

## **Civil Society Report to the Friends of the Forum**

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Mr. Mansoor, past and future hosts and friends of the Global Forum, Excellencies, colleagues, good morning!

May I first thank the Mauritian Chair for renewing the trust placed in ICMC to work to bring continuity as well as savings as Coordinator of civil society's engagement in the Global Forum. Together with our partners from every sector and geography of civil society, this is a responsibility we have taken quite seriously and, we hope, with at least fair success. We recommit to partner with you going forward with the same energy and honesty.

Allow me just to touch on three areas: (1) a few quick notes from 2011; (2), a snapshot on steps taken in these two first months of the 2012 GFMD; and (3) civil society's work immediately ahead.

### **First, some notes from 2011:**

On the back tables there is a new, short document that breaks out in simple format the recommendations and outcomes of the 2011 civil society days—including recommendations for which civil society acknowledges its own responsibility and not just responsibilities of states or international organizations. Most openly, this format is intended to be a baseline for discussions and action this year. Just to mention three elements of substance in those recommendations:

- A number of areas were noted as having outcomes within reach, in particular: measures to improve recruitment and placement processes; cooperation on piloting mechanisms for labour and skills matching; and securing ratifications of the new ILO Convention on Domestic Workers.
- There continues to be appreciation that the "D" in "GFMD" is for *human* development—but not as the opposite of *economic* development. Human and economic development are not opposites in this Global Forum: they go together.
- Again the predominant emphasis of civil society was on protection of the rights of migrants and their families for the well-being of migrants, their communities and states—including fundamental rights essential to positive diaspora engagement.

### **Three flashes on process in 2011:**

- We are happy to report that we were able to achieve the civil society portion of last year's Global Forum *within budget*—at 1/3 of the cost of the prior year. This however, was thanks almost entirely to the support of five donors, led by the Swiss federal and cantonal governments, the MacArthur and Bancroft Foundations, and ICMC's own contribution. Already we have commitments for about half of that support for civil society again this year. We see that support as an objective expression of confidence in the place of civil society within this process—important because the Chair's budget covers less than half of the modest civil society budget for the year's activities. With that in mind, in the coming weeks we will be launching an organized appeal for a diverse group of 10 states to become "*investors in the GFMD civil society.*" We look forward to discussing this with you bilaterally, and warmly welcome appointments with you, and your advice, here in Geneva.

- We received 70 responses to the evaluation form that we sent to all who participated in last year's civil society days. We have been struck by their positive tone, in particular with respect to efforts at continuity. We have also noted strong appreciation for the value that common space adds in bringing delegates from both "sides" of the Global Forum together on a single theme, exploring not only existing good practice and common ground among civil society and state actors, but also some complex political sensitivities. Many of the evaluations also raised the challenge to structure more focused and connective dialogue within that common space and in other parts of the states' GFMD programme. We look forward to working with you and the Chair on that challenge this year.
- But that evaluation was of 2011 only. We are happy to participate (along with what we understand will be many other GFMD participants) in the civil society assessment of the Forum that the MacArthur Foundation recently asked an independent consultant to complete this year.

**Second, a snapshot of steps taken in these two first months of the 2012 Global Forum**

- We have formally pursued several funding opportunities for civil society activities related to the Forum: each with the possibility of multi-year funding; two referring to civil society organizing and follow-up between GFMD meetings at an inter-regional level, including continental Africa; and one for research on so-called "south-south" migration and related development issues. We share the Chair's belief that there is genuine funding potential in this GFMD process, especially as both civil society and states become more focused—voluntarily—on specific and measurable outcomes, and we are committed to working on that with you.
- Along with 16 other civil society organizations, representative of 11 agencies of the Global Migration Group and intergovernmental organizations, and even 10 states, we participated actively (and moderated) the day of brainstorming among *non-states* actors that the Chair organized on its draft concept paper in Mauritius two weeks ago. The discussion was lively and positive: 32 different speakers made 89 interventions, broadly supportive of the themes of the concept paper, and the drive of the Chair towards outcomes. Particular emphasis was made on keeping migrants at the center of the discussion, engaging more fully with diaspora and on development, and taking discussion to action.
- With respect to partners, we will once again be working with an International Advisory Committee, a core group of 15-18 civil society representatives that are geographically and sectorally diverse. We want and expect many of the veterans from prior years to stay on, but will bring in more representatives from Africa, and more diaspora, along with Mauritian civil society representatives (as we did with representatives from Geneva last year.) On the ground, our presence and direct partner for the international planning and logistics of the civil society days will be ICMC's network member Caritas Mauritius, who along with other local civil society groups will also collaborate in a distinct process of organizing Mauritius civil society with the Mauritius Council of Social Services and IOM Mauritius.

**Third and last, a glimpse of civil society's work immediately ahead**

- We are heavily engaged in fundraising, as mentioned, but also in logistics planning, working with the Chair towards a suitable location that satisfies plenary, break-out session and common space requirements of both the states and civil society meetings.
- Following your adoption of **the Chair's concept paper**, we will refer to it alongside civil society's work in the GFMD to date as the two principal references for civil society's *own* concept paper this year. Like last year, we will lead with the principle "less is more." So for example, the civil society concept paper is likely to have a more limited focus than the states', for example with great attention to issues particular but not exclusive to Africa (including south-south migration), and on dynamics of development and diaspora.

- Finally, civil society has begun thinking in earnest about the Future of the Forum and the High Level Dialogue next year. Many of you attended the two plenary sessions that we held on those subjects during the second day of the civil society days, featuring Peter Sutherland, and others, in two-way open floor debate. Now: we are aware that, as far as organizing the HLD goes, “next” year is really “this” year, only underscored by the UN Coordination Committee scheduling a panel on the HLD at its annual convening in New York at the end of this week. Honestly civil society (like many governments and international organizations we believe) has a lot of thinking to do. For one thing, contrary to wide assumption, there is no consensus in civil society that the GFMD belongs in the UN—even as many agree even as many agree that the GFMD needs a UN framework of some kind, at a minimum normative but also more structured and sustained than is presently the case. But let me make just two observations regarding the HLD here: after six years of constructive participation in these GFMD meetings since the last HLD in 2006, civil society must have greater participation in the next one. And even as such modalities of process and engagement get so much attention in coming months, it is important not to lose the essential focus of the HLD on the *substance* of the issues at hand, and, as in the first HLD, its potential to address with practical orientation real-world aspects of migrants and societies in migration and development. Perhaps a strategic few aspects, like data and rights-based mechanisms for labour and skills matching, or normalizing effective protection for vulnerable migrant victims of violence and trauma, whether forced, stranded, in transit or in destination countries, regardless of their immigration status...

I will close with the biggest next step, like last year: *wide consultation*—with you as well as within civil society. Like you, we believe in the value of this GFMD and in the importance of assuring its impact. We believe that civil society’s role is to step up to, and into, what is possible to really achieve that value and impact for the benefit of migrants, migrant families, communities and states.

*Thank you.*

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