- 18 January – 26 January 2021: Thirteenth GFMD Summit

## The UAE's Vision for GFMD 13

The United Arab Emirates came forward to announce its candidacy for the 2020 Chairmanship of the GFMD in May 2019. This announcement, relatively early in Ecuador's Chairmanship, ensured continuity for the GFMD's Troika, and enabled the UAE to spend time planning in some detail its Chairmanship. The resulting Vision for the Chairmanship was outlined by the UAE's Chair, Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, during the Closing Plenary of the 12<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit in Quito in January 2020.

The elaboration of the Vision was a participatory process, which relied on the Chair's Advisory Group (see below for further details of the Advisory Group). The Vision that was presented in Quito thus represented a consolidation of the efforts made by all Advisory Group members.

The Vision constituted four key segments: first, an overview of the thematic selection for the 2020 Chairmanship; second, a series of proposals geared towards establishing the GFMD as a year-long process; third, an overview of ideas and reforms put forward for the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit; and fourth (in a separate document) a comprehensive and transparent budget that outlined the anticipated costs for the year, alongside what the UAE was committed to contributing financially under its Chairmanship and what it consequently sought to raise from other Member States.

The UAE's thematic selection was grouped together under the overarching title of 'The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development'. The title reflected the emphasis placed on partnerships, the links between migration and development, and the impact of global changes underway due to shifts in technology, culture, wealth distribution and demographic shifts. It challenged participants to think about the scale and impact of these changes and how the GFMD can foster partnerships to manage them.

The six themes selected for the year were:

- Theme 1: The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes
- Theme 2: Skilling Migrants for Employment
- Theme 3: Levering New Technologies to Empower Migrants
- Theme 4: Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection
- Theme 5: Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration
- Theme 6: Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Sustainable Development Goals

Of these six themes, two (those focused on the governance of labour migration and the skilling of migrants) were directly related to aspects of labour migration and therefore of particular

relevance to the UAE. The thematic focus on technology was entirely new to the GFMD, while issues relating to irregular migration had not been a focus of discussions for some time. Protection and the relationship to development are core to the GFMD's ongoing agenda. It was intended that the themes selected would be sufficiently narrow to generate meaningful discussion, while being simultaneously broad enough to engage participants from around the world, regardless of local context.

For each theme, the UAE taskforce identified a thematic expert, who would take responsibility for overseeing the elaboration of thematic documents. This began with the drafting, by the thematic expert, of a background document in advance of the regional consultations, which formed the basis for discussion at a regional level. The thematic experts were then charged with synthesising the inputs from the Regional Consultations into a single first draft of the Roundtable Papers, the finalisation of which was overseen by the Summit Roundtable Chairs during the preparatory meetings of the Friends of the Forum.

This process represented a re-engineering of the way in which background papers have traditionally been developed in the GFMD. The reason for approaching the elaboration of background papers in this way was two-fold: first, it would support the GFMD as a year-long process; second – and more importantly – it was designed to encourage capitals-based experts to input into the background papers early in the process.

The six thematic experts were Michelle Leighton (Theme 1); Michele Klein Solomon (Theme 2); Gibril Faal (Theme 3); John Bingham (Theme 4); Kathleen Newland (Theme 5); and Dilip Ratha (Theme 6). All were chosen for their deep insights and subject matter expertise.

The Vision also addressed the selection of Regional Consultative Processes (see below), tasked with inputting into the background papers. The UAE has long been an advocate of stronger links between Regional Consultative Processes and global fora, including the GFMD, organising – for example – a side event at the 11<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit in Marrakesh looking at creating greater alignment between regional and global fora.

The Vision also outlined the UAE's commitment to a number of organisational principles: these included opening the entirety of the GFMD Summit (and, where relevant, preparatory meetings) to all GFMD stakeholders, notably those from the Business, Civil Society and Mayors Mechanisms, as well as Youth; and re-focusing the GFMD on partnerships, in line with the recommendations of the 10 Year Review, bringing back the Migration Labs that were first instituted under the joint chairmanship of Germany and Morocco.

Finally, the UAE also outlined, in Quito, a budget for the 2020 chairmanship. Under the Swedish chairmanship of the GFMD, a Long-Term Financing Framework - which included the standardisation of an annual budget to increase transparency and predictability - had been

proposed. Nonetheless, one of the issues that remained unaddressed in the Long-Term Financing Framework was the Chairing Member State's contribution to the GFMD. The lack of clarity over what the Chair would contribute – alongside the continued absence of a standardised budget – was, in the UAE's view, a disincentive for other Member States to signal their support early in each Chairmanship, leading to uncertainty around funding for the GFMD throughout the year.

The UAE sought to rectify this challenge by outlining a full budget in Quito. The total budget set out for the year – approximately \$2,690,000 – was in line with expenditure in previous years, once the additional costs for the Regional Consultations was taken into account. In the budget, the UAE estimated total anticipated costs for each line item, earmarked its own funding for that item, and gave a resulting indication of what other donors would need to contribute if the GFMDs finances for the year were to be balanced. The resulting fundraising target was set at approximately \$1,807,000 for the year.

Taken together, the elements outlined in the Vision represented an attempt by the UAE to put the GFMD on a more sustainable footing and implement some of the recommendations of the 10 Year Review, with a year-long agenda, space for greater engagement by non-State stakeholders, and a more transparent financial model.



## The Chair's Advisory Group

Upon confirmation that the UAE would chair the GFMD in 2020, the UAE's Taskforce assembled an Advisory Group, to assist in developing and synthesising ideas and identifying opportunities over the course of the Chairmanship. The Advisory Group consisted of a number active Member States, including several former GFMD Chairs, the six thematic experts, and the coordinators of the GFMD Mechanisms. The Advisory Group was established on an Ad Hoc basis, with other Member States and individuals joining for dedicated meetings throughout the UAE's Chairmanship, in response to the issues under consideration.

The first task of the Advisory Group was to guide the development of the UAE's Vision. To that end, it met twice over the course of 2019, with the UAE presenting for the Group's scrutiny new revisions to the Vision and related documents, including the Terms of Reference for the Regional Consultations. These were finalised by the time of the Quito Summit, with partner Regional Consultative Processes identified early in 2020.

The Advisory Group continued to play a key role over the course of 2020, providing support and insights to the Chair on issues relating to the response to COVID-19, the management of Preparatory Meetings, and scrutinising plans for the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit. It was consulted at key moments throughout the Chairmanship, including prior to the decision to hold Regional Consultations online, in advance of preparatory meetings, and in advance of the third meeting of the Friends of the Forum, when plans for the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit were finalised.

One of the recommendations that the UAE would pass on to future Chairs is the establishment of a similar ad hoc group for each chairmanship. The Advisory Group enables the Chair to better understand in an informal setting the impact of decisions relating to the management of the forum, the modalities for meetings, and the response of stakeholders to key issues. It also reduces the cost of overseeing the forum, by allowing the Chair to reduce its possible reliance on the hiring of external Geneva-based taskforce members.

## The Impact of COVID-19

The SARS-CoV-2 virus had already begun to spread around the world prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit, but it wasn't until several weeks after delegates left Quito that the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic began to be understood. It quickly became clear that the cessation of global travel was going to interrupt many of the original plans for preparatory meetings.

As the situation began to escalate, the UAE called a meeting of the Advisory Group, soon after the first meeting of the meeting of the Steering Group in February 2021. A number of issues were under consideration, including the impact on migrants themselves, and the consequences for the UAE's plans for its chairmanship.

The non-financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 Chairmanship can be divided into two spheres: first, the impact on the organisation of preparatory events and the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit; second, on the thematic output of the Chairmanship.

### *Organisational Impact*

Ultimately, the Chairmanship was only able to proceed because of the availability of online video conferencing platforms, which provided an alternative to in-person meetings. Once the decision had been taken by Chair, in consultation with the Advisory Group, to cancel in-person meetings, the Taskforce then had to undertake a process of selecting the optimal online video conferencing technology.

There were a number of constraints that guided the selection, with the Advisory Group agreeing a number of principles. First, the barrier to entry in terms of access to technology had to be as low as possible. Given that the GFMD is a multilateral forum representing diverse Member States, it was important that developing countries were not prevented from participating for reasons of cost, the need for high-speed internet or compliance requirements. Second, the meetings needed to be secure and provide a safe environment for the informal discussion of politically sensitive issues. Third, the platform needed to provide for language interpretation directly, rather than through the use of third-party applications.

The result was the selection of KUDO for the Online Regional Consultations. The results were reasonably good; but by the time of the Summit, it became clear that compliance concerns relating to Zoom had been by-and-large addressed and it was therefore decided to use Zoom.

Although the use of video conferencing inevitably made trust-building more difficult over the course of the year, there were significant advantages to using video technology; notably, the impact on the environment and the reduction in financial costs. For example, the original projected cost of the Regional Consultations, as presented in Quito, was approximately

\$320,000, including significant levels of subsidised travel for Governments and Civil Society. By taking these meetings online, the eventual cost was closer to \$52,000, which represented principally the cost of language interpretation. Likewise, the cost of preparatory meetings – which included some level of in-person meetings in Geneva during the summer months – was reduced from approximately \$150,000 to approximately \$30,000.

### *Thematic Impact*

The impact on the thematic output of the Chairmanship was, in many ways, more significant and was led in an organic fashion by a multitude of GFMD stakeholders.

The first effort to thematically address the global impact of COVID-19 on migrants was undertaken by the Chair, in consultation with the Advisory Group, in early April 2020 through the organisation of two webinars on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development. The purpose of the webinars was to afford stakeholders an opportunity to reflect on the challenges faced by migrants at the moment that the crisis was undermining the capacities of government and support structures; to take stock of effective responses to those challenges; and to identify joint action and potential partnerships among GFMD constituents aimed at mitigating the adverse impact of the pandemic on migrants and migrant communities.

The webinars also recognised that, in the longer term, migrants are likely to be key to recovery efforts, contributing to economic regeneration and growth and filling key roles in workforces impacted by the disease.

In advance of the webinars, the Chair invited Friends of the Forum to respond to a survey soliciting answers to two critical questions:

- What is the single most significant impact of COVID-19 on migrants and migrant-focused institutions in your city / country / region?
- What immediate and short-term measures and strategies constitute good practice in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, work and society at large?

The GFMD webinars took place on 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April. Each webinar was divided into two cycles and featured six speakers. The selection of speakers was designed to balance representatives from each of the GFMD stakeholder groups. The speakers on the 28<sup>th</sup> April were; Lukas Gehrke (ICMPD), Pietro Mona (Govt. of Switzerland), Roula Hammati (Civil Society), Gibril Faal (LSE), Imen Ouadani (Mayors Mechanism), and Menno Bart (Business Mechanism). The speakers on the 30<sup>th</sup> April were Cecile Riallant (IOM), Bitta Mostofi (Mayors Mechanism), Austin Fragomen (Business Mechanism), Dilip Ratha (World Bank), Ambassador Jose Luis Pardo (Government of Spain), and Helen Olea (Civil Society).

The webinars can be found online, on the GFMD's digital channels.

One of the key outcomes of the GFMD webinars on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, migration and development was the establishment, in response, of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the same name. Details of the output of the Ad Hoc Working Group can be found below.

In addition to the webinars, a dedicated COVID-19 Information Hub was set up on the GFMD website, where Friends of the Forum could access documents on guidelines, best practices and relevant mitigating policies and measures, published by GFMD stakeholders. Resources shared on the COVID-19 Information Hub include information and documents from nine Member States, fifteen GFMD observers and all three Mechanisms.

That the impact of and response to COVID-19 should continue to be a major concern for stakeholders throughout the Chairmanship was inevitable, given the challenges that the pandemic created. This led to many of the six themes set out by Chair becoming closely inter-linked with concerns over COVID-19, with – for example – questions relating to protection, technology, workforce planning and sustainable development all of great relevance. These issues were taken up throughout the Regional Consultations, the development of the background papers during preparatory meetings, and at the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit online. Further details relating to the thematic impact can be found below, in summaries of the Summit's thematic Roundtables.

## Online Regional Consultations

As set out in the preliminary Vision document, the UAE's ambition, as the Chair of the GFMD, was to ensure that the thematic papers, to be presented at the Summit, were informed by discussions at a regional level. The central purpose for doing so was to provide an opportunity for engagement to capitals-based experts, and successfully capture regional specificities relating to migration governance. With most migration taking place within regions, it has long been the view of the UAE that greater understanding of regional specificities at a global level is vital if recommendations and insights are to be locally relevant.

In consultation with the Advisory Group, the Chair developed a set of Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference set out a series of key points relating to the management of each of the Regional Consultations, which were re-designed in light of the decision to take all meetings online. The final design of the Online Regional Consultations anticipated meetings taking place over three separate days, with an Opening Plenary, Thematic Breakout Calls, and Closing Plenaries. In many cases, each day was separated by a number of weeks, although the schedule meant that for those meetings that were taking place towards the end of the May - July window (notably the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the OECD meetings) all three meetings were squeezed into the course of less than ten days.

In advance of the Regional Consultations, the background papers were uploaded onto an online platform that allowed for written input by registered participants. This supplemented the verbal input that was contributed during the meetings and ensured that all participants had an opportunity to elaborate on the background papers. In addition to Member State participation, the three GFMD Mechanisms and UNMGCY were each invited to identify a number of participants to join the meetings.

No limits were set on participation in Opening Plenaries. To ensure a manageable group and a balanced discussion, participation in Thematic Breakouts was limited to two per Member State, two per GFMD Observer and five per Mechanism. For Closing Plenaries, Member States and GFMD Observers were allotted six participants, and the three Mechanisms fifteen. Each participating organisation was encouraged to nominate a spokesperson for Closing Plenaries, and coordinate comments internally in advance. Simultaneous interpretation for two languages per consultation was made available through the KUDO platform, and Opening Plenaries were recorded and made publicly available to all stakeholders through the GFMD's digital channel, where they remain.

Five major migration corridors were represented in the Online Regional Consultations through the participation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (West and South Asia), the African Union (Africa),

the Bali Process (East Asia and Asia Pacific), OECD (primarily European Member States) and RCM (Puebla Process – the Americas), with two consultations taking place for Africa (one English, one French). Taken together, these six consultations provided a regionally relevant platform to every government wanting to participate, as well as constituents from civil society, business, local administrations and youth. A total of thirty-one online meetings took place over the course of May, June and July.

All six thematic priorities were covered in at least two regions, with *The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes*, *Skilling Migrants for Employment*, and *Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection* all being covered in three regions. *The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes* proved to be the most popular of the six themes, with 206 participants worldwide joining in breakouts on this theme.

Partnering RCPs were invited to select a minimum of two and a maximum of three of the six thematic priorities of the chairmanship. In the end, all RCPs chose three. The following themes were selected by the partnering RCPs:

Abu Dhabi Dialogue:

- The governance of labour migration in the context of changing employment landscapes
- Leveraging technology to empower migrants
- Fostering partnerships to realise migration-related sustainable development goals

African Union:

- The governance of labour migration in the context of changing employment landscapes
- Skilling migrants for employment
- Addressing gaps in migrant protection

Bali Process:

- Leveraging technology to empower migrants
- Addressing gaps in migrant protection
- Discussing approaches to address irregular migration – what works? what doesn't?

OECD:

- The governance of labour migration in the context of changing employment landscapes
- Skilling migrants for employment

- Fostering partnerships to realise migration-related sustainable development goals

RCM (Puebla Process):

- Skilling migrants for employment
- Addressing gaps in migrant protection
- Discussing approaches to address irregular migration – what works? what doesn't?

The RCM Regional Consultation also held an additional breakout on Public Narratives on Migration, organised in cooperation with the Government of Canada and the Mayors Mechanism as Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration.

In total, 856 individuals participated in the Regional Consultations, with the move online, due to COVID-19, enabling a significantly higher level of engagement than would otherwise have been possible, had the meetings taken place in person. Participation numbers (some covering multiple sessions) for each Regional Consultation were as follows:

- Abu Dhabi Dialogue: 225
- African Union (English): 176
- African Union (French): 131
- Bali Process: 232
- OECD: 181
- RCM: 265

The conclusions of the Regional Consultations were presented at the second Friends of the Forum meeting in September and formed the basis for the Summit background papers, under the guidance of the Summit Roundtable Chairs. The process of seeking Summit Roundtable Chairs began during the first Friends of the Forum meeting in July.

## Reports of the GFMD Working Groups

### Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration

Having concluded the review of the recommendations of the 10 Year Review, undertaken over the course of 2019, the Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration met early in 2020 to consider the GFMD's response to the invitation to contribute to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The subsequent report was written by Ms Kathleen Newland of the Migration Policy Institute. It was coordinated by the members of the Working Group and endorsed by Member States, GFMD Mechanisms and Observers and is accessible through the GFMD website.

Throughout the report, the GFMD community sought to share the knowledge and insights it has accumulated on how best to accelerate actions needed to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among the key objectives is to ensure that the contribution of migration to development is fully realised, and that migrants are included in the aspiration of the SDGs to 'leave no one behind'.

The report offered a number of recommendations, drawn from the substance of GFMD discussions, which were relevant to the theme of the 2020 HLPF. Namely:

- i. Pursue a whole-of-society approach
- ii. Emphasize the links between migration and development
- iii. Foster partnerships to make more rapid progress towards the SDGs
- iv. Promote a balanced, fact-based narrative about migrants and migration
- v. Empower migrants to make a full contribution to development
- vi. Recognize the opportunities that migration creates for rural development
- vii. Take into account South-South and regional mobility
- viii. Prioritize the collection and analysis of high-quality migration data
- ix. Strengthen the governance of international migration

Complementing these recommendations were a set of relevant projects, policies, and programmes selected from submissions sent by Member States and GFMD Observers.

Subsequent to its work on the HLPF, the Working Group undertook a reform of the GFMD's online Platform for Partnerships presence, in order to better improve the archiving of material relating to the link between migration and development. That work has now been completed and the results are through the [gfmd.org](https://gfmd.org) website. In particular, the re-design sought to improve the searchability of the Platform for Partnerships database, through the use of infographics and data display.



Looking forward to 2021, the Working Group is in need of a co-chair, to replace Germany, who stepped down in 2020. It may be that the Working Group will have a significant role to play over the coming year to coordinate the GFMD's input into the International Migration Review Forum in the first quarter of 2022.

### Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration

Public attitudes towards migration and migrants remain deeply polarized on an international scale, with serious implications for migrants and communities alike. Efforts to counter this challenge by promoting accurate and balanced narratives on migration are therefore central to supporting the meaningful inclusion and integration of migrants worldwide. This work represents a key element of both the Global Compact for Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In February 2020, the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration was officially established with the aim of fostering multi-stakeholder discussions and concrete collaboration to balance the public narrative on migrants and migration. Currently co-chaired by the Government of Canada, the Government of Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, the working group welcomed a diverse group of members in its first year, including 8 states, 6 local government representatives, three business representatives, two civil society organizations, one youth organization and four international organizations.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the challenges posed by the emergence of COVID-19, the Working Group was able to advance an ambitious agenda in 2020 that focused on creating concrete initiatives and new connections across different stakeholder groups, in line with the UAE Chair's thematic focus on partnerships. Most notably, the Working Group led the development of a collaborative, global social media campaign, titled "*It Takes a Community*," which soft launched on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This unprecedented campaign seeks to leverage the multi-stakeholder nature of the GFMD by bringing together a diverse network of countries, cities, businesses, civil society and youth leaders to share inclusive stories on social media about how migrants are having a positive impact in communities around the world.



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<sup>1</sup> Members of the working group during 2019-20 included Algeria, Bangladesh, Canada, Ecuador, Ireland, Mexico, Morocco, The Gambia, the City of Mechelen, the City of Montreal, the City of Johannesburg, the City of Sao Paulo, the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, Welcoming International, the GFMD Civil Society Mechanism, Oxfam, the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth, the GFMD Business Mechanism, ERC Worldwide, Talent Beyond Boundaries, the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The development of *It Takes a Community* was a highly collaborative process, with Working Group members providing detailed input on its creation during a series of stakeholder consultations, meetings and workshops throughout the fall of 2020. An external communications firm, called Purpose, was also hired by the Co-Chairs to help develop the campaign’s initial strategy and visual identity. Following this first phase of work, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was engaged as the Working Group’s lead project partner for the launch and implementation of the campaign.

In the first 18 days following the soft launch of *It Takes a Community* on December 18<sup>th</sup>, campaign content reached over 9.5 million people, demonstrating the strong success of this initiative’s collaborative approach. The implementation and global growth of *It Takes a Community* will continue to be a top priority for the working group as it moves into 2021.

Beyond the creation and soft launch of *It Takes a Community*, the Working Group hosted four full meetings and one sub-group meeting on monitoring and evaluation during 2020 to provide a venue for members to exchange updates and ideas. The Co-Chairs additionally coordinated a virtual breakout session in June on migration narratives in the Americas as part of the GFMD – RCM (Puebla Process) regional consultations hosted by the UAE Chair.



The Working Group also circulated its first quarterly newsletter on migration narratives to the GFMD community in December 2020 as part of the group’s objective of supporting the wider exchange of information and resources related to narratives. This newsletter included updates on six different innovative initiatives to promote balanced narratives on migration, along with links to four recent publications and a snapshot of recent events on communicating about migration. Finally, the Co-Chairs of the Working Group led the compilation of suggested messages on migration narratives for members to raise during the upcoming Global Compact for Migration Regional Reviews in order to further elevate the issue of migration narratives on the international agenda.

#### Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development

The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development was established in April 2020, for a period of one year, as a response to the

COVID-19 pandemic and its ensuing crisis. Migrants are among the most affected by the pandemic. They are more likely to be fired or stranded due to the restriction of movements and other measures aimed to curb the spread of COVID-19, as well as the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic. Despite their contribution to the economy, migrants are also more likely to not have access to health services.

In light of this, the establishment of the Working Group aimed, among other objectives, to create a space for stakeholders to share best practices, develop a GFMD working paper on the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants, and reflect on possible adjustments in the way the GFMD works based on the pandemic.

The Working Group is co-chaired by Indonesia, Switzerland, and the GFMD Business Mechanism. The members include Ecuador, Gambia, Jamaica, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, the UAE, Civil Society Mechanism, Mayors Mechanism, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, IOM, and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Sweden is an observer.

At a side-event at the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit, the Working Group presented a milestone of its work: a working paper entitled “Lessons Learned from COVID-19 Prevention, Response and Recovery.” The paper sought to discuss not only the impacts of COVID-19 on migrants and the migration-development nexus, but also share good practices implemented by the GFMD Community in response to the pandemic. The paper is informed by the GFMD Community through the survey that the Working Group sent out in October 2020.

Over 170 participants attended the side-event, many of whom found the paper insightful for the GFMD Community. The Chairs of the Working Group would like to thank all the respondents of the survey, as well as the contributors to the write-up of the working paper. The end-result synthesized more than 100 pages of responses of the survey into the working paper. Some key issues raised in the working paper are the importance of giving access to migrants to health care services, the need to have an inclusive, multi-stakeholder pandemic response (including by engaging with local actors and communities), the importance of fostering a balanced narrative on migrants and migration, as well as involving migrants in the pandemic response.

The Working Group provides a valuable space for members to discuss their perspectives on the impacts of COVID-19 on migration and development. In view of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, the Working Group members continue to see a potential for further work. The scope and the modalities may be subject to other developments within the GFMD.

## Partnership Process & Migration Labs

A core objective of the 2020 Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) was to facilitate the emergence of new or substantially expanded partnerships and cooperation between countries and other stakeholders on the six thematic streams and / or priorities of the GFMD Working Groups. To that end, the Chair, following a model first piloted under the German-Moroccan Co-Chairmanship, recruited Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP) to facilitate a partnership development process, including the holding of two Migration Labs over the course of 2020 - the first on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020 and the second on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 – with the results announced during the Open Space session at the Summit.

The 2020 partnerships process aimed to encourage the emergence and formation of partnerships by: (1) working with GFMD stakeholders to identify entry points to promising partnerships; and (2) supporting potential partners to flesh out the rationale and critical elements of proposed partnership.

The primary goal of the 2020 partnerships process was to identify and develop between three and five partnerships which were ‘fundable proposals’: that is to say, all actors involved in the partnership agreed on the answers to all elements of a standard project proposal (including problem assessment, identification of partners, partnership goals and objectives, activities and implementation plan, and key elements of budget).

Partnerships were intentionally defined loosely, in order to allow participants the flexibility to design an initiative which met their needs. Eligible partnerships were considered to:

1. involve two or more GFMD members (including Member States and members of the business, civil society, and Mayors mechanism), as well as any necessary partners from outside the GFMD community;
2. Be of mutual benefit to the members (i.e. not a fee-for-service arrangement in which one member pays another to deliver a program or service);
3. Propose new or substantially expanded partnerships that relate to the six themes of the 2020 GFMD chairmanship or the GFMD ad hoc Working Groups on COVID-19 and Narratives.

The partnerships process mirrored the rest of the year-long 2020 GFMD process. Each of the six Online Regional Consultations included breakout sessions on three themes of their choosing from the six 2020 GFMD themes; the six Thematic Leads led these sessions with an eye towards actionable partnership ideas, and the LaMP team participated to document and follow up on emerging partnership opportunities.

In each Regional Consultation, the LaMP team ran a ‘Partnership Matching’ session as part of the Closing Plenary sessions, in which participants were given the opportunity to present ideas for further exploration. Following the breakout sessions, the UAE Chair also circulated a survey, including two key questions:

1. Based on the opening plenary presentations and discussions in breakout sessions, what do you think are the most pressing problems facing migrants or governance of migration in your city / country / region? – and:
2. What solutions do you think could be implemented in the near future to address this problem? What would this look like and who would you like to see involved?”

86 responses were submitted to this survey from across the regions. Ideas on potential partnerships from the 18 breakout sessions, six ‘partnership matching’ sessions, and 86 survey responses were reviewed to identify recurring themes and ideas. Based on this review, twelve areas were identified as having the potential for partnership development across a diverse array of GFMD stakeholders:

1. Transnational Justice / Wage protection (particularly following repatriation during COVID-19)
2. Local Data Collection (Africa)
3. Regional Coordination (Africa and GCC)
4. Regional Coordination (LAC)
5. Coordination towards local decentralization (Africa)
6. Labor Pathways (LAC)
7. Digital Migration Processes
8. Support for returned migrants during COVID
9. Pathways to upskilling and Qualification Recognition (OECD)
10. Financing Solutions for Mobility Partnerships
11. Narratives on Migration and Communicating with Migrants
12. Fair Recruitment

Between the end of the Regional Consultations and the first Migration Lab, small groups were formed among participants across regions and mechanisms, based on expressions of interest in working on these ideas. These small groups were formed in late August and met beginning in early September. Not all of the focus areas of the small groups resulted in tangible partnerships to be presented at the Summit: their purpose was to explore ideas and possible ways forward.

The Migration Labs consisted of two sessions alongside each Friends of the Forum meeting, the first on September 30th and the second on December 3rd.

Due to restrictions related to COVID-19, the first Lab session was held in a mixed physical and virtual format, with physical meetings held in Geneva and virtual links to allow participation of those unable to travel. The second Lab, in December, took place entirely online.

The methodology of the Migration Labs was based on Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), which is a process developed by Harvard economists to help governments and their partners to break problems into root causes, identify entry points, search for possible solutions, and take action. The PDIA process consists of six initial stages towards development of an intervention. Rather than applying standardized interventions in new contexts, LaMP looked for partnerships which spoke to root causes of problems experienced by practitioners in the migration field.

Participants in the Labs were given the opportunity to apply the PDIA process to a number of problems, in particular those that States, civil society, business and city actors identified in the six regional GFMD meetings between May and July, and to search for possible solutions alongside other similarly minded GFMD members and participants. The Lab process was non-binding and intended to give participants sufficient space and flexibility to explore multiple possible solutions and partners. There were opportunities for developed partnership proposals to be connected to interested donors at the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit in January 2021.

## Meetings of the Friends of the Forum

Following the recommendations of the 10 Year Review, and in line with the example set under the Ecuadorean Chair, the 2020 UAE Chair decided to continue to differentiate between the agendas of the Steering Group and the Friends of the Forum. The Steering Group met in February to oversee plans for the Regional Consultations, and then again regularly from July onwards, when the financial challenges facing the GFMD in 2020 started to become apparent. For further information relating to the focus of the Steering Group during the 2020 Chairmanship, please refer to the sections on GFMD 2020 Finances and GFMD Reform.

The first meeting of the Friends of the Forum took place on 22 July 2020. Unlike in previous years, it was the intention of the Chair that the proceedings of preparatory meetings would be informed by the outcomes of the Regional Consultations. Consequently, the first Friends of the Forum meeting was not originally envisaged to take place until September, when the first drafts of the background papers would be presented by the thematic experts. Nonetheless, the Chair decided that it was important that the Friends of the Forum be updated on progress mid-year.

The first meeting of the Friends of the Forum was held entirely online and was Chaired by H.E. Abdulla Al Nuaimi, Assistant Undersecretary for International Relations and Communications, UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation. Key items on the agenda included: the schedule of meetings leading up to the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit; briefings on activities undertaken by the Co-Chairs of Working Groups; an update on the 2020 budget; briefings on activities undertaken by the GFMD Mechanisms; a presentation by UNMGCY; and an invitation to Member States to come forward as Chairs of Summit Roundtables.

The second Friends of the Forum took place on 01 October. The severity of the COVID-19 situation had temporarily receded sufficiently to allow socially-distanced in-person meetings to be held in Geneva, with online links available for those who preferred to join by video conference. The second meeting of the Friends of the Forum was principally focused on the drafting process for the Summit Roundtable papers, with an overview presented by the Chair and outlines of the first drafts presented by the Roundtable Co-Chairs and Thematic Leads. Further updates were delivered by the Working Group Co-Chairs and the Coordinators of the GFMD Mechanisms, and the Chair gave an overview of plans for the Summit. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Ms. Asako Okai, UNDP Assistant Secretary General and Assistant Administrator, launching a new report by UNDP, *Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*.

The third Friends of the Forum took place on 04 December. It focused on wrapping up the drafting of the Roundtable papers and providing an overview of the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit.

## GFMD & Key Partners

The 2020 Chair invited the three Mechanisms and UNMGCY to input into this report. The following sections were prepared and submitted by the respective organisations in response to that request.

### Civil Society

For Civil Society, the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit was of particular importance. As civil society representative, Ms. Stella Opoku-Owusu, said in her remarks delivered in the opening ceremony of the Summit: *“as political spaces for civil society continue to shrink, the GFMD has become a standout example of what self-organized engagement by all stakeholders should look like, and how this enables us to reach our shared goals together”*.

Civil Society delegates participated actively in the Summit and brought forward the key priorities and concerns they had discussed prior to the Summit in their Civil Society Preparatory Meeting (CPSM), calling upon the GFMD Community to be bold and courageous to ensure all are protected. In particular, it was felt that the COVID-19 pandemic offered a unique window of opportunity to rebuild better, creating equitable, inclusive societies that benefit all and do not leave migrants behind, as delegates concluded at the final plenary of the GFMD Civil Society Preparatory Meeting.

At the same time, this Summit changed the way civil society interacts and participates in the GFMD, as the United Arab Emirates (UAE) introduced or crystallized a number of forward-looking changes when they took over the GFMD Chairmanship in February 2020. The UAE proposed that the GFMD be a year-long process, with six GFMD Regional Consultations to be held over the course of 2020, in partnership with State-led Regional Consultative Processes. Each Regional Consultation focused on three of the six 2020 GFMD themes, providing the substance for the thematic background papers, which were discussed in the Roundtables at the Summit.

This allowed civil society to participate actively in all GFMD events and engage in in-depth discussions throughout 2020. By meeting prior to each regional meeting, consulting broadly with civil society organizations at the regional level, and having the possibility for a civil society rapporteur to present the results of these preparatory meetings during the GFMD Consultations themselves, civil society was able to build up a strong incremental process towards the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit. A civil society representative was also invited to contribute to the elaboration and finalization of each of the GFMD Thematic Background Papers under the leadership of the thematic leads (experts) and roundtables' co-chairs, thereby ensuring that the key civil society advocacy points were reflected in the final papers.



At the same time, the UAE also introduced a major change for civil society by deciding to open the entire Summit to all GFMD stakeholders. This meant that all civil society delegates were invited to attend *all* of the GFMD Summit program instead of only participating in some selected sessions, as it used to be the case in the past. This had a particular importance for many civil society organizations since the UAE is one of the main destination countries for millions of migrant workers. In addition, the UAE proposed to facilitate a series of ‘Networking Meetings’ to enable non-government participants (each mechanism separately) to meet and interact directly with government delegates.

Finally, an Advisory Group involving all GFMD stakeholders as well as independent experts was established by the UAE Chair, in July 2019, with the aim of supporting the development of the GFMD vision for 2020. Two NGOs were invited to join, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), in its official capacity as the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office, and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), providing an opportunity for regular and direct contacts with the Chair and for civil society proposals to help shape the GFMD Summit and other activities throughout the year. The Advisory Group also provided a space for an immediate reflection on the pandemic, which led to the creation of a new ad-hoc Working Group on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration, and Development in April 2020, as proposed by, among others, civil society.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all regional consultations, and eventually the GFMD Summit too, had to be held online. While this proved to be challenging in a number of ways, in particular for the UAE as organizer, and required everyone to adapt very quickly to the new online reality, all the events were maintained and became accessible to all delegates regardless of their location and sanitary restrictions.

As such, civil society adapted its organizing and activities to the year-long process introduced by the UAE and the online format induced by the pandemic. The GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office worked closely with its International Steering Committee (ISC) - a body composed of 30 + NGOs from all over the world, which provides direction and guidance to ICMC, and a smaller ad hoc Program Committee made up of eight regional focal points.

To reflect the fact that all civil society delegates could now participate in the entire GFMD Summit, it was decided to rename the traditional “Civil Society Days”. The civil society meeting preceding the summit was thus named *Civil Society Preparatory Meeting (CSPM)* instead and was developed to build on the regional consultations, and brief and prepare all delegates prior to the Summit.

183 civil society delegates, out of some 250 initially identified based on their participation in the regional consultations as well as in prior GFMD Civil Society Days, attended the Civil Society Preparatory Meeting and subsequent Summit. During four days between 7 and 15 January

2021, they met online and held in-depth discussions in both plenary and breakout sessions. To facilitate the process, the six GFMD themes were consolidated into three themes, and a fourth one on “COVID-19 – Building Back Better” was added.

These discussions, led by a group of co-facilitators and thematic rapporteurs, helped identify the following key priority areas that were brought to the GFMD Summit and constitute civil society thematic priorities beyond the Summit:

- Fighting xenophobia and discrimination against migrants
- Promoting regular pathways, including regularization
- Due process and access to justice
- Social protection for all migrants

In addition, civil society made the following recommendations regarding the future of the GFMD:

- The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that the GFMD is more meaningful and purposeful than ever. The formula adopted in 2006, when the GFMD was created, remain valid today, precisely because the pandemic has created a global crisis, including a migration and development crisis. During a crisis, international cooperation is of paramount importance, in particular when it is supported by an informal and transparent dialogue, during which the focus is on best practices.
- A truly multi-stakeholder approach, which has increasingly become the footprint of the GFMD, also makes sense when the international community is collectively confronted with massive and brutal losses of lives, jobs, and livelihoods. In such a context, solutions can only be built collectively. Partnerships developed around shared responsibility, honesty and transparency will yield better results.
- The three innovations brought by the UAE, following years of an increased collaboration between governments and the other stakeholders, i.e. the GFMD becoming a year-long process with regional consultations; the creation of an Advisory Group open to the three mechanisms and independent experts providing inputs before papers or agendas are finalized; and the Summit being entirely open to all, must become permanent features of the GFMD, as well as strong, organized and impactful youth engagement.
- We should also build on the many technological innovations during the “unusual”, fully online Summit, during which the level of engagement and substantive inputs was high in spite of the many organizational challenges.

- The lack of a GFMD Chair for 2021 and the first part of 2022 is of particular concern to civil society since this may lead to a transition year without clear focus or real ownership. A GFMD without a chair may also be a year without summit, regional consultations or thematic workshops. With the Troika and the Steering Group in charge of ensuring a meaningful transition, the three mechanisms now risk losing their capacity to influence the GFMD agenda and shape the Forum's future, since the Steering Group membership is limited to governments. While civil society does not request full membership, it would appreciate having an observer status and being regularly consulted. This should also be extended to the Business and Mayors Mechanisms.

## Business Mechanism

### *Overview*

The 13<sup>th</sup> Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summit took place virtually from 18-26 January under the chairmanship of the government of the United Arab Emirates. The theme was “The future of human mobility: innovative partnerships for sustainable development”. The Business Advisory Group on Migration, coordinated by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), designed an online program dedicated to the impact of migration policies on businesses, with a view to strengthening the dialogue between businesses and governments on business priorities linked to skills mobility, responsible recruitment and regular migration pathways, in the post Covid-19 economic recovery process.

For the fifth consecutive occasion, IOE through the Business Advisory Group on Migration, championed active business representation during the GFMD Summit which brought together more than two thousand registered participants worldwide. 160 representatives of companies and employers’ organisations registered and engaged in multilateral discussions on migration during the Summit. Business speakers had 37 formal speaking roles in different government-led plenaries, as well as side events, showcasing their strong presence and engagement.

In the preparatory phase leading up to the Summit, the UAE hosted six regional online roundtables between March and July 2021. Employers actively participated in all sessions, which addressed the following topics: governance of labour migration, skilling migrants for employment, leveraging technologies to empower migrants, addressing gaps in migrant protection, discussing approaches to address irregular migration and fostering partnerships to realise migration related goals.

Through the whole process, employers addressed policy gaps highlighted by the Covid-19 crisis, which urgently needed solutions. Focus was placed on the need for improved regulatory frameworks for skills mobility and responsible recruitment, as well as the alignment of skills and migration policies as a comprehensive response to migration challenges.

The first ever virtual GFMD Summit was successfully organised by the UAE. It provided smooth connectivity and systems which helped seamless holding of various sessions. The attempt to cater to all the different time zones were navigated in the best possible manner. However, the late finalisation of time slots and programme created administrative and organisational challenges to the different stakeholders in securing speakers and participants. This challenge was compounded due to the summit being held in January, as much organisational time was lost during the Christmas break.

### *Conclusions*

Despite the online format which prevented face-to-face interactions, the 13th GFMD brought positive outcomes and furthered engagement among stakeholders. The engagement of the private sector and its visibility at the virtual Summit was well noted and appreciated in different sessions and in the roundtable discussions. In addition to dozens of formal speaking roles in different government led discussions and events, the Business Advisory Group on Migration contributed with both written and oral inputs in the roundtable discussions and made active interventions from the floor and in ad-hoc meetings.

The private sector participated successfully during the Summit, both in terms of the quantity and quality of its engagement. It was able to highlight to stakeholders that it had a concrete role to play in supporting Governments in effectively managing migration and was willing to contribute to the policy debate at the local and global level.

A positive and measurable outcome of the Summit was the increased demand for private sector participation and collaboration from governments, the mayors mechanism and international organisations. With France set to take over the chairmanship of the GFMD in 2022, the current Troika, composed of Ecuador, UAE and France is expected to ensure the continued value-addition and positive impact of the Forum. In this context, the Business Advisory Group on Migration will continue to organise the much-needed voice of business, to ensure its continued impact in the GFMD and beyond.

## Mayors Mechanism

### *Background*

In 2018, following a growing emphasis on the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to migration governance issues, the GFMD formally recognised the value of involving local and regional governments (LRGs) in GFMD discussions through the establishment of a Mayors Mechanism in 2018. First presented at the GFMD Preparatory Meetings in September 2018, and jointly steered by [United Cities and Local Governments](#), the [Mayors Migration Council](#), and the [International Organization for Migration](#), the Mechanism was launched officially on 8 December 2018 in Marrakesh at the Fifth Mayoral Forum Meeting, held just after the close of the Marrakesh GFMD Summit.

The Mayors Mechanism was established to formally link LRGs to the GFMD, alongside civil society and the private sector. The Mechanism creates opportunities for LRGs to influence GFMD discussions and provides them with opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exchange. It establishes a platform to interact with States, civil society and the private sector and provides avenues to bolster innovative solutions.

The following GFMD Mayors Mechanism activities took place throughout the 2020 UAE Chairmanship:

### *Mayors Mechanism overall engagement in the GFMD*

The UAE chairmanship was marked by the largest involvement of LRGs in history of GFMD. LRGs participated in the GFMD regional consultations and thematic discussions and joined panels to talk alongside national governments and other stakeholders to discuss topics such as irregular migration, protecting migrants and labour migration, resulting in key LRG inputs and recommendations included in regional and global GFMD discussions and publications<sup>2</sup>.

### *Local government perspectives on inclusive response and recovery to COVID-19*

As the global pandemic hit the world, with far reaching consequences for human mobility, the MM was glad to see the Chair acknowledge the unique role of the GFMD in advancing the multilateral dialogue in search of concrete solutions. With LRGs playing a key role in inclusive response and recovery, the MM ensured LRG perspectives were represented and lifted-up in the GFMD COVID-19 discussions:

- The MM provided specific input in the [COVID-19 working group thematic paper](#)

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<sup>2</sup> All statements, speeches and MM publications can be found [here](#).

- The city of New York (USA) and Sousse (Tunisia) were invited as panellists in the two GFMD COVID-19 webinars hosted by the Chair
- In April 2020, the MM published a [COVID-19 Update](#) highlighting existing city and city network initiatives that mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on human mobility in urban contexts

### *Mayors Mechanism co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on Balancing Public Narratives*

Created in February 2020, the Working Group aims to bring all GFMD stakeholders together to pursue balanced and evidence-based public narrative on migration. Upon the proposal of the Government of Canada, the GFMD Steering Group endorsed the creation of the Working Group. With LRGs in a critical role in promoting social inclusion, the Steering Group welcomed the MM as co-chair of the working group, which marked the first time for a Mechanism co-chairing a working group alongside national governments. In September, the Government of Ecuador also joined as a co-chair.

The MM has invited the cities of Johannesburg, Montreal, Sao Paulo, Mechelen and Dublin to join as members, in addition to city-led or city-focused networks, including UCLG, MMC and Welcoming International. With this group, the MM has worked closely to ensure LRG perspectives and realities were included in the discussions and concrete working group actions, including the [It Takes a Community](#) Campaign and the working group quarterly newsletter.

#### **Mayors Mechanism: In Numbers**

- ⇒ over 40 LRGs speaking in regional consultations
- ⇒ over 90 LRGs participating in the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit
- ⇒ 25 LRGs in a speaking role next to national governments in 18 GFMD Summit sessions
- ⇒ 53 representatives of LRGs join 43 representatives from 17 States and 3 Intergovernmental Organisations in the GFMD Networking Session.
- ⇒ Over 60 LRG examples showcased through 11 GFMD publications the MM developed or contributed to.
- ⇒ Chaired or joined 2 policy working groups, involving 15 national governments, 4 cities, and 3 city networks.

## Youth Engagement

Young people were an integral part of the 13th GFMD, bringing their proposals to all preparatory meetings and the Summit. They presented the most pressing priorities of young people and migrants, including the prevention of human trafficking, access for migrants to services including health, education, and labour protection, and evidence-based narratives on migration and migrants. They proposed solutions, including good practices from governments and lessons learnt from initiatives led by themselves and their peers.

The presence of youth was capillary and extended to the regional preparatory meetings, to the Migration Partnership Lab, the Working Group on Public Narratives, and the Summit. All GFMD mechanisms and governments were invited to bring youth as part of their delegations, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of the youth population. Young participants thus included a strong presence of migrants, with backgrounds spanning all areas of society: from governments (5 young delegates), to civil society (10 youth representatives), youth-led organizations, social enterprises, businesses and many others.

To participate effectively, young people self-organized through the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), specifically its Youth Migration Network, which served as the space for connection, preparation, and mobilization of young people.

### *Regional preparatory meetings*

In preparation for the GFMD regional meetings, MGCY's Regional Focal Points conducted extensive consultations with young people and youth-led organizations to understand young people's priorities. They consulted with 145 youth-led organizations, operating in 79 countries, and representing 88,000 youth around the world. The results of these consultations were summarized in policy briefs and presented at the Regional preparatory meetings of the GFMD, as well as formed the basis for the background documents and priority selection for the Thematic Roundtables. All policy briefs are available at this link:

<https://www.unmgcy.org/youth4migration>.

### *Year-round activities*

Youth participated at the Friends of the Forum meetings and sent delegates to the Migration Lab, bringing the ideas and good practices of the initiatives mapped during the consultations. MGCY also holds one of the stakeholders seats in the Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, for which we are part of the first cohort of Campaign Leads.

### *Youth Forum*



To mobilize and prepare young people to attend the GFMD Summit, MGCY, IOM, and UNICEF co-hosted a Youth Forum on January 4th-6th. Through an open call for applications, 96 young people were selected - from nearly 1,000 applicants - based on their track record of leadership and impact in migration issues.

They came from a range of backgrounds - spanning grassroots organizations to social enterprises, private sector to government. Overall, 44.5% of participants identified as migrants; the age range was 17 to 31; and 60% self-declared as part of minorities.

The Youth Forum consisted of preparatory workshops and thematic roundtables that mirrored the themes of the GFMD, allowing young people to discuss between their peers and prepare documents containing good practices and concrete proposals that could be brought to the GFMD Summit. These included calls for:

- Protecting all migrant workers, irrespective of status, ensuring access to regularization and rights protection
- Ensuring all young people, regardless of migratory status, are able to access services, and continue education at all levels
- Facilitating the recognition of qualifications across countries and regions, taking into account the difficulties in accessing documentation in some places
- Investing in prevention of human trafficking and in alternatives to detention - calling for the end of child detention in all cases
- Promoting evidence-based narratives on migration and integration
- Investing in already existing initiatives, including those led by youth, which are offering support to migrants in the form of skilling opportunities, legal advice, promotion of integration, and using innovative technologies to empower migrants

Besides the co-hosts MGCY, IOM, and UNICEF, a number of collaborators supported these discussions, including the UNDP, ILO, OHCHR, UNAOC, the EU Joint Research Council, ICMC, the CS Action Committee, Oxfam, ICMPD, IDC, and Global Changemakers.

### *Participation at the Summit*

All Youth Forum participants were invited to take part in all of the GFMD Summit and activities, including as speakers, facilitators, and presenters. Almost all roundtables and side events (16)

had one or more youth speakers as part of the panel discussions, as well as several youth interventions on the floor and in the chat.

Moreover, young people's leadership was also showcased and amplified through the first edition of the Migration Youth Leadership and Innovation Award, held during the GFMD Summit in partnership with IOM, UNICEF, the Swiss Confederation and the United Arab Emirates (see below for more details).

To young people, the GFMD demonstrated again its importance as a crucial space where there can be an open dialogue between different stakeholders. Youth, through MGCY, also announced they will proceed to request the formalization of youth participation at the GFMD, not as another mechanism, but as a crosscutting presence in all mechanisms - governments, civil society, mayors, and business. Young people also advocated for the continued centrality of the GFMD in the current migration space and its ongoing role as an open space for dialogue and cooperation.

# The 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit

## Overview & Design

The 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit took place online – for the first time ever - between 18 – 26 January 2021, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The decision to hold the GFMD Summit online was taken in late November, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and comprehensive plans for the Summit were presented to the third meeting of the Friends of the Forum in early December.

The decision to host the Summit online presented a number of logistical issues which needed to be addressed in the Summit design.

First, the diversity of the GFMD community meant that time-zones stretching from Australasia and the Pacific through to the west coast of the Americas needed to be accounted for. In consultation with the Advisory Group, the Chair decided to focus key GFMD Summit activities – for example, the Roundtables – in a narrow two-hour band designated ‘prime time’, when the largest possible cross-section of stakeholders could reasonably be expected to be online.

This enabled, in prime-time sessions, a more truly global discussion to take place than would otherwise have been possible had, for example, sessions been replicated twice or three times through the day. Around these prime-time sessions, a more localised approach was implemented, with side events and regionally relevant events taking place at times that were consistent with their target audience.

Time constraints also meant that the Summit had to be extended from five days to seven, to ensure that all sessions that needed to take place in prime time could do so. This expanded the number of side events that were possible, so all those who requested a slot in which to organise a side event were granted one.

Second, the Chair also decided that it was important that online infrastructure be developed to bring together all aspects of the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit in one place. To that end, a single platform – [gfmduae.org](http://gfmduae.org) – was developed, hosting online registration, recordings of the Opening Ceremony, relevant background documents, and links to register for individual sessions. The aim was to develop a single, integrated user-journey that took participants from Summit registration through to the start of each event.

Online registration for the Summit was made available in early December and the full user experience of the online Summit agenda was opened to participants a few days before the

start of the Summit. Once participants were able to access the full online Summit agenda, they were invited to register for specific Summit events. Registration for an event would trigger an email and calendar invite being sent for that specific event to the participant's email, and each participant further received an individually tailored email each morning reminding them of the events taking place that day for which they had registered.

The infrastructure developed for the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit has been donated by the UAE Chair to the GFMD and is available for future chairs to re-brand and use, under circumstances where an in-person Summit is not possible. The website continues to be hosted online and video recordings of select sessions are available to registered participants.

The UAE also instituted a number of innovations / reforms in terms of programmatic Summit design, which were first outlined in the Vision document. First, as discussed above, Observers and participants from the three Mechanisms were invited to participate in all aspects of the Summit. Second, the Chair decided to replace Common Space with Open Space, to reflect the participation of all stakeholders and the centrality of partnerships to the chairmanship. Third, each of the Mechanisms were encouraged to organise Networking Sessions, to help strengthen links between their participants and those from government and encourage a frank exchange of views. Finally, the Opening Ceremony was pre-recorded and made available on the Summit website on the first day of the Summit.

## Opening Ceremony

Keynote speeches at the Opening Ceremony focused on the importance of partnerships in reviving economic development in the aftermath of a pandemic that has seen the worldwide movement of people plummet by up to 50 percent. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, UAE Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation and GFMD 2020 Chair, opened the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit with a speech that urged the world to come together as one community to tackle urgent priorities.

He said, "Recovering from this pandemic will take a global effort in which we all have a part to play. We must find ways to partner together: government with business and civil society, national administrations with local administrations. Migrants, too, must be empowered to play their role. So many have the skills and the knowledge to help build up, once more, their communities, if they are given the opportunity to do so. I hope that we will all, as a global community, take this opportunity to come together and look for ways to transform the future through innovation and cooperation."

In particular, the Minister noted that the UAE's vaccination programme – which has already delivered over 1.8 million vaccinations – is available, at no cost, to residents and citizens alike and called on other countries to follow suit in ensuring free vaccination access to migrants.

Luis Gallegos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador, the 2019 chair of the GFMD, reminded delegates of the challenges faced by governments over the previous twelve months and the human toll of the pandemic. “The force and impact of COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact, of enormous intensity and cost to human lives. Maintaining safe, regular and orderly migration in the face of this has not been an easy task.”

Minister Al Hamli's call to make vaccinations available to migrants was echoed by other speakers in the Opening Ceremony, including the Director General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), António Vitorino, who appealed to countries to intensify efforts to make vaccinations available to migrants.

In his speech, Mr Vitorino noted that many governments made significant policy changes over 2020 to accommodate the needs of migrants in the face of the pandemic, including adjusting immigration procedures and finding alternatives to the detention of migrants. But he warned that the pandemic will have long-lasting consequences.

“Recovery”, said Mr Vitorino, “will require ingenuity, openness and the capacity to innovate. We need to devise new policies and measures to ensure global mobility and health and safety are strongly coupled together, while ensuring that no country, and no individuals, are locked out of international travel systems”.

The Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD), Ángel Gurría, noted that although global growth is expected to rise by 4.2% in 2021 and by 3.7% in 2022, the recovery will be only partial from the steep recession of 2021, and that global mobility will not return to previous levels for some time, due to weaker labour demand, travel restrictions and increased remote working.

But, said Mr Gurría, “we must seize the opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to change our approach to the global challenge of international migration. We need a broad, coherent and comprehensive approach. We need an international migration strategy that can address an array of complex challenges from pre-departure to return migration”.

Ylva Johansson, the EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, promised Europe's financial support to the world to address people smuggling and support training programmes, while expanding migration opportunities to Europe, including to low and medium skilled workers.

Outlining details of a €38 billion European COVID-19 recovery package, as well as €8 billion for migration management and asylum, Ms. Johansson said, “It is my personal mission to build close, strong and mutually-beneficial partnerships. With the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum, we have the tools to build lasting partnerships to manage migration.”

Reflecting the UAE’s focus on regional perspectives, Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organisation of American States, also addressed the opening ceremony. Mr Almagro noted efforts to deal with the challenges of displaced people in Latin America resulting from the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis. “Addressing the future of human mobility in the Americas and the rest of the world cannot be solved by a single state”, he said. “This extraordinary endeavour requires a combination of regional and national responses, following the principles of solidarity, shared responsibility and cooperation.”

These speakers were joined in the opening ceremony by Carola Gunnarsson, Lord Mayor of Sala, representing local government, Roberto Suárez Santos, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers, representing business, and Stella Opoku-Owusu, Deputy Director of the African Foundation for Development, representing civil society.

### Youth Leadership and Innovation Award

“Youth-led solutions to complex migration problems” was the launch event of the inaugural Youth Leadership and Innovation Award hosted by UNMGCY, IOM, and UNICEF, in partnership with the Swiss Confederation and the United Arab Emirates. The event served as a key step in growing the support for youth-led action on migration issues through capacity building, financing, and networking opportunities.

The event began with remarks from Ms. Camila Pinto, Youth Forum Chair, H.E. Abdulla Ali Al Nuaimi, representing United Arab Emirates’ GFMD Chair, and Mr. Conradin Rasi, Head of the Forced Displacement and Migration Unit, Swiss Confederation, who all highlighted the key role of youth as stakeholders in the discussion on migration. The judging panel had representatives from the UAE, Switzerland, UNICEF’s Chief for Migration and Displacement, IOM’s Director of Policy Hub, the Vice-Mayor of Sousse, Microsoft, and UNMGCY.

The Award finalists were leaders of nine initiatives selected out of 350 applications, with 3 in each category: Skilling Migrants for Employment, Shaping Narratives on Migration, and Leveraging Technologies for Migrants. All selected initiatives were already being implemented, able to demonstrate a promising track record of impact, and demonstrate great potential for scaling and / or replicating. All finalists participated in workshops from Oxfam, UNAOC, and MIT-Lab, as well as one-on-one mentoring, leading to the Award Ceremony from partners including UNICEF, IOM, GIZ, IDC, PUF, Global Changemakers, Storius Limited.

The finalists pitched their initiatives, and the winners were: El Barometro de Xenophobia (Colombia), Global Voice for Autism (Middle East), and Association for the Integration of Women (Italy) which won seed funding for their initiatives of \$15,000, \$10,000, and \$8,000 USD, respectively.

The last interactive panel featured interventions from young people, the Government of Canada, ICMC, and UNICEF, among others, who discussed concrete proposals on how young people promote changes on the grassroots level and on youth as key partners of multi-stakeholder initiatives.

## Summit Roundtables

The following reports on Roundtables were submitted by their respective Summit Rapporteurs at the request of the 2020 Chair and are included here in response.

### Roundtable 1: The Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes

Roundtable 1 focused on the *Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes and Future of Work*. Under the co-chairmanship of Zimbabwe and Egypt, Roundtable discussions focused on four thematic areas. A broad range of experiences were highlighted among different governments and other stakeholders.

*The first theme concerned human-centred approaches to addressing future of work challenges and opportunities for labour migration:*

Participants shared examples of approaches used at local, national and regional levels according to 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' frameworks.

It was noted that there are generally very large wage gaps between foreign and national workers. Many migrant workers are usually indebted, in some cases due to their having to pay high recruitment fees and other costs. They lack job security, often due to their presence in the informal economy or in temporary work, and many live in cramped housing. Conditions have worsened due to the pandemic, with high exposure rates for migrant workers. Hundreds of thousands of migrant workers have had to return home with neither full compensation for their previous work, nor secure employment back home. There have been many examples of reduced wages, random dismissals and breach of contracts.

Although migration control is based on state sovereignty, a rights-based approach involves several pillars, which are often missing in policies: the overall protection of the rights of migrants; counteracting discrimination and xenophobia; gender equality; equal pay for equal work; recognition of rights in the workplace; freedom of association and the right to join labour unions; and access to social protection. Governments can be party to or act in the spirit of ILO and UN conventions relating to the rights of migrant workers. Such international legal norms provide minimum standards and guidance for the formulation and implementation of labour migration policies, e.g. on recruitment fees and costs. There are recent laws adopted in the Middle East which can be linked to these conventions, even though the conventions themselves are not ratified by those governments.

To improve the current situation, source country governments could provide more information about migrant rights before departure, and their Embassies could assist migrants in the countries of destination. Destination countries could involve various stakeholders and partners in the monitoring of migrants' employment conditions. In this regard, governments should implement the 2030 Agenda, especially goal 8 on decent work for all, which interrelates with other relevant SDGs.

From a business perspective, well-managed migration systems are becoming increasingly important. They need to provide clarity; transparency; and consistency. They should enable businesses to work within the frameworks of predictability, stability and flexibility.

Looking beyond the pandemic, there was some discussion about the future of work. While digitalization is overall a positive development, it also presents a number of risks. Advances in technology are sometimes used to outsource work to countries with less protection. Another aspect of digitalization is the gig economy, which entails less protection and job security, or the absence of insurance. The digital divide could be counteracted by empowering migrants. There is a need for training and skills to use digital tools, and the overall transfer of technology from developed to developing countries.

Several other lessons learned were shared. For instance, more investments in securing decent work and social protection can level the playing field across businesses and facilitate the formalization of informal labour markets. Governments can do more to ensure fair recruitment practices. More focus is needed on the reintegration of migrant workers upon return. One example mentioned was the common social stigma faced by domestic workers. This makes it hard for them to work locally after return, or to work in other jobs and industries. Both countries of origin and countries of destination should recognize this profession. Another aspect of return is that the social protection systems in developing countries such as Nepal are under a lot of stress. It is therefore important to consider reintegration from the perspective of overall labour market policies for all workers. Investments in agriculture, for example, could benefit both migrants and returnees.



*The second theme focused on data and migration governance:*

Roundtable discussions concerned the significant gaps in available data and analytical tools, and the priority focus areas for policymakers. Those areas related to the role of dedicated research in policy formulation, and how standardized data collection and surveys can help policymakers to meet both the challenges of the pandemic and better anticipate future labour migration needs. Tools are available to support governments in this regard, such as the methods and guidance developed by the intergovernmental International Conference on Labour Statisticians (ICLS).

The discussions revealed a need for improved interagency coordination on the issue of data. There is also a need for advances in access to data and data sharing. Accuracy, consistency and reliability are all important aspects of data in policymaking. Data gaps were identified concerning women and youth as well as forecasting methods. Training and skills development could be used in several developing countries in understanding labour shortages and skills gaps. This could help ensuring better job matching in recruitment.

Partnerships are also needed in terms of data collection and principles for data sharing, including improved skills and training programmes, e.g. across African countries. Ministries of labour, foreign affairs and internal affairs as well as development planning could cooperate in this regard.

In addition, it was pointed out that proper research based on accurate data is increasingly needed for policymaking, e.g. regarding victims of trafficking. Improved data needs to be used in planning of policies and in evaluations. The standardization of surveys can also provide insights to policymakers, e.g. on domestic workers. Such surveys could also be used for developing future policy measures. With an improved evidence-base, policymakers will be able to identify the specific needs of people in a development context.

*The third theme focused on regular migration pathways, skills and job matching:*

A key issue discussed by the Roundtable was how to upskill migrants to enable them to access job opportunities abroad, and upon return back home. It was noted that the private sector plays an important role here. Moldovan and Filipino returnees in the wake of the pandemic were mentioned as examples of good practice. Although they were not entitled to unemployment benefits as they had worked abroad, the Moldovan government made specific provisions for them to be covered. The Filipino government has also stepped up its support to returning migrant workers in order to improve reintegration.

It was also noted that migrants might need regular pathways at different points in their careers. Improved policy coherence could be achieved through linking migration policy to education, employment and labour market policies. Training can also be scaled-up through cooperation with local authorities and municipalities. Governments could also tailor their admission and visa schemes to meet present and future needs and challenges. One case mentioned involved Russia, which, like most other countries, was addressing the consequences of the pandemic. There had been a high demand for low skilled migrant labour, e.g. in delivery services. Now that a large share of them have left, many employers are having a hard time finding staff. This also shows that policies need to be developed in view of labour market complementarities, adjusting them to the role of migrants in the overall economy.

*The fourth theme concerned partnerships, international and bilateral cooperation for improved labour migration governance:*

Lessons were shared regarding partnerships and cooperation to anticipate and address future labour market demands.

It was noted that international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships are more efficient than unilateral action. Partnerships can strengthen the application of international treaties and frameworks such as the Global Compact for Migration. The GFMD should continue to act as an open platform for dialogue, bringing together various stakeholders. Such frameworks can encourage rights-based bilateral and multilateral agreements that protect migrants' rights. Negotiations around such agreements could involve social dialogue with employers and labour unions with a view to ensuring skills-matching, labour inspections and migrants' access to justice.

With regards to a whole of society approach, the importance of citizen engagement was highlighted together with the issue of gender equality. Youth issues and the role of youth organizations were also raised, as well as the importance of including other stakeholders such as businesses and trade unions. Partnerships could address reskilling, rebuilding capabilities, and recrafting protective policies. In addition, they could be used to better manage the expectations of industry stakeholders.

It is also important to involve cities, municipalities and sub-national regions in such dialogue. Local administrations often have an advantage in understanding migrants and facilitating their daily lives by planning and implementing policies. Cities of origin and destination are well placed to cooperate in finding solutions. Both parties should pay attention to reintegration and reskilling with a particular focus on women. An example is a city-to-city project in the Mediterranean region. Two other examples include Indonesia, which works with civil society, businesses, unions and migrant associations in both source and destination countries to

protect the vulnerable; and Nepal, where the local government level is reaching out to migrant workers on data, information and skills needs.

Finally, it was suggested that when governments develop bilateral labour agreements, they could involve both migrant associations, unions and employers, cities and regions to achieve more comprehensive packages.

## Roundtable 2: Skilling Migrants for Employment

### *Background Paper*

The Background Paper of Roundtable 2 developed in a highly participatory environment with IOM as the pen holder, ably supported by the co-Chairs, the Philippines and United Kingdom, with Botswana acting as rapporteur. Contributions to the Background Paper came from the Governments of Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Botswana, Bangladesh, Belgium, Germany, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela, as well as civil society organisations including youth organisations, the Business Mechanism, Mayors Mechanism and partners such as ICBD, ILO, IOE, IUTC UNCTAD, FAO, OECD.

The purpose of the Background Paper was to outline concepts for the discussion in the roundtable, falling into two main parts;

1. *Presentation of the issues: skills, labour migration, and the labour mobility nexus, including an overview of the policy debate on skilled migrant work:*

The paper started with the overview of the situation: the acute needs of the labour markets of developed states and the need for effective regulations over supply to ensure productive migration. The paper acknowledges the situation created by COVID-19, whereby unemployment, labour market imbalances, and restrictions on mobility reign supreme. The paper was quick to point out that the situation created by the pandemic demonstrated the high inter-dependence of states on labour migration and the importance of mobility in filling labour market gaps and ensuring development. The paper extensively discusses the role of governments and particularly recognises the role played by local governments. It further acknowledges the need for skills at all levels, as was demonstrated by the COVID-19 crisis. The paper includes discussion on the link between skills with modern trends of digitisation, automation, increasing competition for skills and talents, and the acute need for action to address climate change. Finally, it addressed the relevance of the GCM, the need for partnerships on skills and mobility, training and recognition between governments including local governments, and multilateral and multi-stakeholder approaches.

## 2. *Summary of findings, issues and priorities arising from GFMD consultations:*

The second part of the paper summarised the outcomes of GFMD consultations, underlining the following priorities: the importance of mapping and analysing required skills; labour market needs and dynamics; linking educational training with labour market needs and ensuring policy coherence; developing data collection and infrastructure and putting them to effective use; setting up skills, up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities; developing skills at all levels; establishing skills categorisation and recognition systems and cooperation; ensuring multi-stakeholder approaches; developing capacity, strengthening relations and deepening collaboration among all the stakeholders

A significant part of the paper is dedicated to a list of best practices and approaches, cooperation modalities and tools that have been compiled in the annex of the paper.

The Summit Roundtable was divided into two panels:

*Panel 1: Skilling migrants for employment to 'build back better' at the time of – and post – COVID-19:*

This panel had the following guiding questions;

1. What are the positive experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships on skilling migrants for employment; what are the challenges experienced by different stakeholders?
2. How do multi-stakeholder partnerships help overcome existing challenges in matching labour demand and supply, as seen in economic recovery more effectively?
3. Are there new actors who should be included and new approaches that should be considered?

The following points emerged from this discussion:

- It is now clear that the impact of COVID-19 on labour mobility leads to constraints on essentials services and basic skills shortages. Business supply chains dry up, and migrant workers face difficulties accessing job opportunities and find themselves trapped in countries of destination without work opportunities. Belgium highlighted an approach to tackling this problem: they held training sessions on entrepreneurship for migrants who found themselves without jobs. In the future, it was suggested that countries should have more robust skills frameworks to recognise and assess skills and identify essential workers who will need to be prioritised in accessing the labour market.

- The discussion also suggested that in order to recover from the pandemic's economic downturn, there is a need to make sure that companies can easily access skills at all levels.
- It was highlighted that the dignity and human rights of migrants are important and should be at the centre of the discussion and that, within this context, labour market needs and existing skills shortages should be a focus of stakeholder cooperation.
- Skills mapping: the discussants urged better alignment and called for Governments policies not to be too rigid. Employers should be allowed to employ the best workers in the market without being impeded by policies.
- Lack of legal pathways: There are limited legal pathways for less-skilled workers. This is a cause for concern because there remains a demand for less-skilled employees in destination countries. It is important to acknowledge that essential skills are not only higher skills. The pandemic has taught us that all skills are important: doctors, care workers, domestic workers, and teachers.
- Recruitment of highly skilled workers through legal pathways was mentioned, but it should be noted that there was need for further discussion and understanding of the requirements of these employees' families.
- It was also highlighted that mobility restrictions, although an excellent tool in slowing down the spread of diseases, also work against the skilling of migrants, so more effort should be put into the vaccination of all, including migrants.
- The discussion also highlighted that there is a problem with the recognition of qualifications and the provision of lifelong education for migrants, which leads to employers undervaluing, under-compensating migrants in destination countries. More formalisation and regularisation are needed, and a focus on skills matching and skills partnerships should be part of bilateral negotiations.
- The example of the Germany-Philippines mobility partnership was given: in this agreement, nurses from the Philippines get training in Germany and given the right to work there; safeguards against discrimination are included in the agreement, as well as monitoring tools which encompass a whole-of-government approach. As part of the agreement they have full rights, and they are allowed to move with their families.

*Panel II: A holistic approach to skills-based mobility and migration*

In this panel discussion, the following issues emerged:

- Funding: it is rare for international funders to provide funding directly to cities, as opposed to national governments; but in the city of Freetown sanitation project, it was commendable that the IOM and the EU funded the city directly, resulting in a highly successful project. The project expanded the number of families with access to sanitation from only 8000 families in 2018 to 30,000 families by 2020.
- Skills recognition featured prominently in the discussion. The discussants underlined the importance of migrant skills and qualifications being recognised both in the country of origin and country of destination.
- Lifelong learning was highlighted as one of the ways migrants can continue to be skilled and competitive.
- The discussion also focused on the importance of technical or hard skills, and the increasing centrality and demand by employers for soft skills. Soft skills contribute to fostering successful entrepreneurial ventures and promoting innovative solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges. They are as important as technical skills, and they need to be mainstreamed in the education system.
- To guard against skills mismatches, the discussion highlighted the importance of close cooperation between governments and academicians to look at future labour market needs, what skills will be obsolete in the future, and which ones will be needed.
- Lessons were learned from the Association for the Integration of Women in Modena, which provides resources to migrant women living in Modena, helping them to build the necessary trust between stakeholders that can lead to the success and sustainability of labour migration programmes.

In conclusion, the Roundtable on the skilling of migrants for employment is highly relevant, especially when the world is looking to recover from an economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. To improve the skilling of migrants for employment the following should be considered: data must become transferable with labour market information integration systems established; there should be more coordination and cooperation at a regional and global level; skills and qualification recognition between origin and destination countries must be intensified, and better mapping and understanding of skills and labour gaps at all levels is very much needed.

### Roundtable 3: Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants

We live in the age of information. And as the expression goes: information is power! But is information and the technology that transmits it automatically empowering for those who use it? Is access to information and technology directly empowering, or is more required?

This question was at the heart of Roundtable 3 *Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants*, co-Chaired by H.E. Sarah Lou Arriola, Undersecretary for Migrant Workers' Affairs from Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines and by H.E. Peter Tum, Principal Secretary from the State Department for Labour, Kenya.

The Roundtable was attended by close to 200 participants, included around 20 spoken interventions and prompted countless written comments in the chatbox from all constituencies, ranging from governments to youth, business, local authorities, civil society and international organizations.

In their opening remarks the co-Chairs from the Philippines and Kenya sketched a picture of the potential of technology for improving migration governance and the benefits for migrants, and at the same time cautioned about the risks and challenges involved. The co-Chair from the Philippines showcased how social media has been a lever for more effective and inclusive migration governance in the Philippines. It has enhanced outreach for information and assistance, which proved particularly critical during the first wave of the pandemic, as many overseas Filipino workers struggled and repatriations had to be organized. Social media has amplified the voice of migrants abroad in such a way that their absentee voting led to significant changes in migration law and budgets. In turn, the co-chair from Kenya noted that technology alone will not lead to empowerment but considerable challenges need to be tackled, such as disparities in access, privacy issues, tech literacy and misuse for illicit purposes. Mobile money transfer being a case in point.

In his scene-setting remarks, the Thematic Lead of the Roundtable, Prof. Gibril Faal picked up from the co-Chairs when he affirmed that technology holds great promise for migration and migrants. However, technology is neither neutral nor necessarily a good thing, as it can be used for good and bad in migration. He called on all of us to turn potentiality into reality and treat technology as a tool that requires checks and balances, rather than a panacea.

Given the doubled-edged nature of technology, governments should purposefully commit to the principle of empowering migrants through technology-based migration governance as a virtue in itself. Leveraging technology to empower migrants is predicated on developing policy and practice that expands and enhances actual and potential benefits for migrants.

Such areas for empowerment include:

- Optimizing information and data sharing and processing
- Improving trust, accessibility and usage of migration-related tech platforms and services
- Reducing the cost of migrant recruitment, immigration, visa and permit procedures
- Reducing the cost of remittances and increasing financial inclusion
- Innovations in enhancing migrant livelihoods
- Improving migrant access to welfare services
- Protecting and supporting undocumented and vulnerable migrants

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the urgency and critical relevance of digitization for the achievement of the SDGs in general and of technology-based solutions in order to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration in line with SDG 10.7 and enhance the development contributions of migrants.

The two keynote speakers expanded on this by illustrating two critical areas for migrant empowerment through technology: equitable service delivery on the one hand and digitally enhanced livelihoods on the other hand.

Mr. Ausamah Alabsi, Founder and Principal of Mind Map Consultants in Bahrain spoke self-critically about the challenges the newly introduced and highly promising FlexiPermit, a sponsorless visa for self-employment, had to withstand in the pandemic, and how the crisis spurred its development into a truly empowering instrument owing to technology. COVID-19 made these permit owners more vulnerable to economic shock and required cash subsidies to be distributed by the state by means of a newly introduced mobile wallet, in order to ensure that they reach all. While this is certainly a problem-solving use of technology, Mr. Alabsi held the view that this is not empowering in itself. To make FlexiPermit holders more resilient and empowering them to make independent choices about their livelihood, an app – similar to Uber – is being developed in partnership with a telecoms company and IOM, which connects potential employers with flexi-permit workers and includes standard contracts, payment functions, a mobile wallet and even a panic button.

Ms. Sabine Mensah, Manager of the UN Capital Development Fund's Regional Digital Hub for West and Central Africa spoke about the enormous potential of digital technology to disrupt the current remittances ecosystem and how remittances can act as a gateway for financial empowerment. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the deficiencies of the traditional remittances market. The full potential of the impact of remittances on sustainable development is far from being realized, due to high transfer costs, a large proportion of informal transfers, and the fact that migrants and their families are underserved with remittance-linked finance products. However, digital solutions alone will not bring about the



desired change without supporting measures that ensure the uptake of such solutions. On the one hand, the regulatory and policy environments constitute considerable bottlenecks and need to be adjusted by striking a delicate balance between conducive conditions and risk considerations. On the other hand, financial literacy and awareness are key. As long as consumers are not comfortable and familiar with new technologies, no innovation will be successful – no matter how promising.

In the ensuing discussion, governments and stakeholders shared a plethora of experiences with technology-based policies and practices in the area of migration, contributing to the empowerment of migrants.

For migration governance in general, such practices include:

- Awareness-raising and public information campaigns about rights, pre-departure and post-arrival information, cultural customs and to counter xenophobia, to name a few.
- The digitization of public services and the provision of accessible information on these services in various languages. Under the impression of COVID-19, particularly visa processing and extension, emergency assistance, disaster relief, social protection and vaccination programs were mentioned.
- The potential of digital technology-based solutions in the area of labor migration for migrant worker documentation, verification and skills recognition to enable migrants' better access to employment opportunities, such as the electronic skills passport recently introduced by the Government of Sri Lanka.
- In the same vein, the importance of digital skills development platforms for migrant youth, such as the UNICEF-supported Youth Agency Marketplace (YOMA), that enables e-learning and e-earning through a blockchain-based token system.
- Recruitment platforms to enhance transparency of recruitment processes and enable informed decisions by migrant workers.
- Coherent e-governance through enhanced interoperability of functions and services provided by different government ministries.

In the area of financial inclusion, numerous tech-based innovations were discussed:

- The importance of bringing digital financial services to un- or underserved migrants, to establish digital wage payment solutions, to modernize the remittances transfer market and drive the development of remittance-linked finance products.
- Leverage remittances as an entry point for digital livelihood options, such as using artificial intelligence for skills identification, development and matching in partnership with the private sector, as tested in Bangladesh by UNDP
- The establishment of diaspora bonds, diaspora trust funds, municipal bonds and SME funds to leverage diaspora savings for investment in their countries of origin.

The discussants also dealt with the risks and challenges of digital solutions, confirming Gibril Faal's caution at the outset that the potentiality of technology can only be translated into reality if disparities in access and usage are overcome. For the purpose of leaving no one behind in the digital age, any promotion of digital solutions to be truly empowering for migrants must be accompanied:

- By the expansion of internet access and smart phone usage.
- By technological and financial literacy and education.
- By gender-responsive measures to address gender disparities in trust and usage of digital tools.
- By the introduction of new approaches to identification, such as digital IDs and voice recognition for apps, in order to reach the undocumented.
- By improving data on migration in general and remittances in particular
- By partnering with the private sector to bring results to scale.
- And finally, by designing services and products with the beneficiary or customer in mind, the migrant.

In conclusion, this roundtable could not have been timelier in the current exceptional context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has catapulted the promise of technology and digitization into the center of attention. The onus is on all of us to bridge the digital divide for all migrants, transform the potential of technology into a truly empowering vehicle for migrants and their families to shape prosperous livelihoods and fully unlock the development contributions of migrants in the achievement of the SDGs.

#### Roundtable 4: Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection

Roundtable 4 was co-Chaired by Mexico and Morocco, with John Bingham holding the pen on the Background Paper and facilitating much of the discussion. The Roundtable saw over 200 participants attend online, including representatives from Member States, international organizations and each of the GFMD mechanisms, as well as youth representatives. The broad range of interventions made for a pointed, interesting discussion.

The Roundtable began with participants looking primarily at migrant protection through the lens of COVID-affected reality, and the impact COVID-19 has had on migrants generally, both temporary and permanent. As participants moved through the Roundtable session, they recognized that the pandemic has exacerbated existing gaps in migrant protection and any efforts to address these gaps needed to be systemic, structural and long-term if they are to be truly successful.

Two general observations are pertinent in advance of outlining the key themes of the Roundtable discussion:

- The first is something that was either stated explicitly or implied in every intervention made, and every contribution to the background paper – that is, that any discussion of migrant protection must start with an appreciation of the migrant’s experience itself. Participants heard that migrants can be far from their country of origin, sometimes separated from family, possibly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, or among the first to lose their source of livelihood in times of emergency. Consideration of a migrant’s experience must be at the centre of any assessment of protection needs, and gaps, and solutions to fill those gaps.
- The second observation is related –accurate, robust data to inform our consideration of protections and gaps is very much needed. Without that, it’s hard to imagine how we can have a clear picture of protections that exist in the first place, let alone gaps in protections, and ways we can fill them. Data that is accurate and reliable, and disaggregated in a meaningful way, can help connect citizens working outside their country of origin with support from their government, as was the case with Indonesia’s digital platform for Indonesian nationals, or target policy and program responses, one of the key objectives in Switzerland’s cross-sectoral partnerships.

With those observations in mind, the Roundtable discussion fell into three parts:

- Firstly, identifying the gaps in migrant protection against the backdrop of the pandemic;
- Secondly, consideration of the ways those gaps are being addressed, or could be addressed; and
- Finally, a discussion on how these practices and partnerships could have value for recovery from the pandemic, and sustainable development in the longer term

### *Gaps*

While the gaps identified were many and various, underlying all of them was a common concern: that migrants have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and that fundamental inequities in their ability to access basic services, seek meaningful employment and integrate have been exacerbated throughout 2020 and into 2021. On the other hand, Roundtable speakers widely recognized that despite this inequity, migrant workers contribute significantly to the communities they live in, not least as frontline workers in sectors that have emerged as critical during the pandemic – these sectors include health care, supply chains and so on. They are key to continuity of service and key to recovery.

There were concerns that migrant access to health care is irregular and inadequate, employment opportunities are fewer, and social security is often unavailable or difficult to access. Similarly, access to justice systems and reparation mechanisms are poor. Low skilled and domestic workers and those who are undocumented have often fared the worse because they generally lacked protections from the outset - labour agreements can be difficult to negotiate for that sector. In New York, death and infection rates are higher in immigrant communities and while undocumented workers were more likely to suffer job losses, ironically, they often work in the critical sectors. It was clear that women comprise the majority of the vulnerable, and violence against women has been exacerbated at this time.

Some interesting examples of the protections some states are putting in place to reduce negative impacts were put forward. At the macro level, this included legislative frameworks for negotiating bilateral agreements for the protection of citizens working abroad; the relaxation of visa requirements to ensure those working in critical sectors could continue working; and at the grass roots level, partnerships with civil society, foundations, philanthropic partners etc to provide emergency relief, food assistance, multilingual health messaging, housing and so on.

There was discussion on the risks migrants face when they become isolated. They are more likely to fall prey to people smugglers and human traffickers who raise expectations of regularization.

### *Addressing Gaps*

In considering how to address gaps, there were a couple of common themes:

Firstly, many stressed that approaches should not only be guided by existing policy and national legislation, but also by fundamental principles of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and bilateral cooperation, and the principles contained in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Secondly, there is a real need for trust and the removing of barriers, across all levels of government, to finding the solutions and reducing the vulnerability of migrants by increasing opportunities for access to education, jobs, justice and services.

Roundtable participants heard of many efforts being taken, or suggestions for what should be done. These included:

- Providing equitable access to healthcare and social services without discrimination, including through some vital partnerships:

- In Morocco, a partnership was set up with the Doctors Guild specifically to facilitate migrant access to GP consultations;
- In Mexico, institutional support was provided to refer asylum seekers to health centres
- Alianza Americas recommended:
  - The establishment of firewalls to ensure access to services without fear of being subject to migration control policies; and
  - The highlighting of the role of local authorities and allowing migrants access to the services that they offer;
- On protecting migrant workers:
  - In the Philippines, cooperation with responsible employers committed to ensuring timely and effective protections for migrant workers;
- On skills development and recognition:
  - In Portugal, entrepreneurship courses were provided to enhance migrants' employability
  - In Mexico, asylum seekers with healthcare qualifications were referred to health authorities to help with the national COVID effort

It was clear that there was a lot of excellent work being undertaken in many countries to ease the difficulties migrants faced during this pandemic, but that change needed to be structural if we were going to be truly successful at removing the protection gaps.

### *The Longer-Term Approach*

The third session took participants into recovery, which was viewed as being part of a longer-term approach which needs to be sustainable, structured, systemic. It needed to look beyond the pandemic.

Many participants argued that migrants have to be central to any decision-making process regarding their welfare - and that trust and empowerment are key. Often preventing this was xenophobia and discrimination which saw migrants as threats.

Narratives have to be changed and for many social cohesion and the removal of racism and xenophobia are paramount. There has to be a more positive and amplified narrative around the benefits of migration and the contribution of migrants. Referring back to the first of the two opening observations, and as one youth delegate aptly put it: one way to change the narrative is to 'put migrants at the forefront of being agents of their own change', including by encouraging migrant youth to share their stories on social media, as his organization had. The Mayors Mechanism, the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, and the It

Takes a Community campaign were seen as excellent opportunities to assist with recovery and sustainability efforts.

Many argued that sustainability rests on enhancing sources of robust, reliable data because only through this could recovery be targeted. Switzerland, for example, is working with IOM on its migration data portal, a central repository of migration-related data collected from across the UN system. Digital platforms are seen as being able to assist in linking migrants to government, service sectors and the job market. However, language is often a barrier to full access to services and justice and this has to be addressed in order to ensure equitable opportunities.

### *Conclusions*

Efforts to identify gaps in protection are not new but have been given new significance in light of the pandemic and it is worth questioning if this discussion should be made available to the Working Group on COVID-19 as something they can use as they undertake their work

In conclusion, this is a conversation that must continue. It is also broad-reaching: in the words of the thematic expert, this is not the only Roundtable addressing gaps in migrant protection – all six of them are. What was discussed only highlighted gaps that were already in place but if we are going to truly address them, this issue needs to be looked at in more detail in the longer term.

### Roundtable 5: Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration

It has been some time since approaches to address irregular migration were discussed as a specific issue within the GFMD. Participants in Roundtable 5, co-chaired by Spain and Venezuela, agreed that irregular migration is indeed a complicated issue to approach in a multilateral setting. There are clearly strongly held differing views, and debate is often polarized. Interests and concerns may vary between countries of origin, countries of transit, countries of destination and other stakeholders.

There was nevertheless consensus that irregular migration is a global phenomenon that must be dealt with. It goes beyond the question of irregular movement as such, but rather affects - directly or indirectly - all aspects of the challenges of contemporary migration and the building up of sensible and sensitive narratives.

Irregular Migration is not safe, not orderly and (by definition) not regular, and therefore should be addressed, in line with the principles and objectives stated in the GCM. It is therefore all the more important to discuss it, here and now.

The GFMD has great value added as a forum where constructive debate on contentious issues can take place, and common ground can be sought.

In this context, there was wide agreement that the discussion is made more difficult by the lack of reliable data and trustworthy information—needed by both policymakers and by migrants themselves to make good decisions.

As a starting point, there was wide agreement that sound approaches to irregular migration must balance humanitarian responses and respect for human rights, alongside migration management and respect for the rule of law. Poor outcomes result from an imbalance among all these elements.

In many cases, the global COVID-19 pandemic seems only to have aggravated such imbalances, and more research is needed to better understand these relationships.

It is important to understand the causes and mechanisms of irregular migration in order to identify solutions.

Solutions to some of the problems associated with irregular migration that were discussed at the roundtable included:

- confronting root causes, by tackling international conflict and promoting job creation and economic development in countries of origin, especially for youth
- better information provided to migrants prior to departure, such as through predeparture programs
- countering human trafficking and other forms of exploitation of migrants
- regularization of irregular migrants (including making some of the temporary regularizations implemented during the pandemic permanent), as a way to ensuring equal rights and equal access to justice and services
- effective border management and asylum systems, including effective and dignified return policies for those not allowed to stay
- increased regular pathways for legal migration; for work, study, family unification and humanitarian purposes (including resettlement). This also includes regional zones of free movement

In the Roundtable, special emphasis was laid on the relationship between increased opportunities for regular migration, and the prevalence of irregular migration. There clearly are links between the two, although the link is not straightforward. Often, irregular migration

is encouraged by migration systems and procedures (like visa applications, possibilities for regularization or family unification) that are complex, slow, unclear and expensive.

Migration policies should therefore be integral and inclusive in nature, addressing legal pathways and solutions to irregular migration challenges in a coherent and comprehensive manner, thus broadening the narrative.

In contrast, failure to have efficient regular channels impose penalties on businesses, economies and societies, as well as on the migrants and their families themselves, who may bear the brunt of criminalization.

In this context, it was noted that while there may be illegal border crossings and illegal stays, there is no such thing as illegal people. Words do matter.

At the same time, the return of irregular migrants who after due process have been found to have no legal right to remain in a country should be humane, predictable, fair and supported with reintegration assistance. Returns should be accomplished effectively, in cooperation with the authorities in countries of origin (while of course respecting the privacy of the individual returning).

In conclusion, the Roundtable underlined that policies and programs to address irregular migration should be approached in a spirit of cooperation and consideration for the needs of individuals. Strong international cooperation partnerships between countries of origin, transit and destination are key, taking account of the interests and concerns of all parties. We need both solidarity and responsibility. Only in a spirit of international cooperation can real and balanced progress be achieved.

To this end, we need to consolidate a space for more debate. Not less. In order to achieve more regular and reduce irregular migration, we need international cooperation, and consideration for the needs and concerns of the other side. We must combine a humanitarian approach with effective migration management. Make it safe. Make it orderly. And where possible, make it regular.

#### Roundtable 6: Fostering Partnerships to Realise Migration-Related Sustainable Development Goals

Migration is here to stay, and grow, due to income gaps, demographic imbalances and climate change. Migration generates huge welfare gains for migrants, sending countries and destination countries. Yet, migration also involves challenges in host communities. Partnerships are key to addressing migration challenges and harnessing its many benefits.



However, for a partnership to be effective, the willingness of members to participate must also be accompanied by an ability to do so. This is easier said than done for many low- and middle-income host countries and even many high-income countries. While it is commonly believed that migration is mostly South-North, in reality South-South migration is more significant in number terms than South-North migration. Within the South, intra-regional migration is also large: as much as 70% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 60% in Europe and Central Asia.

To engage in migration partnerships, developing countries need financing support. Like refugee flows, migration has elements of global public goods that require external financing support. In the near-term, the provision of vaccines and healthcare to migrants in host communities is a global priority, because we cannot be safe from the pandemic unless migrants in our community are safe. Return migration has increased significantly in response to rising unemployment in host countries. Many origin countries need support for provision of services to returning migrants. Larger-than-expected influxes of migrants can be a challenge to host countries, similar to influxes of refugees. Host and transit countries, and also origin countries require financing support to address such global-public-good aspects of migration. In the medium-term, financing support is needed to transition from immediate humanitarian solutions to more sustainable development solutions.

Based on several rounds of regional consultations, the background paper for Roundtable 6 has proposed the creation of a Concessional Financing Facility for Migration (CFFM). For this purpose, lessons can be drawn from the Global Concessional Financing Facility for Refugees, set up in 2016 as a joint initiative of the United Nations, Islamic Development Bank and the World Bank, to provide interest-subsidies on loans to host countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Jordan, Lebanon in addressing influxes of refugees and asylum seekers. So far \$622 million has been approved to support projects worth \$4.2 billion. IDA18 and IDA19 sub-windows for refugees provided over \$4 bn to address refugee issues.

During the Roundtable 6 Session on Jan 21, 2021, a poll was conducted. Participants were asked, “Would your State or Organization be interested in joining a Concessional Financing Facility for Migration (CFFM)?” 37 participants (or 76% of respondents) responded “Yes.” An online survey was also conducted in the weeks preceding the Roundtable Session: 8 out of 9 respondents said a CFFM was needed. Activities to support in HOST or TRANSIT countries included vaccination, healthcare, psycho-social support, humanitarian support and facilities, admin and legal assistance, training and job search, support to stranded migrants, data collection. Activities to support in ORIGIN countries included compensation for stolen wages of returning migrants, reintegration of returnees, education/training, build infrastructure to prevent irregular migration.

The Roundtable 6 session focused on the following guiding questions:

- a) How to make financial resources available for the implementation of partnerships?
- b) How to make the Concessional Financing Facility adaptable to changing circumstances?
- c) What are the next steps that the GFMD and Member States can take to operationalize the Financing Facility?

The discussion that followed during the 3.5-hour session showed a lot of interest in the proposal of a CFFM. Participants highlighted the importance of a whole-of-government approach including the private sector, civil society (including a focus on youth and diasporas), and local governments. They also emphasized the importance of bilateral dialogues between Member States. Many participants emphasized the need for monitoring and evaluation to learn from and improve upon ongoing partnership arrangements. The role of remittances as a financial lifeline during the crisis was mentioned.

The idea of scaling up financing support through the CFFM, from millions to billions, was well received. However, concerns were raised about its feasibility in the context of widespread fiscal difficulties among countries. Also, participants emphasized the need to make the CFFM complementary and additional to the existing UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund and World Bank's KNOMAD Migration Umbrella Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

A strong and useful recommendation from the RT session was to set up a **GFMD Working Group on the CFFM**, with a 9-month term, to take stock of existing financing facilities, draw lessons, explore complementarity and additionality, and clarify its relationship to existing global governance structure for migration, including to the UN and the GFMD.

## Networking Sessions

The following reports on the Summit Networking sessions were submitted by the coordinators of the three GFMD Mechanisms, at the request of the 2020 Chair.

### Civil Society Networking Sessions

Both civil society networking sessions took place on 20 January 2021, at different times to accommodate participants joining from different time zones, in particular Asia / the Pacific on one hand, and the Americas on the other.

Civil society invited government delegates to join these networking sessions of open and informal discussion on "Building Back Better after Covid-19: Regular Pathways and Solutions for Recovery". To ensure that the discussion was indeed open and informal, the networking sessions took place under strict Chatham House Rule. Both sessions were facilitated by civil

society representatives. Six government representatives (Bangladesh, Nigeria and Switzerland for the first session and Argentina, Canada and Germany for the second session) were invited to share their views in panel discussions with civil society delegates, which were then followed by interventions / questions / comments from the floor. Between both sessions, more than 250 people participated.

The sessions began by outlining the challenges and impacts of COVID-19 for migrants and refugees, including:

- Lack or insufficient access to social protection, healthcare, and pandemic assistance measures, particularly for undocumented migrants
- Job losses, including impacts on families and children supported by migrant worker incomes and remittances
- Insufficient support for migrants returning to their country of origin
- Border closures, mobility restrictions and expiration of legal residence
- Exacerbated individual vulnerabilities, such as disabilities
- Homelessness or precarious housing conditions, caused by prolonged lockdown and evictions by former employers
- Increased instances of wage theft and other rights violations, particularly for women migrant domestic workers
- Over 90% of the COVID-19 cases are in urban areas, where the majority of migrants live
- The pandemic has a huge gender impact
- The recovery is unlikely to be for 2021, given the second / third wave of the pandemic

The discussions highlighted a range of possible short and longer-term solutions to mitigate these impacts and “build back better” for migrants in the global recovery from COVID-19. Suggested immediate measures included:

- Ensuring vaccination programs are open to all migrants, including those who are undocumented
- Prioritizing migrants in essential roles for vaccinations
- Facilitating access to justice for migrants who are the victims of wage theft or other rights violations by employers
- Imposing penalties on employers violating the rights of migrant workers
- Skills and qualification recognition for migrant workers returning to countries of origin
- Including provision for assistance to vulnerable migrants in fiscal and monetary policy in response to COVID-19

- Expanded and more accessible mental health and psychosocial support for migrants
- Recognizing that local governments are best placed to lead transformative recovery

The sessions additionally pointed to the need for State assistance for small and medium-sized businesses, many of which employ migrants, and the need for such assistance to be accompanied by measures to promote workplace rights and safety for migrant workers. Relatedly, delegates also emphasized the need to ensure migrant collective representation and participation in trade unions, with a particular plea for trade unions in countries of destination to be more inclusive of migrants of both regular and undocumented status.

In the medium to long term, discussions concurred on the crucial importance of expanded and more accessible regular migration pathways. Interventions highlighted the positive outcomes of such an expansion for migrants' access to rights, for employers seeking recruitment, and for the prevention of trafficking. In the context of reduced global remittances caused by COVID-19, delegates also pointed to the need for reform of the global remittances system to maximize its development benefits.

There was a strong consensus amongst participants on the need to identify and replicate good practices adopted by States in COVID-19 responses. Of particular note here are:

- Temporary relaxations of labor regulations that prevented migrants from changing employers
- Visa extensions for migrants unable to return to countries of origin
- Extended time limits for migrants to regularize their stay by finding new employment
- Right to apply for a work visa without having to leave the country

These measures are largely temporary, and delegates provided several examples of how the closure of similarly time-limited measures in the past had in fact increased irregular migration. Civil society participants expressed their strong wish that such measures are made permanent, and that additional States build on this new evidence of feasibility to implement similar, permanent measures.

The sessions concluded with a broad agreement on the key principles and approaches that should underpin policy-making and action in the global recovery from COVID-19. Here delegates concurred on the need for strong and inclusive partnerships at all levels, based on the principle of solidarity, and whole-of-society and rights-based approaches to assistance and recovery.

## Business Mechanism Networking Sessions

Regional dialogues for Africa (English and French), Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe were organized on Thursday, 21 January. This networking space was structured as six regional dialogues exclusively for private sector's delegates to exchange directly and informally with the governments from their region, under Chatham House rules. The focus was on solutions for migration-related consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and provided a platform for employers to present the business case for well-regulated migration policies in times of crisis, recovery and beyond.

The regional dialogues on business and government networking attracted over 136 participants from governments and business delegations from 61 countries. Discussions were organised around two focus questions: What are two key solutions for the hardest challenges to migration in the time of Covid-19 in your country or region? How can businesses and governments collaborate concretely on solutions to recover from Covid-19 in your country or region?

Discussions on each roundtable was led by leading employers' organisations from the region, as well as global businesses. Discussants elaborated on the challenges faced in accessing skills, moving skills across borders during the pandemic, difficulties in retaining talent due to border closures. Businesses emphasized the need for public-private partnerships at the regional level, to facilitate access to skills and skills recognition processes to meet labour shortages in specific fields.

Employers shared lessons learned and proposed recommendations to the governments on possible successful regulations and solutions adapted to today's realities. All six regions expressed strong support for advanced use of data management to improve cross border migration, contact tracing, intra-company migration procedures and improved legal pathways for labour migration.

Employers stated that the consequences of the pandemic highlighted skills gaps in labour market and migration governance. They urged governments to consider digitizing procedures for work permits applications, visa extensions and recruitment processes, in order to create more accessible, transparent and less bureaucratic systems.

## Mayors Mechanism Networking Session

On Friday 22 January, the MM hosted a dialogue or 'GFMD Networking Session', between local and national governments entitled '[Enabling Local Solutions for Inclusive COVID-19 Response](#)'

and Recovery<sup>3</sup>. The objective of this meeting was for local and national governments to share priorities for joint action, barriers to success and solutions for greater collaboration on migration policymaking going forward, in particular in light of COVID-19. The session was attended by 53 representatives of LRGs, 43 representatives from 17 States and 3 representatives from Intergovernmental Organisations.

The session included three short discussion rounds, followed by an open discussion:

*Round 1: How can policy coordination between local and national governments enable inclusive response and recovery?*

- Moderator: Ms. Cecile Riallant, Head of the Migration and Sustainable Development Unit, International Organization for Migration
- Discussant 1: Ms. Carola Gunnarsson, Lord Mayor of Sala, Sweden
- Discussant 2: Ms. Alexandra Young, Director, International Migration Policy, International and Intergovernmental Relations, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Government of Canada

*Round 2: How can national-local legal frameworks enable inclusive response and recovery?*

- Moderator: Ms. Emilia Sáiz, Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments
- Discussant 1: Hon. Salvatore Martello, Mayor of Lampedusa and Linosa, Italy
- Discussant 2: Mr. Ahmed Skim, Director of Migration Affairs, Ministry Delegate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Morocco

*Round 3: How can municipal access to international funding and financing mechanisms enable inclusive response and recovery?*

- Moderator: Ms. Vittoria Zanuso, Executive Director of the Mayors Migration Council
- Discussant 1: Ms. Jeniffer Villarreal de Hoyos, Secretary of Government of the District of Barranquilla, Colombia, Colombia
- Discussant 2: Mr. Felipe Muñoz, Chief of the Migration Unit, Inter-American Development Bank

*Open discussion:*

- Moderator: Ms. Sophie van Haasen, Coordinator, GFMD Mayors Mechanism

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<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive overview of this session is available via the [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#).

- Respondent: Ms. Bettina Etter, Senior Advisor, Global Migration Governance, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
- Respondent: Ambassador Diego Morejón, Representative of Ecuador to the GFMD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, Government of Ecuador

In the meeting, LRGs shared the pragmatic and principled actions they are taking locally to include migrants, especially in response to COVID-19, and called on national governments to improve local-national coordination mechanisms; to ensure LRGs have adequate legal and budgetary mandates to protect migrants; and to change international financing mechanisms so they can access necessary resources. They reiterated that these calls are critical, as 95% of all COVID-19 cases occur in urban areas — where the majority of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced live — and LRGs globally could face a 25% loss of resources in 2021 because of COVID-19<sup>4</sup>.

The following 5 *priorities* reflect LRG key asks and recommendations in the networking session and throughout the Summit discussions<sup>5</sup>:

1. *Ensure access to services for all, including for those in an irregular situation or without documentation.* Providing access to services is part and parcel of what it means to manage a city. In practice, cities need an enabling national legal environment, resources, localized data, and outreach networks to make equal access to services a lived reality. Cities called on national governments to address these needs, for example through expanding pathways and regularization programmes and to recognise such programs as smart policy tools to ensure everyone’s health and safety in a pandemic and beyond.
2. *Balance narratives on migration to build inclusive communities.* Protecting migrants from discrimination, and creating stronger, balanced, and more resilient narratives on migration is part of the mandate of cities to ensure everyone can feel safe. Engaging with the general public and addressing their real concerns is key to achieving this goal. Cities call on national governments and others to join this effort, through peer learning and multi-actor partnerships.
3. *Promote the economic inclusion of migrants as an important driver of sustainable development.* Cities are important partners in building effective labour migration policies and skills matching, in particular when it comes to protecting migrants in the informal sector and enabling migrant entrepreneurship and inclusion. They help gather local data and are well placed to connect different stakeholders. Cities call on national

<sup>4</sup> UN Secretary-General (July 2020). [Policy Brief: COVID-19 in an Urban World](#).

<sup>5</sup> The press release of the Networking Session is available here: [www.mayorsmechanism.org/gfmd-2020-resources-and-documents](http://www.mayorsmechanism.org/gfmd-2020-resources-and-documents)

governments to partner with them so policies can be rooted in these local realities and can benefit from existing expertise and networks.

4. *Set up and strengthen local-national policy coordination mechanism on migration.* Cities and States illustrated that local-national coordination mechanisms could make it easier for national governments and cities to manage migration together, especially when faced with a crisis like COVID-19. Such mechanisms are important tools to ensure migrants are included in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, cities call on national governments for increased, better and sustained local-national coordination and communication structures.
5. *Increase municipal access to international funding.* Cities are being asked to do more with less. This was true before the pandemic, but the economic and social impact from the crisis makes this even more apparent. In 2021 alone, African cities are projected to lose up to 65 percent of their revenues. Globally, cities may face a 25 percent loss, which will and already has had huge effects on those who need it most. Cities have called for increased access to international funding and have stressed the importance of innovative funding schemes, including the MMC-led [Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response](#) and the important precedent of the UN [Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund](#), which includes city-led organizations as part of its Steering Committee.

## Future of the Forum

The Future of the Forum session was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021. The Future of the Forum is held annually as an integral component of each GFMD Summit. The main objective is to take stock of the progress and achievements of the Global Forum from one Chairmanship to the next and to consider the year ahead. With the 2020 Chairmanship presenting some unique challenges to the GFMD, the Friends of the Forum session at the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit offered an opportunity to reflect on how the GFMD had adapted to those challenges since the previous Summit in Quito, and to set out priorities for the year ahead. By convention, the Future of the Forum is open to all Heads of Delegation of participating Member States and to the coordinators of the three GFMD Mechanisms.

The agenda for the Future of the Forum included the Chair's report. This was followed by an address focused on the IOM's support to the GFMD through 2021 and beyond, delivered by the Director General of the IOM, António Vitorino. The Director General was followed by the Administrator of UNDP, Achim Steiner, focused on the relationship between the GFMD and the UN's development agenda. The three coordinators of the Mechanisms and a representative from UNMGCY, speaking on behalf of youth, were given an opportunity to present an overview of their perspectives, followed by report from the Chairs of the Working Groups. The session concluded with an open discussion and closing remarks.



The Chair's report was presented by H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, 2020 GFMD Chair. The Chair's report began with a review of the thematic and programmatic priorities of the UAE's chairmanship, including encouraging stronger regional inputs into the thematic agenda, the focus on the development of partnerships, the decision to open up participation in the entire Summit and preparatory process to stakeholders from the three Mechanisms and Observers, and the publication of a transparent budget at the start of the UAE's chairmanship.

The Chair thanked the governments of Egypt, the Gambia, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, the UK, Venezuela and Zimbabwe for their chairmanship of the six Summit roundtables, and the six thematic leads who led on the development of the Roundtable papers. The Chair noted that these background papers had been informed by regional perspectives, through the Online Regional Consultations, and there had been significant work done at a regional level to encourage the formation of partnerships. The Chair welcomed the full participation of the three Mechanisms and Observers in the Summit for the first time, noted the high level of engagement by youth, and invited youth participants to articulate how they would like to be engaged in the GFMD going forward.

The Chair provided an overview of the financial and structural challenges faced by the GFMD over the course of 2020. These included the routine nature of Steering Group meetings and the worrying lack of financial sustainability. The Chair noted the UAE's decision to hire an external consultancy to look into alternative funding models for the GFMD and highlighted two key findings from the resulting report. First, that it is not unreasonable to believe that the GFMD could be at least partially supported by external donations from non-Member State sources, given investment in a professional fundraising expert. Second, that fresh contributions to the GFMD have declined every year since 2015, from approximately \$3 million USD to approximately \$800,000 in 2019, with expenditure exceeding fresh contributions in every year.

The Chair noted that, in response to these issues, the Steering Group has embraced a process of reform over the course of 2021 and highlighted the commitment of those Member States that confirmed their continued membership of the Steering Group over the course of 2021: Morocco, Ecuador, France, Turkey, Germany, Indonesia, Mexico, Australia, Switzerland, Kenya, Sweden, Spain, Canada, Belgium, Egypt, Philippines, Thailand, India, Azerbaijan, Ghana, Bangladesh, Greece and the United Arab Emirates.

With regards to the financial situation, the Chair noted the need to reduce the GFMD's fixed costs, with the ratio of fixed costs to fresh contributions under the UAE's Chairmanship exceeding 100%, resulting in a budget deficit for the first time ever. The Chair noted that efforts to reduce fixed costs had a human impact, and that the financial situation faced by the GFMD may have dissuaded Member States from coming forward as Chair the GFMD for the 2021 –

2022 period. The Chair reiterated the UAE's commitment to the GFMD and welcomed France as GFMD Chair for 2022.

## Building Forward Better: Common Group Solutions and IOE-Seedstars Migration Challenge

### The Business Case and Common Ground Plenaries

During the three-hour prime time slot of the GFMD on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, the Business Advisory Group on Migration hosted two high-level Davos style plenaries. These plenaries were open to the public and brought together speakers from governments, businesses and mayoral stakeholders. During the opening session of the business plenaries, IOE Secretary-General Roberto Suarez Santos stressed the importance of the engagement of stakeholders to work towards solutions during troubling economic times.

Mr. Santos reiterated the call for efficient and transparent legal frameworks for migration with increased use of digital technology. He highlighted that the activities of the Business Advisory Group on migration held in 2020 were strategic and forward looking, like the [Asian Declaration](#), innovative solutions driven start-up tech competition, the engagement with national migration focal points in national Employers' Organisations across regions, and a number of collaborative engagements with international partners on migration and development processes.

During the Business Plenaries, panelists from employers' federations, businesses and governments shared their perspectives on the challenges arising in labour markets, as governments took measures to control the spread of the pandemic. Panelists focused on solutions to fostering legal migration pathways that were key to post-pandemic recovery and rejuvenation. They also shared their perspectives on common grounds for different stakeholders to work together in order to #buildforwardbetter.

Experiences shared from the Philippines, Switzerland and France, as well as from global companies, underscored the importance of public-private dialogue to manage and improve more predictable and innovative frameworks for skills mobility. This would help to fill the much-needed skills shortages to support economic recovery during and after the pandemic.

Panelists also emphasized the need to maintain and improve regular migration pathways, to ensure that the Covid-19 crisis does not reverse the progress attained. Discussions and floor interventions also stressed the need to support and promote fair and responsible recruitment practices, which would prevent illegal migration, to develop and recognize skills and the transfer of skills, and to match talents to work where and when it is needed.

As businesses contribute to a significant share of global employment, it is commendable that governments respond with stimulus packages designed to help businesses, in particular SME's affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This encouragement to keep employees at work and businesses open will support the foundations for more resilient economic recovery.

The business-led 2021 regional workshops presented the recommendations outlined below, along with the Asian Declaration paper. The Business Advisory Group on Migration was congratulated for tabling the recommendations, as they represented the footprint of business in the migration landscape, as well as a source of future collaboration and partnerships going forward.

*Recommendations:*

1. Stronger engagement with the private sector in developing and amending migration policies
2. Enhanced public-private cooperation at the regional level
3. Improved transparency and whole of government coordination
4. Improved legal pathways for employment
5. Better leveraging of technology for enhanced migration management
6. Adoption and implementation of responsible recruitment policies and practices

#### IOE-Seedstars Migration Challenge Competition

*Start-up competition:* During the prime-time slot of the business meetings at the GFMD Summit on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, IOE Secretary-General Mr Roberto Suarez Santos launched the global Migration Challenge Competition, where 18 start-up finalists presented their business pitches. IOE had launched the second Migration Challenge program in partnership with Seedstars, a Swiss start-up incubator, and with financial support from the Swiss Development and Cooperation. The competition was launched in recognition of the importance leveraging technology to find innovative solutions to the different challenges in labour migration processes.

Eighteen tech start-ups represented by innovative business entrepreneurs from around the world attended the virtual GFMD Summit. The Migration Challenge competition received ninety-nine completed applications, and a select group of eighteen were shortlisted to present at the GFMD. The business models focused on education technologies (EdTech), financial technologies (Fintech), human resources, artificial intelligence annotation tools and visa processes. Detailed information on the program and past winners can be found on the website of the [Migration Challenge competition](#).

*Training – 6 January:* The start-ups benefited from a day-long online training on the “Art of Pitching” that focused on pitching, investments and networking. Mentors worked with the

start-ups to help them to develop their presentation pitches, to tap into their talents to grow their networks and business models. This support is in line with the ethos of IOE, which strongly believes in empowering young entrepreneurs with tools to help them strive in their business endeavours.

During the GFMD Summit, start-ups had access to all open roundtable meetings and consultations, in order to connect to business representatives and government officials to present their tech products. Consultations with some of the start-ups revealed that they were able to generate business interest of possible investments and partnerships. Finalists included CorvusHealth, a start-up which works to train, certify and match health care talent from the African continent to Europe; C-Wallet, a fintech start-up on remittances and finances; and Hirefreehands, a start-up that trains and connects African IT talent remotely to fill skills shortages in developed countries.

*Pitching – 22 January:* During the “Business Plenary on Common Ground”, two sessions of nine (9) start-up pitches each were presented to about 200 online viewers. The eighteen (18) start-ups pitched for two minutes each and took questions from the jury panel. The jury panel comprised of four (4) members which included:

1. Mr. Harshvendra Soin (Global Chief People Officer and Head Marketing at Tech Mahindra)
2. Mr. Konstantin Hapkemeyer (Investment Associate at Seedstars)
3. Ms. Valentina Primo (Founder and CEO at Start-up without Borders)
4. Ms. Lisa La Bonte (CEO at Arab Youth Venture Foundation)

The winners were announced on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, during the prime-time session of Open Space for Migration and Development Partnerships. The representative of Swiss Development and Cooperation, Ms. Bettina Etter, announced the winner. Roberto Suarez Santos, Secretary General of the IOE, hosted a live follow-up question and answers session with the winner and the two runners-up of the Migration Challenge 2021.

The recipients were:

- Winner: [DignifAI](#) from Colombia
- First runner-up: [CasparCoding](#) from Nigeria
- Second runner-up: [LaowaiCareer Int.](#) from China

Recordings of the eighteen start-up [finalist pitches](#) and the [winner announcement](#) video are available on IOE YouTube channel.

The concluding remarks for the Open Space for Migration and Development Partnerships session was delivered by the Chair of the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD, H.E. Nasser bin Thani Al Hamli, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation of the UAE. The Minister emphasized the importance

of bringing the digital innovation and technological enablers to the GFMD sessions, and to continue efforts to find solutions that contribute to improving labour migration governance.

## Open Space

The 2020 Open Space was a celebration of the partnerships achieved throughout the 2020 UAE chairmanship of the GFMD. The Open Space was hosted by Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP), which facilitated the 2020 GFMD partnerships track. The partnerships track consisted of 6 regional partnership matching sessions, 9 small groups on specific themes, and two Lab sessions alongside the Friends of the Forum, seeking to identify and pursue opportunities for partnerships between Member States, the three Mechanisms, and GFMD Observers.

The first segment of the Open Space was the announcement of the Migration Challenge Start-Up Competition winner. The contest hosted by the International Organization of Employers' (IOE) and SeedStars aimed at rewarding the most promising human resources, fintech, civictech and edtech start-ups with solution-oriented products to improve migration systems that respond to labor market needs. Out of the 18 finalists, judges awarded the prize to DignifAI. The IOE Secretary General Roberto Suarez Santos began the segment with opening remarks and led conversations with representatives of the winning team.

The second segment was moderated by Michael Clemens (Center for Global Development) and featured presentations and Q&As with representatives of partnerships that emerged from the GFMD 2020 partnerships process. Five new and expanded partnerships were presented:

- Raffaella Greco Tonegutti (Enabel) and Sobel Aziz Ngom (Consortium Jeunesse Sénégal, a network of youth-based incubators in Sénégal) presented a partnership on entrepreneurial mobility between Senegal and Belgium;
- Stella Opoku-Owusu (AFFORD) and Giulia Castro (Food and Agriculture Organization) (FAO) presented an emerging partnership on labour mobility schemes and on diaspora contribution for up-skilling in countries of origin, capitalizing on the respective organization's existing programs;
- Camilla Hagström (European Commission) and Alfred Wöger (ICMPD) presented an expansion of the Migration EU eXpertise+ (MIEUX+) initiative in the area of regional capacity development partnerships;
- Marta Verani (UN Major Group for Children and Youth) presented a partnership with IOM, UNICEF, UAE, and Switzerland to grow youth participation at the GFMD this year, highlighting concrete proposals that emerged from it, and next steps and opportunities for youth and stakeholders to partner at the local, national, and global level; and
- Alia Ibrahim Mohamed Abdulrahim (Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization of the UAE), announced a pilot of the Comprehensive Information and Orientation

program (CIOP) in select Africa-GCC corridors, with the support of the International Organization for Migration.

In addition to the presentations of new and expanded partnerships, Alex Mejia (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) presented an update on the Knowledge Hub for Migration and Sustainable Development, a tool for gathering information that could be useful to better understand the nexus between migration and sustainable development, which resulted from the Ecuadorian chairmanship of the 2019 GFMD.

The third segment of Open Space consisted of a panel discussion moderated by Alex Zalami (Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization of the UAE) on the 2020 partnerships process and the future of partnerships in the GFMD. This began with a one-on-one conversation with Michael Clemens on the future of mobility partnerships, followed by a panel discussion with representatives of government development and implementing agencies Bettina Etter (SDC), Rob Whitby (FCDO), Anne Hitzegrad (BMZ) and Oleg Chirita (ICMPD), assessing lessons learned from 2020 and debating what could be replicated and improved in the upcoming years.

Overall, the event concluded the 2020 GFMD partnership process, which brought new insights to the facilitation of migration partnerships through the GFMD platform, serving as a pilot for future processes. Despite the considerable challenges caused by the global pandemic of COVID-19, preventing the in-person meetings of participants, the partnerships process established by the UAE Chair and facilitated by the LaMP team succeeded in delivering five either completely new or expanded partnerships. This offers a powerful demonstration of the enormous potential of the GFMD as a platform to facilitate partnerships in the future by actively supporting members and the Mechanisms in their development.

## Side Events

Thirteen side events were organised over the course of the seven days of the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit. Side events were scheduled to take place on Days 1, 2 and 6 of the Summit. The first morning saw two side events: *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Migrant Workers in the Middle East – a Discussion on the Gained Experience*, organised by the Embassy of Sweden in Abu Dhabi, and *Non-Payment of Wages and Benefits: Impacts on the Life of Migrants and their Families Post-COVID-19*, organised by Migrant Forum Asia and the Council of Global Unions. Two more side events were scheduled for the afternoon of the first day – the first on *The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development*, organised by the Ad Hoc Working Group on COVID-19, and the second on *Beyond Recovery: a Post-COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response for Migrants and their Communities*, organised by ILO, UNDP, UNU-MERIT, the Government of Sweden and the Government of Columbia.

On the morning of the second day of the Summit, three side events were scheduled. The first, organised by the League of Arab States, IOM and UN-ESCWA, was titled *Migration Governance in the Arab Region: Trends, Challenges and Priorities for the Future*. The second, *Inter-Regional Partnerships on the Governance of Labour Migration: two Abu Dhabi Dialogue Initiatives*, was organised by the UAE, IOM, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, GK Partners and the African Union Commission. The third was focused on *Enabling African Youth to Upskill and Move*, organised by the Centre for Global Development, Labour Mobility Partnerships, Enabel – the Belgian Development Agency, the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre, and the OECD Development Centre. The first of two afternoon side events was titled *Advancing Fair and Ethical Recruitment for all in a COVID-19 Context*, organised by the ILO-IHRB Leadership Group for Responsible Recruitment and IOM. The second was titled *Harnessing Diaspora Contributions to COVID-19 Recovery Efforts in Countries of Origin* and was organised by IOM, UNDP, and the governments of Moldova and Somalia.

The extended schedule of the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit allowed for four further side events to take place on the sixth day. The first of two morning side events was titled *Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development*, organised by UNITAR, UNCTAD, UNHRC and IOM. The second morning side event was focused on *Cross-sector Approaches for Local Actors on Migrants’ Inclusion*, organised by UN Habitat and Center for Mediterranean Integration, OECD, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNESCO and WHO. In the afternoon, the governments of Canada and Ecuador, with the GFMD Mayors Mechanism – as Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration – alongside IOM organised the side event *It Takes a Community: Building a Global Movement to Balance the Narrative on Migration*, launching the Working Group’s international campaign. The final side event of the Summit was *The Impact of COVID-19 on Migration and Remittances*, organised by KNOMAD / the World Bank.

## Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony of the 13th GFMD Summit took place on 26th January 2021. It began with Opening Remarks by the Chair of the GFMD, Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, the UAE’s Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization. In his remarks, the Minister noted that it was the first Summit to have been held over seven days, the first to be held online, the first to reflect regional perspectives in the Roundtables, the first to be entirely open to all stakeholders and the first Summit to attract over 2000 registered participants.

Nonetheless, the Minister noted that the Summit was held in the shadow of a global pandemic, bringing urgency to discussions on the impact on migrants and how to build back better.

The agenda then moved to honour individuals that have played a key role in the GFMD over the course of previous years. First, Pietro Mona, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the African Union and IGAD, who has been deeply involved in supporting the GFMD over many years. He was joined by Estrella Lajom, the Head of the GFMD Support Unit, who had been integral to the management of the GFMD since the establishment of the Support Unit under the Chairmanship of the Philippines. The Chair also wished to recognise the contributions of the GFMD's newest Mechanism, that of the Mayors, with Madelaine Yorobe, Mayor of Iriga City, responding. In recognition of the high levels of youth participation in the Summit, Marta Verani, on behalf of the United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth, was invited to deliver her comments.

The three GFMD Mechanisms were also invited to deliver concluding remarks, with the Business Mechanism represented by Austin Fragomen, Chair of the Business Advisory Group; Helen Olea, Associate Director for Programmes, Alianza Americas, representing Civil Society; and Sophie van Haasen, Coordinator of the Mayors Mechanism, speaking on behalf of the Mayors Mechanism.

As is customary at GFMD Closing Ceremonies, the rapporteurs of the six Summit Roundtables were invited to deliver summaries of the outcomes of each of the Roundtables. Kristof Tamas, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Justice, Government of Sweden, provided the summary of Roundtable 1. Roundtable 2 was summarised by Michael Sean Koorapetse, Counsellor, Labour and Migration Issues, Permanent Mission of Botswana to the UN in Geneva. Bettina Etter, Senior Advisor, Global Migration Governance, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Switzerland, acted as rapporteur for Roundtable 3. Roundtable 4 was represented by Fiona Andrews, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Australia to the UN in Geneva. Joost Klarenbeek, Special Envoy for Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of the Netherlands, summarised Roundtable 5. The summary of the final Roundtable – Roundtable 6 – was delivered by Richard Taylor, Policy Advisor at the UK's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

Marking the change in administration, the United States, represented by Daniel McNicholas, Humanitarian Affairs Counsellor at the US Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, requested an opportunity to speak in the Closing Plenary, to reaffirm the US commitment to engage in multilateral fora and undertake a listening exercise. His comments were followed by an address by the Ambassador of France in Charge of Migration, Pascal Teixeira da Silva, in announcing France's forthcoming Chairmanship, beginning in July 2022.

The 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit closed with remarks delivered by the Chair, Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, expressing thanks on behalf of the UAE to a number of organisations and individuals, including those who took part in the Chair's Advisory Group, the Chairs of the Roundtables and the rapporteurs, the three Mechanisms and UNMGCY, the Chairs of partner Regional



Consultative Processes, the organisers of side events, the Support Unit, and members of the UAE Taskforce.

### Dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) / the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)

The dialogue informed about the state of play of the GCM process and shared good and innovative practices, policies, and cooperation mechanisms towards the implementation and review of the GCM. It was opened by H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al-Hamli, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation and 2020 GFMD Chair, and Director General of IOM and Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration, António Vitorino. The GFMD Mechanisms, Friends of the Forum and relevant stakeholders contributed to a lively debate with over 150 participants.

In their statements, participants showed strong commitment in implementing GCM including in COVID responses. The existing practices shared, including from UN Resident Coordinators, offered inspiration for more innovative solutions to migration challenges. Existing practices presented included the development of national implementation plans and the integration of SDG Objective 10.7, the integration of GCM objectives into existing national migration policies, the establishment of tracking mechanisms for programs aligned to the GCM, and the conduction of GCM national implementation reviews.

The discussions showed that while COVID 19 has brought unprecedented challenges for human mobility, it became clear that the GCM provides a robust international cooperation framework to respond.

With a view to emerging challenges in 2021 and how the GFMD and the UN Network on Migration can contribute to the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022, participants reiterated that the GFMD remains a valuable platform for dialogue and inclusion of Civil Society, Local Government and Business and is well positioned to make a valuable contribution to the IMRF, scheduled for the first half of 2022.

## GFMD 2020 Finances

The following section is the audited financial report for the period ended 31 January 2021, prepared by the IOM Department of Resources Management in coordination with the GFMD Support Unit, under the direction of the UAE GFMD Chair. In the Annexes can be found the final breakdown and the report of the independent auditor on the 2020 financial report.

### Auditor's Report

#### Sources of Funds

The initial budget of the GFMD 2020 Chairmanship has been established at USD 2,689,236. During the handover of the GFMD Chairmanship at the Twelfth Summit in Quito, and at the first GFMD preparatory meeting of the Steering Group under the UAE Chairmanship on 12 February 2020, the GFMD 2020 Chair presented a budget proposal<sup>6</sup> amounting to **USD 2,874,141**, with the following cost elements:

	<u>USD (\$)</u>
• Regional Meetings	320,400
• Preparatory Meetings	190,000
• Summit Costs	701,840
• GFMD Support Unit and Other Costs	1,009,085
• Consultancy Services	135,000
• Contingency	117,816
• Commitment to GFMD 2021	400,000

The UAE Chair also reported that upon assumption of the Chairmanship, the GFMD had left-over funds from the UAE contribution to GFMD 2019 amounting to **USD 199,298**, following a decision of the GFMD 2019 Chair Ecuador not to fully utilize the UAE contribution.

In October 2020, a new cost element, Working Group on Narratives-Related Activities, was created to support the development and implementation of an international social media campaign to promote balanced narratives on migration.

Between February 2020 and January 2021, additional fresh contributions were received from 7 governments, namely, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Mexico, the Philippines, Switzerland and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) amounting to **USD 516,967**. Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates as Chair-in-Office, brought in additional **USD 544,514**,

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<sup>6</sup> The UAE Chairmanship budget retains some elements of the GFMD budget prescribed in the long-term financing framework for the GFMD which was established during the [Swedish GFMD 2013-2014 Chairmanship](#).

thus making a total of **USD 1,061,481** fresh contributions. Adding the leftover UAE funds from 2019, total available resources for GFMD 2020 amounted to **USD 1,260,779**.

Contributions by the UAE, Canada, United Cities and Local Governments and Belgium were earmarked, while contributions by other donor states were non-earmarked, as shown in the below table:

Earmarking of Contributions	Donor Countries	Amount (in USD)	%age
Earmarked	Belgium	56,818	5%
	UAE	743,812	59%
	Canada	25,000	2%
	United Cities and Local Governments	30,000	2%
Non-earmarked	France	29,691	2%
	Germany	82,108	7%
	Mexico	50,000	4%
	Philippines	25,000	2%
	Switzerland	218,350	17%
<b>Total (USD)</b>		<b>1,260,779</b>	100%

All international contributions were received and managed by the GFMD Support Unit on behalf of the GFMD 2020 Chairmanship. As provided under the MOU on Financial Arrangements signed between the UAE GFMD Chair and IOM, the former exercised direct supervision over the GFMD Support Unit to ensure sound financial management of GFMD resources, in coordination with the IOM Department of Resources Management. The GFMD Support Unit flagged to IOM all pledges that were received by the Chairmanship and followed up with donor countries to facilitate the actual transfer. Most contributions were received in US Dollars – the currency used in IOM project management. However, the GFMD also received contributions in Euros and Swiss franc, which were then posted in the original currency of transaction and translated to USD at the exchange rate applicable at the date of transaction. Some contributions are paid in different tranches; hence, the foreign exchange conversion was subject to market fluctuations.

To promote transparency and accountability, the Chair provided periodic reports on the financial situation of the GFMD in 2020 during the preparatory meetings of the Steering Group.

These occasions afforded the opportunity to announce new contributions and to reiterate the Chairs’ call for additional contributions. To formalize the Chairs’ appreciation of the international contributions received during the year, acknowledgement letters were sent to the GFMD donors.

Beginning March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused lockdowns in most parts of the world, resulting in travel limitations and bans on public gatherings. As a consequence, the initially planned GFMD meetings in Geneva could not be held, thus rendering some cost elements of the GFMD 2020 budget no longer valid, particularly the provision for travel and other participation costs in the regional meetings.

In light of this, the GFMD 2020 budget was adjusted accordingly. As of September 2020<sup>7</sup>, the total budget was reduced to USD 2,433,716, broken down as follows:

	<u>USD (\$)</u>
• Regional Meetings	52,000
• Preparatory Meetings	156,000
• Summit Costs	701,840
• GFMD Support Unit and Other Costs	807,985
• Consultancy Services	200,000
• Contingency	115,891
• Commitment to GFMD 2021	400,000
	<b>USD 2,433,716</b>

At the time of budget revision, the cost of the Working Group related activities was not yet foreseen; thus, it was not incorporated into the budget.

As the COVID-19 situation persisted across the globe, the UAE Chair decided in December 2020 to hold an all-virtual GFMD Summit in January 2020. This meant further reductions in the organizational costs of the Summit-meeting. In addition, the lack of sufficient international financial contributions required the UAE Chair to notify IOM of the prospect of a budget deficit, leading to IOM taking measures to reduce the overall administrative costs of the GFMD, notably by downsizing the GFMD Support Unit, as explained further below.

#### Actual Expenditure

After twelve months, the UAE GFMD Chairmanship incurred a total expenditure amounting to **USD 1,089,840** or 45% of the revised budget (USD 2,433,716) in September. The respective shares of these costs against a) total expenditure and b) total budget are shown below:

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<sup>7</sup> Annex 1

EXPENDITURE	<i>Revised Budget (\$)</i> <i>(as of Sept 2020)</i>		<i>Amount Spent (\$)</i>		<i>% Share to Total Expenditure</i>	<i>% Share to Total Budget</i>
<b>I. Regional Meetings</b>		<b>52,000</b>		<b>53,774</b>	5%	3%
1. Venue and logistics	52,000		53,774			
2. Travel Governments	-		-			
3. Travel Civil Society	-		-			
4. Travel Thematic Leads	-		-			
<b>II. Preparatory Meetings</b>		<b>156,000</b>		<b>30,680</b>	3%	2%
1. Friends of the Forum	60,000		10,279			
2. Steering Group	24,500		4,619			
3. Troika	1,500		-			
4. Migration Lab	50,000		-			
5. Translation of Background Papers	20,000		15,782			
<b>III. Summit Participation</b>		<b>701,840</b>		<b>150,000</b>	14%	7%
1. Support to Civil Society	260,000		150,000			
2. Travel Governments	441,840		-			
<b>IV. Consultancy</b>		<b>200,000</b>		<b>193,291</b>	18%	10%
1. Thematic Leads	60,000		60,141			
2. Graham Pelton	50,000		45,150			
3. HLPF Report	18,000		18,000			
4. LaMP	72,000		40,000			
5. UNGMCY	30,000		30,000			

EXPENDITURE	<i>Revised Budget (\$)</i> <i>(as of Sept 2020)</i>		<i>Amount Spent (\$)</i>		<i>% Share to</i> <i>Total</i> <i>Expenditure</i>	<i>% Share</i> <i>to Total</i> <i>Budget</i>
V. WG on Narratives				55,000	5%	
1. Purpose			55,000			
V. Support Unit		807,985		607,095	55%	30%
1. Staff Costs			509,927			
2. IT			33,833			
3. Other Office Costs			34,276			
4. IOM Overhead			29,059			
VI. Contingency (10%)		115,891	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>2,033,716</b>		<b>1,089,840</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>52%</b>

In line with established procurement processes, all transactions were initiated by the GFMD Support Unit on behalf of the UAE Chairmanship. Each transaction was checked by the IOM to ensure conformity with international accounting standards, and due authorization from the UAE Chair. Below is a summary of the actual expenses charged against the GFMD 2020 budget.

### 1. Regional Consultations

The total costs of the GFMD 2020 online Regional Consultations, held in 31 sessions from May to July 2020, amounted to **USD 53,774**. The bulk of the expenses pertained to the web conferencing services package (USD 50,651), comprised of an online videoconferencing platform (KUDO), technical assistance during the sessions and remote interpretation in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic). The second cost element (USD 3,123) applied to the translation in French and Spanish of the Thematic Notes.

### 2. Preparatory Meetings in Geneva

The total actual costs amounted to **USD 30,680**. During the Chairmanship period, the Friends of the Forum met three times (22 July, 1 October, and 4 December), while the Steering Group met five times (12 February, 21 July, 3 September, 29 September, and 2 December). Back-to-back with the last two meetings of these governing bodies were the Migration Lab sessions (30

September and 3 December) and the Government-led Roundtable consultations (1 October and 4 December).

In-person meetings took place at the Centre International Conference de Geneve (CICG) on February 12, September 3, and September 29 to October 1. All others were held virtually via the KUDO and Webex platforms.

Thanks to the generosity of the Swiss Government, the costs of meetings at the CICG were minimized. GFMD did not pay rental for the conference rooms, but only for the expenses of various technical services, including sound and video technicians, rental of IT equipment. Some miscellaneous costs were incurred for the per diems of daily hired conference assistants. A final element consisted in the translation (into French and Spanish) of the final Roundtable background papers.

Below is the cost breakdown of the GFMD 2020 preparatory meetings:

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Amount (USD)</b>
(1) Rental of conference rooms and technical costs	14,535
(2) Translation of background papers	15,782
(3) Other conference-related services	363
<b>Total (USD)</b>	<b>30,680</b>

### **3. Support to Civil Society**

Out of a total budgeted amount of \$260,000 that was originally slated to support Civil Society participation in the GFMD 2020, the UAE Chair earmarked and gave USD 150,000 to the International Catholic Migration Commission as an earmarked contribution. This contribution was processed in August 2020.

### **4. Consultancy**

The UAE Chair commissioned a number of external consultants to support the various work streams of the GFMD in 2020.

- a) In February, the UAE Chair hired the services of Graham-Pelton (UK) to look into the issue of financial sustainability and the prospect of expanding the GFMD donor base.

The service provider conducted data collection, surveys and strategic discussions in order to develop a suggested action plan for the way forward. The report, “Fundraising Growth Plan,” contained a set of recommendations for the GFMD governing structures to consider.

- b) To respond to the ECOSOC President’s invitation for the GFMD to submit a focused input to the 2020 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York, the UAE Chair commissioned Ms. Kathleen Newland, Senior Fellow of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), to draft the GFMD’s contribution based on inputs from GFMD participating Member States and other stakeholders.
- c) Six Thematic Leads were selected to assist the Chair in the preparation of the Regional Consultations and the Summit Roundtables. Their tasks also entailed engaging in the Chair’s Advisory Group and drafting the Thematic Note, summaries for the Regional Consultations, as well as the Roundtable Background Papers. Three of them (Ms. Kathleen Newland, Mr. John Bingham and Mr. Gibril Faal) were issued consultancy contracts by the IOM on behalf of the UAE Chair, while the others (Ms. Michelle Klein Solomon, Ms. Michelle Leighton and Mr. Dilip Ratha) provided their services pro bono, as representatives of GFMD Observers (IOM, ILO and World Bank).
- d) The Labor Mobility Partnerships (LaMP), was hired by the UAE Chair to lead the GFMD 2020 Migration Lab activities, with a focus on facilitating the identification of potential partnerships among GFMD stakeholders, to be presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit’s Open Space.
- e) Finally, the UAE Chair provided a financial contribution to the United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth (UNMGCY) to support youth capacity building programs, leadership and innovation awards for migration, and the hosting of a youth meeting before the 13<sup>th</sup> GFMD Summit.

Below is a snapshot of the consultancy fees incurred during the UAE Chairmanship:

Particulars	Amount (USD)
(1) Graham Pelton – Fundraising Growth Plan	45,150
(2) HLPF Report	18,000
(3) Thematic Leads	60,141
(4) LaMP	40,000



(5) UNMGCY	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>193,291</b>

## 5. Working Group on Migration Narratives

The GFMD ad hoc Working Group on Migration Narratives, established in February 2020, led the development of an international social media campaign (#ItTakesACommunity) to promote balanced public narratives on migration. As a first step thereto, the Working Group Co-Chairs (Canada, Ecuador and Mayors Mechanism) hired the services of a US-based communications company, Purpose, to develop the campaign strategy and concept, in consultation with the membership of the Working Group. The total fees paid to Purpose amounted to USD 55,000. The expenses were covered by earmarked contributions of the Government of Canada and United Cities and Local Governments.

## 6. Operational Costs of the GFMD Support Unit

The cost of the GFMD Support Unit throughout the UAE Chairmanship amounted to **USD 607,095**, representing 60% of the initial budget of \$ 1,009,085 presented in February. The bulk of the costs (84%) went to salaries and staff costs, and the rest pertained to the office, IT and other related costs. As mentioned above, due to limited financial contributions, the UAE Chair was required to notify IOM that money may not be available from to fund the Support Unit. Consequently, the Support Unit, which started with a manpower complement of 5 people, was downsized during the second half of the Chairmanship. From end September until the end of the UAE Chairmanship, the Support Unit operated with only three staff – i.e., Head of the Support Unit, one Program Officer, and one Program Associate.

The UAE Chair entered into an agreement with the IOM Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Support for the delivery of the gfmd.org website support and maintenance services. Previously, such services were provided by an in-house Support Unit web administrator. However, due to funding constraint in 2019, this position was abolished.

Other Support Unit-related costs included the purchase of equipment and technical (e.g. Google Services, Mailchimp, SurveyMonkey, Adobe, etc.), rental of offices, phone and printing charges.

Particulars	Amount (USD)
-------------	--------------

(1) Staff Costs	509,927
(1) IT	33,833
(2) Other Office Costs	34,276
(3) Overhead	29,059
<b>Total (USD)</b>	<b>607,095</b>
Available funds*	561,967
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(45,128)</b>

* UAE	100,000
Belgium	56,818
France	29,691
Germany	82,108
Mexico	50,000
Philippines	25,000
Switzerland	218,350

Due to limited international contributions that have been received, the operational costs of the GFMD Support Unit in 2020 were not fully covered. Out of a total actual operational cost of USD 607,095, only 93% or USD 561,967 was funded by the earmarked funds from the UAE and Belgium plus the entire amount of unearmarked 2020 Member State contributions, leaving a **deficit of USD 45,128**.

## 7. Participation in the Summit by Government Delegates from Developing Countries

Out of a budgeted amount of \$441,840 originally slated to support the participation of Government delegates to the Summit, the UAE earmarked \$150,000 of its total contribution to GFMD 2020 to this end. As it was later decided to convene the Summit online, this earmarked contribution was not used and is due to be reimbursed to the UAE.

## 8. Commitment to the 2021 Chair

Out of a budgeted amount of \$400,000 originally intended as a carry forward seed fund for the next GFMD Chair, the UAE earmarked \$50,000 as a contribution to this fund. This earmarked contribution is due to be reimbursed to the UAE should no Chair come forward to chair the GFMD in 2021.

Ending Balances

- a) All earmarked contributions from Canada, UCLG and Belgium were used for their designated purposes (respectively, supporting the Working Group on Migration Narratives and the Support Unit), with zero balance left over.
- b) Un-earmarked Member State contributions were used up.
- c) The UAE earmarked contribution account balances on 31 January 2021 were as follows (in USD):

Account	Earmarked amount	Actual disbursement	Balance due to UAE
Support Unit	100,000	100,000	0
Regional meetings	31,250	53,774	(22,524)
Prep meetings	61,500	30,680	30,820
Consulting	200,000	193,291	6,709
Support to Civil Society	150,000	150,000	0
Support Gov delegates	150,000	0	150,000
Commitment to 2021	50,000	0	50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>742,750**</b>	<b>527,745</b>	<b>215,005</b>

\*\* a differential between total received vs. earmarked contribution to GFMD 2020, (743,812 – 742,750 = 1,062) in the GFMD account will be added to the balance due to UAE arriving to the total of USD 216,067.

- d) The ending 2020 budget deficit amounted to USD 45,128. The responsibility for recovering the balance lies with the GFMD Member States

## GFMD Reform & the Future of the GFMD

Over the course of the 2020 Chairmanship, as the challenges faced by the GFMD became clear, the Steering Group began to take an active role in reflecting on the future of the forum and the need for reforms necessary to ensure that the GFMD continues to fulfil its unique mandate as a key contributor to the global dialogue on migration and development.

It was agreed by the Steering Group that these issues could not be resolved within the timeframe of the UAE's Chairmanship, and that they should therefore be taken up in February 2021. To that end, a meeting of the Steering Group, in the aftermath of the UAE's Chairmanship, mandated the formation of a Sub-Group on GFMD Governance Reform.

The Sub-Group consists of the Troika and a number of supportive Member States (and, it was later agreed, the coordinators of the three Mechanisms and Youth), and is tasked with reviewing the long-term future of the GFMD.

This Sub-Group has, to date, met four times over the course of the first half of 2021, and formed four committees:

1. On Identifying a 2021 / 2022 Chair and Short-Term Finances, led by France
2. Fundraising and Budget Management, led by Egypt
3. On Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the GFMD Governing Bodies, led by Canada and the UAE
4. On GFMD-GCM Relations, led by Sweden

The Sub-Group has also been engaged on the question of the interim provision of administrative support to the GFMD, overseen by the Troika.

According to a workplan developed by the Sub-Group, of the four committees formed, the first will aim to report to the Steering Group in June whether there has been any success in identifying a Chair for 2021-2022. The other three Committees will provide interim findings in June, but their work will continue through the course of the remainder of the year. The goal of this work is to establish a platform for the GFMD's renewal and sustainable future.

## Annex 1: Audited Financial Statement



### GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT GFMD 2020

#### FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT


for the period from 01 February 2020 to 31 January 2021

<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>	USD
<b>A. LEFT-OVER FUNDS FROM PREVIOUS GFMD</b>	
United Arab Emirates (earmarked)	199,298
<b>Sub-total A. Left-over funds from previous GFMD</b>	<b>199,298</b>
<b>B. 2020 FRESH CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	
<b>Earmarked</b>	
Belgium / EUR 50,000 / July	56,818
United Arab Emirates / February	544,514
Canada / December	25,000
United Cities and Local Governments / January 2021	30,000
<b>Non-Earmarked</b>	
France / EUR 25,000 / September	29,691
Germany / EUR 37,500 / June	41,391
Germany / EUR 37,500 / May	40,717
Mexico / January 2021	50,000
Philippines / May	25,000
Switzerland / CHF 160,000 / December	174,102
<b>Sub-total B. 2020 Fresh contributions</b>	<b>1,017,233</b>
<b>C. OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	
*Switzerland / CHF 40,000 / Final payment per signed agreement	44,248
<b>Sub-total C. Outstanding contributions</b>	<b>44,248</b>
<b><u>Total resources</u></b>	<b><u>1,260,779</u></b>
<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<b>I. REGIONAL MEETINGS</b>	
Venues & logistics	52,000
Subsidized Travel Governments	52,000
Subsidized Travel Civil Society	-
Subsidized Travel Thematic Leads	-
	53,774
	53,774
	-
	-

Project ID: XG.0001  
END N° HQ.2021.0093

<b>II. PREPARATORY MEETINGS</b>	<b>156,000</b>	<b>30,680</b>
2X Friend of the Forum*	60,000	10,279
3x Steering Group	24,500	4,619
3x Troika Meeting	1,500	-
2x Migration Labs	50,000	-
Translation of Background Papers	20,000	15,782
<b>III. SUMMIT COSTS</b>	<b>701,840</b>	<b>150,000</b>
Subsidized Travel Civil Society	260,000	150,000
Subsidized Travel Governments	441,840	-
<b>IV. GFMD SUPPORT UNIT AND OTHER COSTS</b>	<b>807,985</b>	<b>607,095</b>
SU Staff, Office, Overhead	807,985	607,095
<b>V. CONSULTANCY SERVICES</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>190,291</b>
Consultancy Fees	200,000	190,291
<b>VI. CONTINGENCY</b>	<b>115,891</b>	<b>-</b>
5% of Annual Expenditures	115,891	-
<b>WORKING GROUP NARRATIVES</b>		<b>55,000</b>
<b>**Outstanding commitment - Consultancy fee - final payment</b>		<b>3,000</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>2,033,716</u></b>	<b><u>1,089,840</u></b>
<b>Amount for refund to the UAE at the end of Chairmanship</b>		<b>(216,067)</b>
<b>***Balance of resources due to IOM at 31 January 2021</b>		<b>USD <u>(45,128)</u></b>

As the responsible project manager, I certify that the financial and narrative reports are correctly stated in accordance with IOM internal rules and procedures.

  
 H.E. Abdulla Alnuaimi  
 UAE Chair's Task Force  
 Geneva, 18 March 2021

- \* Switzerland's contribution final payment due upon receipt of the certified final report. USD value may vary at the time of the actual receipt due to payment in CHF  
 \*\* Consultancy fee final payment due upon receipt of the final report from UNMGCY  
 \*\*\* Final balance may vary due to currency fluctuation pertaining to the final payment from Switzerland

## Annex 2: Independent Auditor's Report



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

### OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

My Ref. No.: **AG/01/21/61**

Ministry Block O, P. O. Box M 96, Accra, Ghana  
Tel: +233 (0) 302 664928 / 675496 Fax: +233 (0) 302 662493  
Website: www.ghaudit.org

Your Ref No.:

28 April ..... 20...21.....

**The Chairman-in-office,  
Global Forum on Migration and Development,  
Geneva.**

#### **Independent Auditor's Report on the 2020 Financial Report of the Global Forum on Migration and Development**

We have audited the financial report of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) for the period 01 February, 2020 to 31 January, 2021 in respect of GFMD related activities and the GFMD Support Unit.

#### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the GFMD related activities and GFMD Support Unit for the period ended 31 January 2021, and in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

#### **Basis of Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing. Our responsibilities under those standards are described in the section below entitled "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements". We are independent of GFMD in accordance with the ethical requirements relevant to our audit of the financial statements and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter**

We draw attention to Paragraph 3 of the Final Narrative Report, which indicated that fresh contributions to the GFMD have declined since 2015. In this regard, we noted that GFMD had limited funding from international contributions which could not fully cover the 2020 Operational Costs of the GFMD Support Unit and resulted in a deficit funding. These matters have been highlighted in the Final Narrative Report with specific actions indicated to address the issue of lack of predictable financing. Since, the GFMD is a state led process, GFMD needs to maintain a broad ownership by participating Member States and adopt a creative fund-raising mechanism to sustain its activities. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Management's responsibility for the financial statements**

The International Organization for Migration in coordination with GFMD is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report in accordance with IPSAS. This responsibility includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control procedures to enable the preparation of the financial report which is free of material misstatements, whether due to fraud or errors. This responsibility also includes the selection and application of appropriate accounting policies and the use of accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

**Auditor's responsibility for the financial statements**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing. These standards require us to comply with ethical rules and to plan and perform our audit to obtain a reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements.



An audit includes performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's professional judgment, including assessment of the risks of material misstatements of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or errors. In making the risk assessment, the auditor considers the internal control procedures in place for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used, the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, and the evaluation of the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.



**Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu**  
**Ag. Auditor-General of Ghana**  
**(External Auditor)**

Accra, Ghana  
28 April, 2021