

**GFMD Friends of the Forum Meeting
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GFMD Business Mechanism – priorities and roadmap

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Check against delivery

- Thank you for the invitation to share the GFMD Business Mechanism’s priorities and roadmap at this Friends of the Forum meeting.
- We would like to reiterate the business community’s priorities and link them to the co-chairs agenda. Our roadmap will very much align with the co-chairs’ program of activities, as well as with our available resources for 2022-2023. We are working on a budget based on the information currently available to us, that we will be pleased to share in due course.

I. On the GFMD Business Mechanism’s priorities

- The main focus for employers is to have access to the skills needed to run their businesses. We hear many employers say that “the skills have no nationalities”. Employers hire workers based on a skill set needed for open positions.
- In many countries, hiring activity has returned to pre-pandemic levels. In the U.S., for example, employers report their most optimistic hiring intentions in more than 20 years. However, such optimism is being tempered by the highest levels of global talent shortages in 15 years – particularly in the hospitality and leisure industry, where labour shortages have impeded restoration of normal levels of service and forced business closures. As per a recent ManpowerGroup survey, globally, 69% of employers report difficulty filling vacancies.¹
- In this context, let me recall the priority of the Business community. 4 areas:
 1. Advocating for **legal pathways for migration** that ensure access to and retention of skills coming from abroad. The private sector cannot integrate a foreign workforce, if pathways are not available for these workers to have access to employment.
 2. Regulatory frameworks conducive to **responsible recruitment**. Once the skills are identified, the process of hiring the workers – either directly or through placement agencies - must be done according to proper regulations. Weak regulations in the recruitment industry can lead to abuses in the recruitment process.
 3. **Alignment of skills and migration policies**. Employers are best placed to assess what skills are in demand and where the skills shortages are at national level. Skills recognition frameworks should be adapted to these realities.
 4. **Leveraging technology**. AI, Blockchain and other tech tools, can enhance migration management. We strive to showcasing concrete innovative solutions through tech start-ups working in the field. Since the GFMD Summit in Quito in 2020, we have organized three start up competitions which brought forward innovation and technology-based solutions.

¹ The Manpower Group, The Talent Shortage, 2021, available at: <https://go.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage>

II. On the GFMD co-chairs priorities

- The expertise of the business community will certainly be of benefit to the France-Senegal co-chair's priorities, in particular on labour migration (priority 4), the public narrative (priority 5) and the governance (priority 6).
- **On Labour migration:** The GFMD has long had labour migration on top of its priority. And we welcome this continuity. Over the years, challenges and opportunities for workers, local authorities and employers have been highlighted. What we feel needs more emphasis on is a conversation on legal pathways to have access to employment.
- Global estimates indicate that labour migrants make up a significant and growing percentage of the migrant population, numbering more than 169 million individuals in 2019. Of these migrant workers, 86.9% are in high-income and upper-middle-income countries. Greater employment opportunities are one of the factors attracting migrants to these countries. However, the ILO data also show that the share of migrant workers in high-income countries has fallen from 74.7% in 2013 to 67.4% in 2019. This fall could be attributed to evolving and potentially restrictive migration policies.²
- As companies are re-hiring and looking to fill gaps left by the pandemic, companies, particularly small and medium enterprises, will need even more predictability in migration systems to ensure they have access to foreign workers. We would encourage the conversation on labour migration to take that direction in collaboration with the GFMD Business Mechanism.
- **On public narrative:** the business community has been active in the It Takes A community campaign, led by the GFMD working Group on public narrative. We contributed with 20 brief videos of business leaders, who highlighted the positive impact that well-managed migration has on economies and on sustainable development. We should not forget the D of GFMD – Development. Jobs support development. We referred to “essential workers” needed in the economy during Covid. Migrant workers are not only “essential workers” in times of crises, but an essential part of the solutions needed to recover from the crises.
- We have to look beyond the remittances – which are an important and key aspect. But equally important are the skills that migrant workers gain from working abroad. Countries of origin can also profit from these returning skills to ensure continued development, with a view to further prosper. And that is the shift of narrative that is needed. To value the migrant workers, not only for the remittances they send home, but for the skills they acquire, and which will benefit countries of origin.
- **On governance:** the GFMD has embraced the multi-level governance idea over the years, through the creation of the three GFMD Mechanisms. The GFMD recognizes that the governance of migration needs the participation of migrants' organisations, of business organisations, and of local authorities. This whole-of-society approach needs now to be embraced at national level by countries. Institutional mechanisms for engagement with various stakeholders are solutions that some countries have already implemented, and which show good results.
- Please use the GFMD Mechanisms structures - well implemented, well organized and well-coordinated - to help you build such institutional mechanisms at national level. On the IOE's side, you can count on our members, the 140 national employers' federations to ensure the most representative voices of business are present in your national consultations.

² ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers, third Edition, 2021: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf

III. On GFMD process

- We congratulate once again France and Senegal for taking the leadership in driving the GFMD forward. As we recover from a global crisis – and as the GFMD also recovers from its own internal reviews – the GFMD process needs driving forces. We trust that France and Senegal will play this crucial role in the coming 18 months.
- Of course, France and Senegal will need support from the whole GFMD community: from the governments first and foremost, as it is key that the process remains State-led, but also from the GFMD Mechanisms and from all Friends of the Forum.
- We have the luxury of time – 18 months to prepare a Summit, with meaningful exchange and contributions in between. On the GFMD Business Mechanism’s side, we commit to remain engaged through the process.
- However, there is so much our small group can do, and there is so much our little piece of the puzzle should be contributing to. We really urge Governments to actively support the GFMD, to listen to and engage with its stakeholders. The GFMD is unique in this regard. The GCM process is far from the level of GFMD when it comes to multi-stakeholder engagement.
- (We support the idea put forward by the civil society to support the preparation and potentially co-chairs the roundtables, through the expertise of our constituents, using also the wide range of available data/papers produced already by our various groups.)
- We look forward to receiving more information about the workplan and to working together.

Thank you.