

GFMD Business Mechanism Meeting

Sunday, 11 December 2016 – Dhaka, Bangladesh

Concept note and guiding questions

Strengthening public-private partnerships in achieving orderly and responsible migration

Background and Objective: Towards a global framework for migration governance

The work of the Ninth Global Forum on Migration and Development is taking place amidst an ongoing worldwide migration crisis. Countries of origin, transit and destination face a range of humanitarian and development issues as they manage increased refugee and economic migration and an imperative to leverage the potential of skills migration in the face of looming labour shortages. A review of current trends leads to several important premises: First, inexorable forces drive migrants to safety and opportunity, regardless of their status. Second, some countries are facing the labour market impact of aging populations and falling birth rates, and increasingly need large numbers of foreign workers to compensate for declining domestic population, while others have large, increasingly educated populations that seek employment. Third, the legal rights of migrants of all statuses, of citizens and of residents must be scrupulously protected. Fourth, public perception of migration is becoming increasingly negative, fuelling initiatives to close borders. Current migration systems and frameworks – developed in the wake of the Second World War – have proven inadequate to deal with these present-day realities.

The convergence of these challenges brings into high relief the fact that there is no modern comprehensive framework for the governance of international migration. Earlier this year, the UN Secretary General convened the High-Level Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, calling for an agreement on responsibility-sharing with respect to refugees and, more broadly, urging member states to work toward a global compact on safe, regular, responsible and orderly migration, consistent with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Ninth GFMD convened stakeholders in government, the private sector and civil society to develop a unified structure for a coherent, balanced governance system that addresses all aspects of migration and integrates development, human rights and security priorities. Key themes are (1) the creation of a set of safe and regular options for the mobility of individuals from one country to another, recognising the positive impact of migration as a driver of prosperity and social progress; (2) recommendations and best practices for a facilitative administration of migration; and (3) safeguards for both foreign and domestic workers.

For the first time in GFMD history, the private sector participates in the Summit as an independent stakeholder. Since its endorsement at the 2015 GFMD Summit under the Turkish Chairmanship, the GFMD Business Mechanism has been working towards building solid

foundation of private sector engagement at the GFMD. A Business Advisory Group, chaired by Mr. Austin Fragomen, leads substantial work on following topics: The need for international skills mobility, fair recruitment and decent work, skills matching and certification recognition, the role of entrepreneurship and circular migration for development. A business position paper will be presented at this GFMD business meeting. While the paper focuses on international skills mobility, it does also address the other mentioned topics, which may be further developed in the coming years for future GFMD Summits. The Business Mechanism's overarching goal is a regulatory environment in which labour migration policies support business and development to create job opportunities and economic growth.

In the current international context, many migration related initiatives seek public-private dialogue. The Business Mechanism serves as a channel for public-private dialogue at the GFMD. Two meetings were organised in 2016 to define the working themes and to create an engaged business constituency. The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the WEF Global Agenda Council on Migration, the co-coordinators of the Business Mechanism, will continue to develop the work of the Business Mechanism with a view to serve further purposes within the international context, including in the framework of the UN Global Compact on migration.

Topics for discussion:

The focus for the GFMD Business Meeting will be the launch of the business position paper. The presentation of the paper will focus mainly on the need for international skills mobility. The discussants - representing business, governments and civil society - will be invited to comment on the paper and to further develop other topics addressed by the Business Mechanism during its first year: fair recruitment and decent work, skills matching and certification recognition, the role of entrepreneurship and circular migration for development. Speakers are also invited to reflect on the way forward regarding the role that the Business Mechanism could play in other relevant public-private dialogues on migration, including the global compact.

I. Presentation of the business case for migration

A. The importance of global skills mobility

Around the world, developed economies are facing the labour impact of aging populations and falling birth rates. The shrinking domestic labour pool means shortages of workers at all skill levels. This is caused in part by demographic realities and an inadequate alignment of educational programming and skills training with the needs of business. Moreover, emerging global trade, investment and finance regimes demand that people are placed at the centre of economic planning and business decision-making; this requires facilitating the movement of people to a greater extent than in the past. Policymakers should recognise labour market needs and modern business practices in the revision and reorganisation of immigration systems. Multinational organisations, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, overwhelmingly seek predictability and efficiency in immigration processing and systems. Laws should be crafted to accommodate flexibility and future evolution in employment models.

B. The need for fair recruitment and decent work

The private sector strongly supports the promotion of fair and ethical recruitment practices to promote human rights, reduce abuse and avoid the negative consequences of migration. Employers of skilled and unskilled workers alike must ensure that recruited employees are not victims of trafficking, and are adequately informed of their rights and obligations. Recruiters and other employment service providers play a significant role in matching labour supply and skills with international employment opportunities. Because recruiters are often the first entry point into international employment for many foreign nationals, it is imperative to promote the responsible and ethical agencies that ensure high quality recruitment standards that protect migrant workers throughout the recruitment process.

C. Role of entrepreneurship and circular migration for development

There is an ongoing worldwide competition for capital and ideas from migrants who can make contributions in a unique way. A prime example is in the technology sector, where many of the top global companies are run by foreign nationals. Economic citizenship/residence and entrepreneur programs are a means to attract foreign capital and ideas as well as foreign innovators themselves. But to avoid the negative impact of “brain drain” and to promote the economic and social development in sending countries, organisations and governments must promote and encourage circular migration as well as the efficient flow of remittances.

D. Migrants in situation of crises: Skills matching to labour market needs and certification recognition

The private sector is indispensable to achieve a positive and sustainable result in providing employment opportunities to migrants in situations of crises and building human capital. Private organisations around the world are already engaged in an array of efforts to support migrants’ entry into the local workforce. Corporations play a major role in skills and knowledge assessments, programs to match skills and opportunities and skills training through apprenticeships and programs to match skills and opportunities.

II. Public-private dialogue on international migration

A. Role of the Business Mechanism in ongoing intergovernmental initiatives

While the Business Mechanism serves as a public-private dialogue in the framework of the GFMD, its expertise and network (in terms of both business knowledge and public-private partnership) could be used in other relevant international fora. The Business Mechanism could serve as a platform for businesses to engage with Governments and other stakeholders on migration issues beyond the GFMD, including the UN migration compact and the SDGs related to migration. With a view to preventing working in silos and potential duplication of initiatives, we should also consider ways to feed other initiatives with the conclusions of the Business Mechanism.

B. Structure and way forward for the Business Mechanism

The Business Advisory Group will organise its work within thematic working groups. It will also focus on regional contexts to provide adequate recommendations. By focusing on specific thematic and regions, the Business Mechanism will be able to further advocate for fair and open immigration policy.

Guiding questions

- How does the Business mechanism's position paper and recommendations advance the global discourse on migration?
- In what ways can your organization/government leverage private-public partnerships to pursue the recommendations?
- What role can the Business Mechanism play in other international fora on migration?