

# FINAL REPORT

GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
CIVIL SOCIETY DAYS 2018  
MOROCCO

***“Goals, Compacts, Action:  
Human mobility that works for migrants and societies”***



Global Forum on  
**MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT**  
Civil Society



## INDEX

### Report of the GFMD Civil Society Days 2018

I.	<a href="#">Migration Week in Marrakesh: the end of a two year process</a>	3
II.	<a href="#">Civil Society Days: a snapshot</a>	4
III.	<a href="#">Migration Week gets off to a dynamic start</a>	5
IV.	<a href="#">Overarching reflections</a>	6
V.	<a href="#">Civil Society Recommendations &amp; Commitments</a>	7
i.	<a href="#">Needs identified</a>	7
ii.	<a href="#">10 Civil Society Commitments</a>	8
iii.	<a href="#">Actions towards a new era of global mobility</a>	11
VI.	<a href="#">Looking towards the GFMD 2019 – Quito, Ecuador: moving from policy to action</a>	12
VII.	<a href="#">Acknowledgements</a>	14
VIII.	<a href="#">Annex of documents</a>	15

#### GFMD Civil Society Days 2018: Key Documents

- [GFMD 2018: lessons learned](#)
- [Programme of the GFMD Civil Society Days 2018](#)
- [Reference documents](#)
- [List of participants](#)
- [Statement of the Chair of the GFMD Civil Society Days 2018](#)
- [International Steering Committee \(ISC\)](#)
- [Global Compact for Migration](#)
- [Global Compact on Refugees](#)
- [12 Civil Society Recommendations for the future of the GFMD](#)
- [GFMD Civil Society Days Evaluation Report](#)

## Global Forum for Migration and Development – Civil Society Days 2018

### I. Migration Week in Marrakesh: the end of a two year process

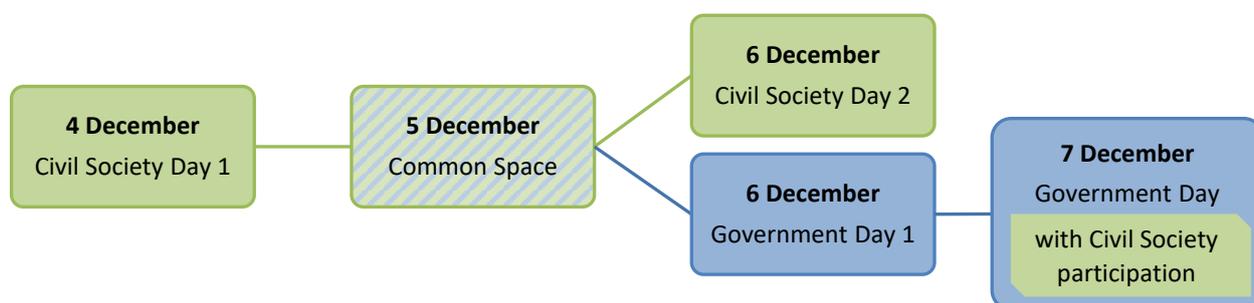
The last two years have been busy ones for civil society and the migration movement as a whole. Inspired by the **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants** in 2016, civil society rapidly responded to a range of new global processes, with coordination and momentum picking up throughout the negotiating phases and continuing towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) as well as the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

After a year of negotiations and consultations, civil society channeled a great deal of energy into the development of this year's **Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society Days**; an atmosphere which permeated the whole event. With the GFMD discussions and debates focusing heavily on the content and implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, the Civil Society Days provided an opportune occasion to come together, reflect on what has been achieved, but more importantly to take stock of where we need to go.

This year's GFMD, and in particular, the Civil Society Days played an important role in setting the scene as the very first event in the "**Marrakesh Migration Week**". While the GFMD takes place each year in a different location, 2018 was unique in that never before has it preceded such an important UN conference on a similar theme. The **UN Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Migration** provided the impetus for a large array of organizations with activities related to migration to establish events of their own in the same location. **The result:** a week full of migration-related events from every angle. World leaders, civil society, youth leaders, academics, the private sector, trade unions and other stakeholders hosted and attended close to a hundred events dedicated to the many nuances of migration and development. After a week of intense discussions, the week ended with the adoption of the Global Compact, a sense of what is to come in the broader migration community and the tasks that lie ahead for civil society to engage in and advocate around a new global process.



## II. Civil Society Days: a snapshot



- A total of **298** civil society delegates participated in the Civil Society Days (CSD)
- For over **45%** of participants, this was their **first** GFMD, reflecting a broader and more diverse participation.
- Of the **298** registered civil society delegates who attended, there were:
  - **55%** female, **45%** male
  - **47%** migrants, refugees or members of the diaspora and **44%** representing organizations led by migrants, refugees or members of the diaspora
  - **27%** representing human rights organizations, **30%** migrant/diaspora NGOs, **24%** development groups, **4%** from academia or think tanks, **8%** from trade unions/workers' organizations and **1%** from private sector, **6%** youth rapporteurs
  - **59** youth representatives (less than 35 years old)
  - **25%** from Europe, **16%** from Asia, **15%** from Africa, **13%** from North America, **7%** from Latin America; **7%** from the Middle East, **4%** from the Pacific regions and **8%** representing global organizations/networks; all from **58** different countries. There were also **5%** representation from Moroccan based organizations.
- **56** observers, among them **19** government representatives.
- Livestreaming - The English livestreaming had **800** views, French **350** views and the Spanish more than **150**

### III. Migration Week gets off to a dynamic start

Headlining a week of diverse meetings, grounded in the theme of migration, civil society was eager that the voice and breadth of its experience be heard loud and clear. For the first time, the Civil Society Days were facilitated by a **three-person chair team**, led by **Roula Hamati**, with **Mamadou Goïta** and **Hamza Ibrahim** supporting in the roles of co-chair.

Hamza made sure that youth perspective was heard first and foremost, and reminded us that there is still room for improvement in terms of making sure the voice of the present and the future is heard within the movement and in discussions of policies that affect them. Mamadou brought the expertise of a seasoned migrant advocate with experience as the regional representative for West Africa throughout the negotiations of the Global Compact and an important voice in the Peoples Global Action. Representing the 2018 Civil Society Days, Roula brought a wealth of experience from previous GFMD's. A "youth" herself, Roula has held the role of regional coordinator for the MENA civil society consultation on the Global Compact in 2017, as well as the moderator of the Puerto Vallarta Stocktaking Civil Society Conference. She has been very much involved in the Compact negotiations, experience which gave her a perspective with which to link the various threads of the Civil Society Days sessions.

- **Recommendations Day** or first Civil Society Day, on **4 December**, was the first moment that civil society actors from around the world could gather together since the negotiations of the Global Compact for Migration concluded. After some general introductory remarks and plenary sessions, participants broke out into four thematic sessions to develop messages and recommendations to be shared with governments in "Common Space" the following day. Discussions centered around:
  - Actions responding to the drivers of **forced displacement, including due to climate change and environmental degradation**
  - Actions ensuring **safe, dignified and rights-based transit, entry, reception and return**
  - Actions ensuring **decent work, labor rights and fair recruitment**
  - Actions ensuring **the social, economic and political inclusion of migrants in communities**
- **Common Space**, on **5 December**, saw civil society and governments come together in half a day of plenary and breakout sessions to discuss the implementation of international commitments in the spirit of shared partnership. Co-organised by the civil society coordinating office together with the GFMD 2017-2018 Moroccan Co-Chair, governments, civil society and other stakeholders explored the following themes:
  - Ensuring an **enabling environment for migrants and diaspora to contribute to sustainable development**
  - Ensuring the **inclusion of migrants**
  - Ensuring **safe, dignified and right-based transit, entry, reception and return**
  - Ensuring **decent work, labor rights and fair recruitment**
- **Commitments Day**, or second Civil Society Day on **6 December** saw a candid one-hour conversation with the new Director General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), **Antonio Vitorino**. This was an opportunity for civil society participants to interact with IOM leadership as it assumes its new role as the secretariat of the UN Network on Migration, in addition to having its overarching identity as the UN migration agency fully endorsed. Participants then again broke into the same thematic groups from Recommendations Day, delving deeper into the content of the four themes, this

time with an internal focus: sharing practices and strategizing for collective action, before sitting down to discuss future avenues and next steps.

In addition to six side events, a “**Green room**” took place on both Civil Society Days to explore models of engagement for civil society in global governance of migration. This session was designed as an opportunity for participants to give input into a study on the future structure and focus of civil society representation, coordination and organization. With the current mandate of the Action Committee being extended until 31 December 2019 (just as the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration gets underway), a consultant was engaged to explore how civil society can collectively contribute to and shape the implementation, follow-up and review of the Compact. The session invited thoughts on three key questions:

- In this new era of migration governance, what are our collective activities?
- What should civil society’s collective priorities and milestones be for 2019?
- How do we structure ourselves to make this workable?

The input received will form part of a report that will be launched in February 2019.

- **Platforms for Partnerships and closing ceremony of the GFMD:** In recognition of the important role of civil society in the future implementation and follow up of the Global Compact on Migration, and in line with the [12 civil society recommendations for the future of the GFMD](#), all civil society participants were invited for the very first time to contribute to the second GFMD Government Day, and to participate in the Platform for Partnerships, as well as the official closing ceremony of the GFMD. This new opportunity for exchange between civil society and governments was welcomed by civil society. Key messages and commitments discussed throughout the Civil Society Days were brought to governments by the Civil Society Days Chair, Roula Hamati.

#### **IV. Overarching reflections**

The 2018 GFMD Civil Society Days kicked off Migration Week in Marrakesh with a great sense of moment. Despite the many challenges and diverging voices of stakeholders around migration governance, civil society delegates shared a general sense of accomplishment about what had been achieved throughout the year. Whether we look at the global level, during the negotiations of the Global Compact for Migration, or at the daily work of many local, grassroots organizations, 2018 was a defining year for civil society as a whole. All civil society delegates therefore shared a feeling of responsibility and determination to move forward together and engage with all actors in the work ahead.

Throughout the Civil Society Days, two themes emerged consistently: ***implementation*** and ***communication***. Grassroots activists, migrants, national trade union representatives, regional advocates and local authorities shared examples of how a global commitment such as the Compact can have concrete impact on their daily work, as well as how civil society actors can support each other around the world. A strong call for collective planning, coordination and advocacy in the implementation phase of the Global Compact on Migration permeated the Civil Society Days, with near-consensus on the need to develop a **joint multi-year work plan** in the immediate future to frame this collective effort going forward.

**Communication** was discussed both broadly and specifically: there was a sense of concern expressed over the effective use of communication by populist political and social movements to disseminate false, misleading or hyperbolic information about migration and migrants. Alarm was expressed at the effect this had not only on migrants and societies, but also on the democratic and rights-based principles on which post-World War II international cooperation has been built. These discussions resulted in a recognition of the need for more emphasis and energy on communication, information sharing and bridge-building with non-traditional actors such as local authorities and the private sector, for example. **These elements should feature prominently in any future work plan.**

## V. Civil Society Recommendations & Commitments

The following section is an attempt to reflect the diversity and the breadth of the discussions and recommendations that came out of the thematic sessions on both Civil Society Days, as well as the overarching thematic reports. In this sense, we have extracted a number of gaps that were identified in responding to the needs of migrants and their communities, as well as [10 commitments for future advocacy and action](#) that were presented by the Civil Society Days Chair at the official closing ceremony of the GFMD. Recognizing that many of these elements are transversal and can equally be applied to other areas of action, we present this outline as an introduction and potential catalyst for more thinking around the development of a common civil society multi-year workplan.

### i. Needs identified

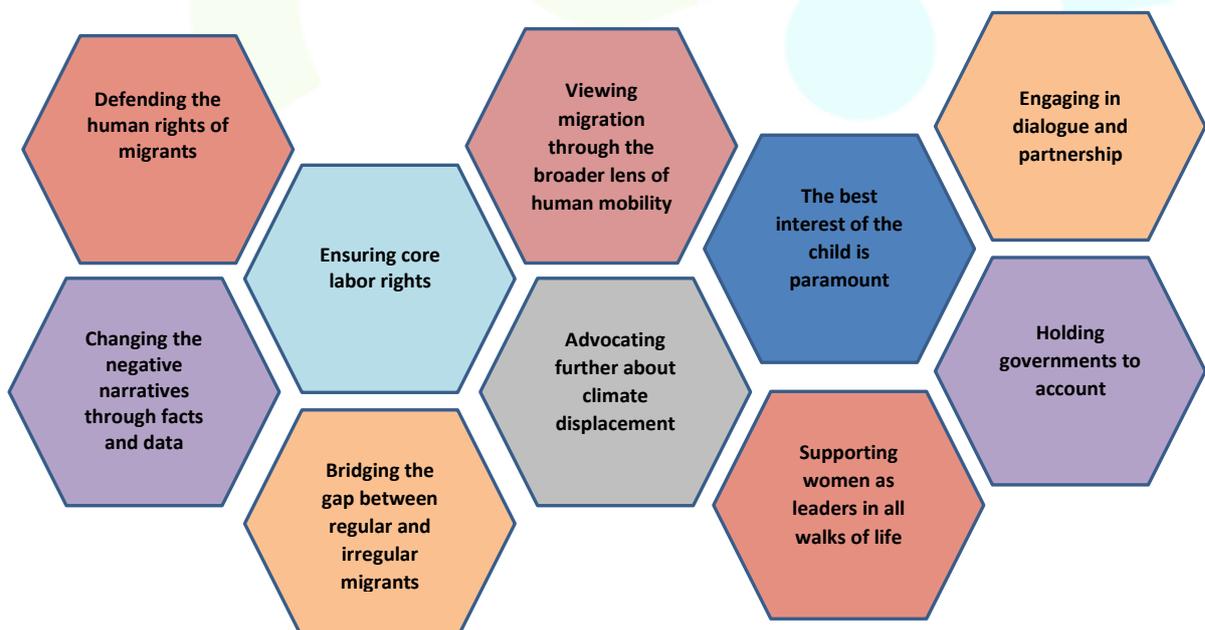
**Throughout the Civil Society Days, the following *needs* were identified:**

- The need to ensure that all stages of migration are governed by human rights, labor rights and other international standards, including by:
  - Aligning national and local migration policies with relevant human rights and international labor standards
  - Ensuring access to protection, including at international borders.
  - Ensuring that returns are not effectuated to countries where the safety and dignity of the returnee cannot be guaranteed, including due to climate change.
- The need to recognize climate change as a driver of forced displacement and to develop adaptive strategies with those affected by climate displacement, including by:
  - Enhancing partnerships which address drivers of forced displacement.
  - Encourage the adoption of national commitments on climate action.
- The need to address negative narratives on migration, including by:
  - Developing communications and advocacy strategies at various levels (states, politicians, media) to combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination by developing positive discourses.
- The need to ensure the protection of all migrants, including through:
  - Early identification of vulnerabilities.
  - Specific attention paid to the needs of children, women, migrants with irregular status, those at risk of being trafficked, or people forced to flee due to climate change.
  - Regulation of firms that exploit women's unprotected labor.

- The need to adopt a holistic approach to human mobility, which takes into account all people on the move, regardless of their status, including by:
  - Ensuring access to justice, legal representation and due process
  - Ensuring access to services
- The need of inclusion of migrants into communities, including by:
  - Fostering economic empowerment
  - Encouraging language skills
  - Focusing on creating economic opportunities for migrants who have returned
- The need to enhance safe and regular pathways, including by:
  - Placing specific emphasis on pathways for children on the move and children affected by migration.
  - Ensuring that all cases of child statelessness are swiftly resolved.
  - Avoiding overly strict visa regulations.
  - Increasing the availability of regular pathways across all skills levels, to prevent migrant workers for being used and returned when they are no longer needed. Advocating for migrant workers as human beings, not a service.

## ii. 10 Civil Society Commitments

The following **ten commitments** were presented at the official closing ceremony of the GFMD, by the GFMD Civil Society Chair, highlighting both some of the key issue and overarching themes identified by civil society in relation to the implementation of the Global Compact.



### 1. Defending the human rights of migrants

Civil society commits to ensure that the Compact is interpreted and implemented in accordance with human rights principles. In doing so, it is vital that migrants are at the heart of all policies that affect them.

### 2. Changing the negative narratives on migration through facts and data

Civil society commits to collect and use facts and data to highlight the contributions of migrants to societies, with a view to changing the negative narratives on migration and to foster social inclusion at the local and national levels. We further commit to monitoring national action plans as they are developed to ensure that they have a clear focus on the inclusion and non-discrimination of migrants.

### 3. Ensuring core labor rights

Civil society commits to continuing to advocate and lobby so that all migrant workers, regardless of status, are guaranteed their core labor rights including the freedom of association and collective bargaining and to ensure that those rights are respected and protected at all stages of migration.

**This is a major cross-cutting theme that was raised in many sessions**

### 4. Bridging the gap between regular and irregular migrants

Civil society commits to mobilize, advocate, and lobby governments to bridge the gap between regular and irregular migrants at the local and national levels. We also commit to support those grassroots actors already providing services to all migrants - and other vulnerable persons - regardless of status and with special attention to the most vulnerable migrants – regardless of their migration status.

### 5. Viewing migration through the broader lens of human mobility

Civil society commits to viewing and advocating for migration from the broader lens of human mobility and to work at the national level to ensure the joint implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees to ensure that it is not rigid definitions that define people and the way they are treated, but their humanity.

We encourage all professionals to consider the importance of working to bridge the two compacts, as well as initiatives that bring the focus of the compacts together under one umbrella through projects such as the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts.

## **6. Advocating further about climate displacement**

Civil society commits to demanding a stronger climate displacement agenda in the Global Compact and in other spaces, such as the GFMD, so that the unique risks facing climate-vulnerable communities are recognized and addressed in a short time frame.

It was reminded that priority should be placed on long-term solutions, rather than short-term fixes which often exacerbate the underlying issues. Migration deterrence policies are not a strategy for sustainable development especially when environmental degradation is increasingly making livelihoods precarious.

## **7. The best interest of the child is paramount**

Civil society commits to holding governments to account to ensure that the best interest of the child as the primary consideration in all matters concerning migrant children is always respected as a minimum standard. No child should be detained for immigration purposes or separated from their family.

## **8. Supporting women as leaders in all walks of life**

Civil society commits to recognize and support the role of women as leaders in communities, families and economies whether as primary migrants or as those left behind when other family members migrate.

## **9. Engaging in dialogue and partnership**

Civil society commits to remaining critical while remaining engaged with States, UN agencies and other stakeholders as a respected partner in the implementation of the Global Compact.

## **10. Holding governments to account**

Civil society commits to monitor and keep governments to account on all their commitments. We will take the initiative to create monitoring systems to track progress at the different levels, connecting the national, regional and global and to create multi-year civil society action plans for implementation.

### iii. Actions towards a new era of global mobility

The following *actions* were identified for civil society to move forward with in 2019:

- Advocate for rights-based equitable development that meets the economic, social and cultural rights of all, facilitating the election of migration as a choice, not a necessity.
  - Encouraging States to ratify and implement applicable international conventions and human rights standards (e.g. UN Convention for Migrant Workers, all ILO conventions, 2030 Agenda, etc.).
  - Use positive discourse with a view to educating around the factual benefits of migration.
  - Adopt a holistic approach which links to work on poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate change.
  
- Advocate for and ensure a greater inclusion of migrants and diasporas in policy-making mechanisms.
  - Develop national and local action plans for the inclusion of migrants, based on the principle of non-discrimination.
  - Involve affected communities in order to reduce vulnerability and isolation and to enhance participation of migrants in decisions that affect them.
  
- Activities to raise awareness among civil society at all levels as well as the broader public about the Global Compact for Migration, through:
  - The development of a toolkit/guide.
  - Tailored messages to respond to states' sensitivities around various issues.
  
- Promote greater dialogue and stronger partnerships between all stakeholders at all levels:
  - National and local and regional authorities
  - Private stakeholders, employers, trade unions
  - The media
  - Including through the creation of platforms to share good practices, for example by identifying "GCM Champion states".
  
- Conduct mapping of existing systems, platforms and monitoring tools, establishing new ones where necessary, to support and measure:
  - The implementation of human rights, international labor conventions and climate action plans, in particular regarding return, reintegration and alternatives to return
  - The implementation of the GCM, including in local contexts to ensure a transparent implementation and that human rights are mainstreamed in all activities.
  - The identification of vulnerabilities from the earliest opportunity, as well as missing migrants, exploited migrant children, etc.
  - The implementation of firewalls for all people on the move
  - The creation of safe and regular pathways.

## VI. Towards the GFMD 2019 – Quito, Ecuador: moving from policy to action

*“Civil Society Days are like oxygen that helps governments and international organizations think better and more creatively about finding solutions for international migration. That is what we need: solutions with a short-term, middle-term, and long term perspective.”*

These words spoken by Ms. Ilse Hahn from the German government, in the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Days reflect perfectly the sentiments expressed throughout the event and subsequent evaluation. The time to move from policy to action is now.

The Civil Society Days ended with a strong conviction that the 2019 GFMD should be linked very strongly to the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, with considerable interest in a focus on regional and national implementation. This will be an important moment to take stock of the initial achievements and initiatives taken by governments to implement the Compact and to ensure that each subsequent GFMD until the first International Migration Review Forum is used as an opportunity to see how governments are moving forward with their commitments.

Also in the closing ceremony of the Civil Society Days, **Ambassador Arturo Cabrera Hidalgo** of Ecuador spoke of a crucial moment to respond to new responsibilities, while at the same time responding to existing obligations. In this sense, coordination is urgently needed to engage collectively within existing frameworks, which will allow civil society to have their priorities heard at the local, regional and global levels.

Ambassador Cabrera shared his vision for the development of the GFMD process in 2019 under the Ecuador chair, specifically mentioning an intention to reflect the strong influence of civil society and the vision to ensure the GFMD is reinforced to make it more inclusive and results-oriented. The decision to bring the GFMD chair back to Latin America for the first time since 2010 is of great significance given the current challenges facing migrants in the region, and the emphasis that Ecuador has already placed on recognizing the need for greater protection of human rights in migration policies.

While there is much work to be done as we move towards Quito, we are encouraged by the incoming Chair’s focus on principles that are in line with our own. Seeing the GFMD as the bridge between the two Global Compacts will be instrumental in closing the gaps in existing international legal frameworks, particularly in regard to:

- Non-discrimination against people in situations of human mobility;
- Non-criminalization of people due to their immigration status; and
- Recognition of the positive contributions of migrants to development.

From civil society’s perspective, one key step would be setting down a **common work plan** for the next year to ensure that we are playing an active role in measuring the progress on the implementation of the GCM and in reviewing the commitments made. Elements of such a planning could be based on the above overview, and should include as a minimum:

- Collective planning, coordination and advocacy in implementing the Global Compact on Migrations, including:

- Advocating for a greater inclusion of migrants and diasporas in policy-making mechanisms.
- Activities to raise awareness among civil society at all levels as well as the broader public about the Global Compact for Migration, through the development of a toolkit/guide.
- A strategy to ensure effective communication, information-sharing and to enhance partnerships between all affected stakeholders at all levels.
  - Including through the creation of platforms to share good practices, including through the identification of “Champion GCM states”.
- A civil society monitoring framework for the implementation of the GCM

With a commitment to “promoting the necessary changes in the narrative of human mobility”, we very much look forward to working together in close partnership with the incoming Chair towards human mobility that works for migrants and societies. As Ms. Hahn reminded us “Moving forward with implementation will be no easy feat... disagreements will come up, as will different perceptions on how to best meet the needs of all stakeholders. Discussions around diverging opinions are not the problem, they can nourish the process and bring about better solutions. Developing a 360 degree vision of migration requires us all to broaden our horizons we must wholeheartedly uphold.” We, as civil society must commit to continue to open discussions on topics of migration that were once deemed too sensitive, drawing on the elements described above as we move towards the next GFMD.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society Coordinating Office would like to thank all those who contributed to making the GFMD Civil Society Days (CSD) 2018 a success.

In particular our sincere thanks and gratitude to the following persons and institutions:

- Secretary General Mr. El Habib Nadir, Moroccan Co-Chair of GFMD 2017-2018, the Government of Morocco and the incredible Moroccan team
- Ambassador Götz Schmidt-Bremme, German Co-Chair of GFMD 2017-2018
- Ambassador Arturo Cabrera Hidalgo, representing the Ecuadorian Chair of GFMD 2019
- Mr. António Vitorino, Director General, IOM
- Donors of the GFMD Civil Society Programme 2018: The Governments of Morocco, Switzerland, Germany / GIZ, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands; Bangladesh, Canada, the OAK Foundation; and ICMC.
- The GFMD Support Unit, Geneva
- The members of the International Steering Committee (ISC)
- Ms. Roula Hamati, Chair, and Mr. Mamadou Goita and Mr. Hamza Ibrahim, Co-Chairs of the 2018 GFMD Civil Society Days
- All speakers, moderators, rapporteurs and special guests
- Ms. Sajeela Kershi, Inspirational speaker
- All participants of the GFMD Civil Society Days 2018
- Our local partner, Forum des alternatives Maroc (FMAS) and Mr. Azeddine Aabbar, logistical assistant
- All the staff at Hotel Palm Plaza, Marrakesh
- All service providers in Morocco
- Mr. Aminul Haque for designing the Marrakesh GFMD logo and banners
- All volunteers

## ANNEX. 1

### GFMD 2018: lessons learned

Following the GFMD Civil Society Days, an evaluation survey was shared with all participants to enable us to reflect on the experience and how it can be improved in future years. The feedback received reflects the views of over 75 participants, and can be consulted in more detail in [the evaluation booklet](#).

While there was valuable feedback about many of the specific aspects of the programme and coordination, for example:

- the themes of climate change and decent work & labor rights should be repeated in the coming year(s);
- there should be a recalibration of the time spent in plenary sessions to ensure more time for working sessions.

There were a number of interesting takeaways that resounded around future editions of the GFMD Civil Society Days in the broader sense:

- On the balance, participants seemed pleased with the **diversity** of the delegates, particularly with **youth represented more visibly** than in previous years.
- It was suggested that the national level and in particular, grassroots organisations, should be better represented in the future.
- Some suggested that the Civil Society Days should be more **action-based**, with specific moments dedicated for **strategizing** and **developing concrete next steps** and commitments which can be measured;
- In this sense, the opportunity for civil society to **self-reflect** on its organization (in the form of the Green room) was much appreciated and recommended for future GFMDs.
- Many appreciated the increased **opportunities to interact with governments**, however there was also a call to reevaluate the opportunities and spaces to engage with governments.
- In particular, there was a clear call for greater opportunities to discuss more concretely with States in Common Space through exchanges rather than spending much of the time in plenary sessions.
- It was suggested that these take-aways and the commitments from the CSD 2018 be presented at the beginning of the CSD in Ecuador 2019, to ensure continuity.

The Civil Society activities of the 2018 Global Forum on Migration and Development are organized by the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office, under the auspices of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) in partnership with a diverse group of NGOs, labor organizations, migrants and migrant associations, members of the academic community, and the private sector.

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