



NGO Committee on Migration

A committee of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations

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ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF MIGRANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES: GFMD 2011, GFMD 2012, UNGA HLD 2013

In concordance with our mission to protect and promote the human rights of migrants and their families worldwide, the NGO Committee on Migration collaborates with States, UN agencies, and NGO networks in preparing for, and participating in, the Global Forums on Migration and Development as well as the United Nations General Assembly High Level Dialogues on Migration and Development. We suggest new initiatives, and support those of other stakeholders, to better serve the ever increasing number of populations on the move. Below is a brief summary of our activities to contribute to the 2011 and 2012 GFMDs and the upcoming 2013 UNGA HLD.

Contributions to the GFMD 2011

To further our advocacy efforts on behalf of migrants and their families globally, **we participated in three Thematic Meetings and one Day of General Discussion prior to the Geneva 2011 GFMD summit.**, namely: the UNITAR Seminar on *Migration Profiles* at UNHQ on 30th June 2011; the IOM-UN Women - supported workshop on *Domestic Care Workers* in Kingston, Jamaica, 7th-8th September 2011; the Day of General Discussion sponsored by the Monitoring Committee of the Migrant Worker Convention on *The Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers in an Irregular Situation*, in Geneva on 19th September 2011; and the WARBE Foundation- supported meeting on *Lowering Migration Costs* in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 3-4th October, 2011.

We also prepared, and distributed our recommendations, for discussion and action at two of these meetings: in Kingston, for action to ensure the human rights of migrant domestic care workers – recommendations which are in concordance with the General Comment on Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the CEDAW General Recommendation #26 on Women Migrant Workers, and the ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers; and in Geneva, at the DGD, . recommendations for protecting migrant workers in an irregular situation and their family members – in concordance with the statement of the GMG, the ICMC and our other NGO partners and networks.

Our presence and input at these meetings was facilitated by useful contacts with UN Women, IOM, the Swiss Government, and the US Department of State. For example, on 22nd July, 2011, **our Committee was invited to participate in a Briefing by the Bureau of Population, Migrants, and Refugees of the US State Department in**

Washington, D.C., where we shared our respective concerns and expectations regarding the GFMD in Geneva. We met again in Geneva during the Civil Society Days, where the U.S. Delegation indicated their desire to keep in touch with us in preparation for Mauritius and the UNGA High Level Dialogue.

Our Committee was deeply involved in preparations for the Civil Society Days (CSD) – the first CSD to be organized by Civil Society itself. The Swiss Government invited ICMC, a partner and member organization of our Committee, to be the organizing agency/coordinating office for the CSD. For the first time in the history of the GFMDs, Civil Society had the opportunity to organize itself. One of our Committee members was invited to be one of the twelve- member core group in charge of this organizing effort; several of our members were invited to be on the seventy plus member global Consultation Circle; and two of our members were invited to be delegates at the CSD in Geneva.

Our GFMD Taskforce prepared, and our delegates in Geneva circulated, the Committee's recommendations for action on each theme of the four simultaneous working sessions of the CSD: 1) Rights-based policy making for the benefit of migrant workers and families; 2) Improving the protection of migrants moving or working in irregular circumstances; 3) Re-imagining labour mobility; and 4) Investing in development alternatives to migration. **These recommendations, as well as the oral interventions of our delegates during the CSD proceedings, contributed to the calls for action contained in the Civil Society Outcome Statement, presented to Governments** at the start of the GFMD proceedings during the Common Space session Thursday, 1st December, 2011.

Contributions to the GFMD 2012.

In response to the First Draft Concept Paper of Mauritius, for comments by 16th December 2011, we submitted two preliminary recommendations—one substantive and one procedural – for consideration at the brainstorming meeting scheduled to take place in Mauritius on 18th and 19th January 2012. On substance, we urged—in concordance with the 2011 Outcome Statement of the Civil Society Days-- that the right of migrants to family unity and reunification must be the cornerstone of migration policies, and should therefore be mainstreamed into all Round Table discussions. On procedure, we urged that the common space meetings be structured in such a way that an actual dialogue takes place, allowing for a genuine exchange of information and views leading to agreed- upon time and place- specific solutions.

Encouraged by recent statements of States favoring closer working relations with Civil Society, **we strongly urge Governments to respond positively to the questions regarding engagement of Civil Society in the GFMD—questions prepared for consideration at the (closed) GFMD session on States' Partnerships with NGOs**, as follows: 1) Should a joint working group be designated for considering arrangements to strengthen the GFMD relationship with civil society?; 2) Should the GFMD expand the range of nongovernmental observers in the governmental discussions to include

Civil Society? 3) What are the most effective mechanisms for Governments to consult with nongovernmental actors prior to GFMD meetings in order to bring their perspectives into the discussions? and 4) How can these discussions best inform the agenda and organization platform of the 2013 HLD and future meetings of the GFMD? Our NGO Committee would welcome the opportunity to participate in such joint endeavors.

We have also responded to Mauritius' revised concept paper (Draft 2, dated 06.01.2012), sent to us by the 2012 GFMD CS Coordinating Office in Geneva, with a request for our input for their use at the brainstorming session on the 18th and 19th January 2012 in Mauritius. Two of the four proposed Round Table (RT) themes, RT Session 2.2 *Addressing South-South Migration and Development Policies*, as well as Session 3.1, *Shaping Public Perceptions of Migrants and Migration*, would provide a welcome opportunity for joint efforts such as possible Government-Civil Society partnerships to address the social conditions and well-being of migrants and their families. While the theme of RT Session 4, *Gender, Human Rights and Migration*, is most welcome, the discussion could be fruitfully expanded to include race, particularly in the African context of the GFMD.

Contributions to the 2013 UNGA High Level Dialogue

We look forward to a strong participation by Civil Society in the 2013 UNGA HLD on Migration and Development, and the preparatory meetings leading up to it. Our Committee's formation is inextricably associated with our contributions to the 2006 UNGA HLD, which earned us our accreditation as a full fledged NGO. Since then, we have been engaged in fruitful collaborations with the various UN entities – especially with the Migration Section of DESA's Population Division -- which work to promote the human rights of migrants and their families.

We closely cooperated with the UNGA/PGA office in preparation for the Informal Dialogue on Migration and Development which took place at UNHQ on 19th May 2011. Our Committee was chosen as one of only 3 NGOs to represent Civil Society and to give an intervention on behalf of Civil Society at that meeting. We also collaborated with our NGO networks in a preparatory side event on *Migration, Development and Human Rights: a Civil Society Perspective and View to 2013.*

Since then, we have been in touch with the PGA, DESA and the NGLS; with the GMG, especially IOM, UNITAR and UNICEF; and with our NGO partners and networks, about preparations for, and participation in, the 2013 UNGA HLD. We believe that these collaborative partnerships will strengthen our joint efforts to bring about successful outcomes for migrants at the 2013 HLD.

New Initiatives in the Area of International Migration

In the wake of emerging trends in international migration, several initiatives seem particularly timely and worthy of support, including *the ACP Observatory on Migration*,

ICMC's *DRIVE* project, and the *Destination Unknown* project being launched in May 2012 by Terre des Hommes.

With South- South migration as one of the themes proposed by Mauritius for the 2012 GFMD RT Sessions, the ***ACP Observatory on Migration*** launched by the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group) promises to assume a significant role. It is designed to produce reliable data on South-South migration flows in ACP countries for policy makers and civil society, and allow them to make informed decisions on South-South migration and development.

ICMC's ***DRIVE project*** responds to the newly emerging situations of forced migration as recently evidenced in North Africa, of massive complex mixed migration flows, where those fleeing are "third country nationals", mainly economic migrants in both regular and irregular situations. While the project's initial objective has been to strengthen capacity among NGOs, local service providers, and institutions in Greece, Italy, Malta, and Spain responding to boat arrivals, its larger objective is a call for comprehensive approaches to respond effectively to future massive mixed migration flows.

As the situation of minors caught up in these emergencies shows, trafficking is an important, but by no means sole, risk that children on the move endure. In recognition of this, the International Federation Terre des Hommes, this Spring is launching a campaign entitled ***Destination Unknown***, whose focus will be on serving all children involved in migration, whether migrating with the family or alone, left behind, or caught up in emergencies. Our Committee, which was actively involved in the preparations for and participation in the 17th-18th May 2011 UNICEF- led GMG Symposium, *Migration and Youth*, strongly supports this initiative. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders in supporting these, and other new initiatives.
