



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, DECENTRALIZATION
AND E-GOVERNANCE



Special Session on the Future of the Forum

Summary of Discussions

Heads of Delegations met in a special session to discuss issues linked to the Future of the Forum. The debate was chaired by Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary General.

In his introduction, Mr. Sutherland gave a brief reminder on the developments that led GFMD where it stands today, acknowledging that it had come a long way to become a unique platform for governments to exchange views, ideas and experiences on migration and development issues. The time had come to make an interim assessment and revisit some of the practical aspects of the Forum on this occasion of the Athens meeting.

The next three meetings of the Forum should allow for a thorough assessment of GFMD that would in turn permit to review its future, at the High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development of the General Assembly to be held in 2013.

The discussion centered on the document presented by the Chair on the basis of a recent debate at the GFMD Steering Group. The richness of the exchanges and the number of speakers (39) highlighted the high level of knowledge and interest of the participants about GFMD. They expressed their overall satisfaction with the way the Forum is conducted, notably on the basis of the Operating Modalities. They re-affirmed that the process should remain informal and state-led. They underlined its multi-dimensional character and emphasized the importance of the development dimension that needs to be strengthened. In this respect, the need to draw on the broad base of available expertise was mentioned.

Participants expressed interest for the suggestion of developing a multi-year GFMD agenda, notably for the sake of continuity. They also underlined the need for flexibility and innovation, through wide consultation, while respecting the thematic priorities of the successive chairs.

The usefulness of the GFMD Support Unit was acknowledged and several governments pledged financial support for its functioning.

The strategic role of the GFMD Steering Group was emphasized, while, at the same time, the difficulties linked to its size (presently 35 countries) were noted. A smaller group, composed of fully committed governments, could be envisaged on the basis of a system to be determined. The Friends of the Forum, open to all countries and observers, should not only be informed on all GFMD matters but also consulted for input.

There was a general consensus to consider that the main GFMD outcomes are the policy recommendations, while exchange of good practices, partnerships and networking were also deemed valuable. Improved dissemination of these outcomes and their follow-up was asked for, notably through the use of the GFMD website and other tools.

Many participants recognized the value for the Forum of the civil society input and of an improved dialogue with the same. At the same time, they stressed the importance of preserving the governmental character of the Forum.

Some participants mentioned the need for the Forum to give more attention to regional organisations and to the necessity of facilitating the Low Income and Least Developed Countries participation in the GFMD preparatory process.

A general consensus developed around the notion that GFMD meetings should remain cost-conscious, in line with their informal character. Organising governments should submit their provisional budget at an early stage so that contributions could be announced in a timely manner.

As primary agents for enhancing national and international coherence, the role and responsibilities of national Focal Points should be strengthened.

At the closing of the session, the incoming Chair took note of the remarks made during the meeting and said that they will be taken into account in the preparations of the 4th GFMD.