

THE UN GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



DHAKA, BANGLADESH 2016

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In my first blog, I look at the history, Operating Modalities, and meeting topics over the nine year course of the United Nations Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the upcoming GFMD in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Global Forum on Migration and Development – particularly this year hosted in Dhaka and with proposed themes surrounding regional issues – will be incredibly educational to CAPI students working with NGOs on migration issues. While only government officials can attend Government Days, the Civil Society Days that follow are generally more passionate, engaging, and informed by those who have a lot of experience with migration (often on a personal level).

Throughout the month I spent working with the Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants, I saw amazing commitments carried out through organizations such as: the International Organization for Migration, Bangladeshi government ministries, and the International Labour Organization. Meetings held six months prior to the ninth annual GFMD have focused on how to facilitate resources in Dhaka, the United Nations, and other NGOs to best serve the event. I have had the incredibly fortunate opportunity to sit in on some of these meetings pertaining to the allocation of city-wide security, transportation and traffic issues, and the search (and competitiveness) of Dhaka accommodation. These meetings are well-thought, passionate, and purposeful. Hosting this event in the megacity of Dhaka at times can be a logistical nightmare (for example: food catering – it has been mentioned several times that city vendors and caterers have never hosted anything on such a large scale) yet it seems like everyone involved is up to the challenge and excited at the opportunity to show the 140 UN member states and the rest of the world hectic, crowded, exciting Dhaka.

I am aware that several CAPI interns will have the chance to participate in the 2016 GFMD and I hope that this blog post sheds light on the background, processes and purpose of this informative and inspiring annual event. The following blog aims at providing incoming interns (and those who are just plain curious) with a straightforward history of the United Nations Global Forum on Migration and Development, as well as it's objectives, Operating Modalities, and Civil Society roundtable discussions. The blog was written to encourage interest – and with an end goal of even perhaps participation – in Dhaka's hosting of the ninth annual UN GFMD.



THE HISTORY OF THE UN GFMD

The GFMD is a voluntary, informal, non-binding and government-led process that began after a September 2006 report from the UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development. The event (usually spanning over a four-day period: two government-led days and two civil society-driven days) is open to United Nations States Members and observers; and civil society.

The main purpose of the GFMD is to advance understanding on the mutually reinforcing relationship between migration and development while looking for action-oriented outcomes. Policy-makers from government Ministries include: Development, Immigration, Labour, Justice, and Foreign Affairs. Various academia and civil society organizations are engaged in the Forum as civil society representatives. Parallel meetings are held simultaneously and the aim is to bring together the expertise and passion of NGOs, trade unions, the private sector and migrant and diaspora representatives.

Objectives of the Global Forum on Migration and Development:

1. To provide a venue for policymakers and high-level policy practitioners to informally discuss relevant policies and practical challenges and opportunities of the migration development nexus, and engage with other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, experts and migrant organizations to foster practical and action-oriented outcomes at national, bilateral and international level;
2. To exchange good practices and experiences, which can be duplicated or adapted in other circumstances, in order to maximize the development benefits of migration and migration flows;
3. To identify information, policy and institutional gaps necessary to foster synergies and greater policy coherence at national, regional and international levels between the migration and development policy areas;
4. To establish partnerships and cooperation between countries, and between countries and other stakeholders, such as international organizations, diaspora, migrants, academia etc., on migration and development;
5. To structure the international priorities and agenda on migration and development.

Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Towards the 2013 High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development: Final Report of the High-Level Dialogue Series. New York: 2013: Issue No. 11.



OPERATING MODALITIES

At the first GFMD meeting in Brussels in 2007, the  [GFMD Operating Modalities](#) were developed. The Operating Modalities aim at ensuring sufficient continuity and provide an initial structuring framework to organize the GFMD chairing arrangements. The structural arrangements include a support framework of the following:

1. a **Troika** (the past, current and future Chairs) that govern the Forum. The Troika is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the event.
2. a **Steering Group** (comprised of a manageable number of governments that lend strategic and political support to the Chair). Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, The Philippines, The Republic of Korea, and Thailand have been a part of the GFMD Steering Group since 2007. India also joined as a member in 2009.
3. **Friends of the Forum**, a consultative body called the (all States Members and Observers of the United Nations).
4. a support unit to assist the Chair-in-Office with its administrative, financial and logistical needs.

Source: Page 2. International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Global Forum on Migration and Development: Perspectives from Asia and the Pacific: Issue in Brief, Migration Policy Institute. New York: May 2014: Issue No. 9.

ANNUAL THEMES AND MEETINGS

Key Themes 2007-2012: Ranked Highest to Lowest: Number of Dedicated Roundtables

- Civil Society and the Private Sector
- Labour Migration and Mobility
- Policy Coherence and Mainstreaming
- Rights of Migrants
- Governance of Migration and Coordination of Dialogue
- Data and Research
- Strategies for Addressing Irregular Migration and Enabling Regular Migration
- Diasporas
- Strategies for Minimizing Costs/Maximizing Human Development
- Remittances

Source: Page 4. International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Global Forum on Migration and Development: Perspectives from Asia and the Pacific: Issue in Brief, Migration Policy Institute. New York: May 2014: Issue No. 9.

BACKGROUND

The idea of establishing a world-wide forum on Migration and Development originally came from a proposal by Secretary General Kofi Annan at the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) that took place in September 2006 at the General Assembly of the United Nations. The 140 UN Member States discussed the global implications of migration on social and economic development. It was realized that stronger and more informed governance surrounding migration could contribute to development through a complex and ever-changing relationship. The GFMD became an outlet for open and transparent dialogue in an informal, non-binding, and state-led framework.

GFMD meetings have two components:

- **Government Meetings:** open to all UN Member States and Observers. Participants in the Government Meeting are high-level policy makers and practitioners on the ground, who can informally have discussions on the complex issues relating to migration and development.
- **Civil Society Days (CSD):** provides a platform for discussion among representatives of Civil Society, NGOs, migrant associations, diaspora organizations, and representatives of trade unions and the private sector that are associated with migration and development issues.

Government and civil society meetings produce a set of outcomes and non-binding recommendations each year.



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon speaking at the 2014 GFMD held in Stockholm, Sweden

ANNUAL GFMD MEETINGS

Brussels, Belgium 2007:

The first GFMD occurred in Brussels on the 9th to 11th of July 2007. The main objectives of the meeting were to look at the impact of migration on social and economic development in relation to human capital and labour mobility. This came in parallel with the contribution of migrant resources (financial and labour skills). Other issues addressed were policy coherence between migration and development policies and human rights, gender, and root causes. The GFMD in Brussels established their structural framework and Operating Modalities.

Manila, Philippines 2008:

In Manila on the 29th to 30th of October, 2008 the second GFMD meeting occurred. It revolved around the central theme **“Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development.”** The objective here was to emphasize the human face and aspects of migration and the protection of migrant rights, and to examine the impact of such protection on development. The Manila GFMD introduced the concept of 'shared responsibility' of governments to global migration processes and most importantly, to migrant workers.

Athens, Greece 2009:

On the 2th to 5th of November, 2009 the Greek Chair chose the overarching theme **“Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All.”** The Greek have a diverse experience and history with migration. At the time just after the Global Financial Recession, there was a world-wide awareness that migration and development must be positively linked for stability. A discussion about the impact of the economic crisis on global migration was had, as well as a talk about the relationship between migrant integration, reintegration and development.

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico 2010:

The fourth meeting of the GFMD was hosted by Mexico from the 8th to 11th of November, 2010. The central theme was **“Partnerships for Migration and Human Development; Shared Prosperity, Shared Responsibility,”** it aimed to improve interactions between government and civil society. A new concept was introduced, the 'Common Space' to promote a shared responsibility and a debating platform between government and civil society.

Geneva, Switzerland 2011:

On the 29th of November to the 2nd of December, 2011, Switzerland pursued flagship theme **“Taking Action on Migration and Development-Coherence Capacity and Cooperation.”** While putting emphasis on action, the GFMD process sought to make policies and programs work “in the field”. Fourteen thematic meetings were created from key outcomes of the previous GFMD meetings and structured under labour mobility and development, a need to change irregular migration through coherent migration and development strategies and techniques for monitoring and evidence-based reporting.

Port Louis, Mauritius 2012:

With the theme of **“Enhancing the Human Development of Migrants and their Contribution to the Development of Communities and States,”** the sixth annual GFMD was held in Mauritius on November 19th to 22nd 2012. The GFMD in Mauritius had an emphasis on development and illustrated Africa's viewpoints and perspectives. Mauritius became the year that civil society discussions aimed to engage the private sector and diaspora groups - two components that were traditionally less present. Mauritius had themes of labour mobility and placing migration protection and development planning as important issues.

2013:

In 2013, the United Nation High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development pre-empted a convening of the Forum.

Stockholm, Sweden 2014:

The 7th Summit Meeting was held in Sweden on May 14th to 16th in 2014 with the theme of **“Unlocking the Potential of Migration for Inclusive Development.”** The Swedish Chair aimed to launch a new, second phase of the GFMD by having a more development-focused, flexible and strong Forum. Discussions at the ‘Common Space’ included participants from Civil Society, the private sector, international organizations and governments.

Istanbul, Turkey 2015:

On the 14th to 16th of October 2015. The theme was **"Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development."** The forum talks solidified that international migration cannot be addressed effectively by any one country without collaboration and cooperation. This cooperation includes international government and non-government organizations, other aspects of civil society, the private sector, and migrants.

THE UPCOMING GFMD – DHAKA: The ninth GFMD meeting will be held December 10-12, 2016 under the theme **"Migration that works for Sustainable Development of all: Towards a Transformative Migration Agenda."** This year's Forum is focused on three main pillars: economics, sociology and governance of migration and development. This GFMD in Dhaka is incredibly important as there is a push to incorporate through a series of deliverable targets, a range of migration-specific issues, ideas and elements that have already been recognized in the 2007 and 2013 UN General Assembly High Level Dialogues on International Migration and Development and in various other dialogues, platforms and the global consultative processes.

