



Swiss Chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development GFMD

In 2011, Switzerland is chairing the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The GFMD is one of the most prominent international platforms available for States to discuss migration and development. The GFMD seeks to foster an informal exchange of experience among states as well as to strengthen the cooperation among States and with other stakeholders (international organizations, civil society, etc.) in the domain of migration and development on a voluntary basis. More specifically, the added-value of the GFMD consists in its focus on the inter-linkages between migration and development, the fact that its participating States (numbering approx. 160) represent all regions of the world, and in its targeted efforts to serve as a catalyst for concrete bilateral and multilateral projects. Conceived of as a process unfolding outside of the UN, the Forum was born upon the initiative of the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in the follow-up to the 2006 “High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development”, in which the findings of the report of the “Global Commission on International Migration” were discussed. The first GFMD was held in 2007 in Belgium. Since then, the Forum has been hosted in the Philippines (2008), Greece (2009), and in Mexico (2010). Since its creation, Switzerland has been supporting the Forum and playing an active role in it.

The GFMD is underpinned by a supporting framework composed of four different bodies. The given Chair-in-Office is responsible for the preparation process and the actual conduct of the Forum. The Chair receives guidance and support from the Troika of past, present, and future Chairs. The Steering Group, comprising 35 States, provides strategic and political support to the GFMD. Finally, the “Friends of the Forum”, open to all UN Member States, ensures that all States keep pace with the GFMD process. UN agencies and associated international organizations enjoy the possibility of obtaining observer status in this body.

What themes will be dealt with during the Swiss Chairmanship of the GFMD 2011?

In 2011, the GFMD will focus on three thematic clusters. The first will take up the theme of labour mobility and its impact on development. The second thematic cluster will analyze how to better and more coherently address the challenges of irregular migration, while the third cluster will undertake to discuss concrete tools and instruments appropriate to sustaining migration and development policy.

Why is Switzerland active in the GFMD?

For Switzerland, the GFMD serves as a platform to link the exchange of concrete practices with projects in the domain of migration and development. Thus Switzerland is able to present its experiences and convictions to a broad-based public while benefiting, at one and the same time, from the experiences made by other States. In this way, Switzerland gains an insight into their migration-policy interests of other states. In addition, the idea is for the GFMD to be increasingly used as a means for enhancing or initiating cooperation with States whose migration and development policies are of interest for Switzerland. As no binding decisions can emerge from within the context of the GFMD, the participating States are also ready and willing to discuss controversial themes. Furthermore, Switzerland uses the GFMD for the purpose of fostering its global network of contacts in the area of migration and development.

Switzerland's commitment to an active, multilateral dialogue on migration is embedded in tradition. The 2011 Swiss Chair of the GFMD unfolds within a range of earlier Swiss initiatives aimed at intensifying the global dialogue on development and migration, such as the Bern Initiative (2001-

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2004), Switzerland's strong involvement in the Global Commission on International Migration (2003-2005) and its successful advocacy for the organization of a second UN High-Level Dialogue within the context of the UN General Assembly 2013. Switzerland recognizes that migration is no longer a phenomenon of merely national significance, but increasingly also has global and transnational impacts and consequences, and that in addition to the challenges it brings, migration also provides a good number of opportunities. Switzerland is convinced that the multilateral dialogue makes a vital contribution to bringing opposing points of view of countries of origin, transit, and destination on migration and its impacts on development closer together.

What are the goals of the Swiss GFMD Chairmanship for 2011?

The primary goal of the Swiss GFMD Chairmanship is to promote a focussed and action-oriented thematic dialogue. To this end, a series of smaller meetings are being organized in various regions of the world with the focus on a specific theme relevant to the given region. Committed to maintaining of the global character of the GFMD, a concluding conference will be held at the end of the year in Geneva to provide the opportunity for a discussion on the outcomes of the regional meetings. This annual meeting, although primarily intended for the participating States, will furthermore also be open for participation to those organizations and UN agencies with observer status. In parallel to these meetings, the GFMD assessment process has been vested with an increased importance this year. The first phase of the GFMD assessment is set to begin and Switzerland is committed to sustaining and advancing the assessment process.

Who is responsible for the GFMD in the Federal Administration?

An interdepartmental Task Force has been set up to coordinate the Swiss Chairmanship of the GFMD. The Task Force includes representatives of the FDFA's Directorate of Political Affairs (lead), the Federal Office for Migration (FOM), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Swiss Chair-in-Office presiding over the various bodies of the GFMD is Eduard Gnesa, Special Ambassador of Switzerland for International Cooperation on Migration. The Swiss team is supported thematically and administratively by a GFMD-specific Secretariat along with two external advisers.

Who finances the GFMD?

The GFMD is funded in about equal parts by the participating States and by the Chair country. For 2011, the GFMD budget amount to approx. CHF 2 million. Switzerland's contribution to the budget is paid out of the ordinary budgets of the FDFA and the FDJP. At the beginning of the year, an appeal is launched to all States to make individual contributions. A binding funding mechanism for the GFMD process, such as that of the UN, does not (yet) exist for the GFMD.

What is the connection to the UN?

The GFMD is a result of the first *UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development* that took place within the context of the UN General Assembly in 2006. The creation of an inter-State Forum outside of the UN framework was proposed by the then UN Secretary General and was endorsed by the States. To date, the States have been unable to come to an agreement on embedding the theme of migration within the UN. The GFMD has filled this vacuum. Although the GFMD is open to all UN Member States for participation, there exists no direct connection between the GFMD and the UN. The flow of information is ensured by the participation of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Migration and Development, Peter Sutherland.

Further information can be obtained by consulting the GFMD 2011 Homepage at <http://gfmd.org/>.