“Migration Week,” held in Marrakech, Morocco in December 2018 was the end of a two-year process which began in 2016, with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Over the past two years, civil society and migrant movements around the world have responded to a range of new global processes towards the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

Migration Week, including the annual Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration—Marrakech, Morocco—provided civil society an opportunity to come together and reflect on what had been achieved, but also on where we need to go from here. While the GFMD takes place each year in a different location, 2018 was unique in that never before had it preceded such an important UN conference on a similar theme. This provided the opportunity for a diverse variety of organizations with activities related to migration to establish events of their own in the same location. The result was 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.
The Eleventh Meeting of the Global Forum for Migration and Development, hosted by co-chairs Germany and Morocco, discussed issues around the theme of “Honouring International Commitments to Unlock the Potential of all Migrants for Development.” The GFMD Summit was the center point for a number of multi-stakeholder interactions, including the Civil Society Days (4-6 Dec), the GFMD Business Thematic Meeting (6 Dec); 13 side-events (6-7 Dec), and the Mayoral Forum (8 Dec). The GFMD thus provided an important forum for stakeholders to discuss how the GCM might or should be implemented, as well as the way forward in the new global migration architecture.

Civil Society Day 1: Recommendations Day – December 4

The GFMD Civil Society Days brought together about 300 delegates from all around the world to take stock and strategize around the theme “Goals, Compacts, Action: Human Mobility that Works for Migrants and Society.” This was the first moment that civil society actors from around the world were able to gather together since the conclusion of the negotiations of the Global Compact for Migration. 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 during the “Common Space” the following day. Discussions centered around the following themes:

- 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

GFMD Opening & Common Space – December 5

The GFMD Summit was attended by over 1000 international participants from roughly 130 governments and 40 observer organizations. After the opening ceremony in the morning, the GFMD Common Space saw civil society and governments come together in half-day of plenary and breakout sessions to discuss the implementation of international commitments in the spirit of shared partnership and cooperation. 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
Civil Society Day 2: Commitments Day – December 6

The second Civil Society Day featured a candid one-hour conversation with the new Director General of the International Organization 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.

Platform for Partnership & Closing Ceremony - December 7

The Platform for Partnership featured panels highlighting government migration and development policies and programs that have been inspired by GFMD discussions and recommendations. It provided a joint space for governments and other GFMD stakeholders to discuss and present concrete projects and initiatives related to migration and development issues, in particular, in the context of the commitments of the SDGs and the GCM. The following initiatives were presented:

- Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: an interactive tool
- People on the Move in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: Addressing their Assistance and Protection Needs in the GCM
- Towards Comprehensive Global Guidance on Developing and Implementing Bilateral Labor Migration Agreements – Unpacking Key Obstacles to Implementation in the African Region
- Remittances for Africa: reducing costs and maximizing impact for development
- African Cities’ Initiative on Migration: Towards Fighting Against All Forms of Discrimination

During the closing ceremony, Roula Hamati, one of the Civil Society chairs, presented the key outcomes of the Civil Society Days in the form of a list of 10 civil society commitments for future joint advocacy and action:

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

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. As national action plans are developed ensuring that they have a clear focus on inclusion and non-discrimination of migrants.

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 times.

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 provide services to all migrants, regardless of status, and with a special attention to the most vulnerable migrants – regardless of their migration status.

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 GCM and the GCR to ensure that it is not rigid definitions that define people and the way they are treated, but their humanity. We encourage all existing 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, such as the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts.
Advocating further about climate displacement: Civil society commits to demanding a stronger climate displacement agenda in the GCM 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.

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 is 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.

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.

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 implementation of the GCM.

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, connection the national, regional, and global, and to create multi-year civil society action plans for implementation.

Main observations and takeaways:

The GFMD is an interesting space, because it is outside the UN, but it still very much acts like the UN – it is a government-led forum, with many of the same actors, and even many of the same individuals as the various migration discussions that happen at the UN. That being said, the GFMD is outside the UN, which does give it some advantages: It is a more informal space, where stakeholders can discuss issues and share good practices and challenges that perhaps governments are not willing to share in the formal UN space, and they can talk about more progressive issues that the rest of the UN may not be ready for yet. Civil society has also been a big part of the GFMD since its inception – not just with the Civil Society Days, but also with the “common space” – which overlaps the Government Days and Civil Society Days so that all stakeholders together can participate together, to share challenges and good practices, and discuss emerging topics. This year, in addition, we in civil society were invited to the final Government Day, which included the “Platform for Partnerships.”

I have only been to two GFMDs, but I found this year’s GFMD to be less interactive in terms of civil society participation in the government space. Even though we were allowed to observe during the final government day, we did not really get to participate. The Common Space was also different. Last year, the entire day was dedicated to discussions and interactions between civil society and governments, but this year, as the Common Space was the first day of the GFMD for the governments, half of the day was taken up by the speeches and formalities that accompanied the opening of the Forum, which only left the afternoon for panels. The afternoon, though, was not very interactive either. I remember last year, during the breakout sessions, where we went to discuss particular issues more in depth, we were seated in a circle, with a more open and informal opportunity to dialogue and share. The way things were organized this year, there was a panel of govern-
ment and civil society actors who shared good practices which dominated the session, and then there was a more Q & A style interaction with the audience, rather than a more interactive format to share, listen and discuss back and forth. There also were no tea tables this year, which were an even smaller and more informal space to have conversations between civil society and governments on particular issues, so that was a missed opportunity for advocacy and building partnerships.

There were also some issues in terms of the themes – while most of the themes from the Civil Society Days were also addressed during the Common Space, the theme on climate displacement was not featured during the government days, which made it hard for this group to present its recommendations and good practices with governments. As we move forward, we will need to make sure that we push hard for meaningful participation for civil society, especially migrants themselves, and ensure that we are able to make space for our priority issues.

Despite the issues with the format, the Civil Society Days and the Common Space were really interesting. Since the GFMD is not a UN forum, there are civil society actors, including many migrants and refugees from all around the world that we do not get to see all the time in New York or Geneva, who have really amazing insights from the regional, national and local levels, and there are representatives of governments who come from different ministries that we do not often get to hear from at the UN. I had been expecting us to talk more about what the future brings for civil society and the GFMD as a forum, since the GFMD is mentioned in the text of the GCM, but there was definitely a lot more focus on the GCM itself. I think perhaps this has been the first time that we have had a chance to sit and reflect on what we have achieved and what we still have to accomplish, so we didn’t get very far in terms of future strategizing or discussion about what the future of global civil society efforts might be.

One of the most important parts of the GFMD for us as a member of the NGO Committee on Migration was the Compendium of Good Practices that we contributed to and worked on in November. Thanks to the enormous efforts of the Committee, we were able to have a document of 40 good practices that align with our priority areas. Through no small effort, we were able to print copies of the Compendium and share them with our civil society colleagues, with staff from DESA, IOM and other UN agencies, and with government representatives. The reaction was very positive - People were excited to receive it and share it in their advocacy. We got some great shout-outs throughout the GFMD, and members of the steering committee praised the work of the Committee as one of the most tangible, concrete resources at Migration Week. Since in mission visits during the months preceding Migration Week we had challenged Member States to come to Marrakech with examples of good practices, this was a great opportunity for us to show what is possible with partnerships, and with the resources and political will to act and implement the GCM, and it was great to hear and see that our advocacy paid off – while there were plenty of general speeches, some governments took up our challenge and did come to Marrakech with practices to share. For example, during one panel during the Common Space, it was great to hear how the Government of Mexico and the International Detention Coalition are working in partnership to end childhood detention. We know that our organization is designing and implementing even more good practices, and this leads into some of the interesting questions that we will have to address in the months and years ahead: How will we expand on this document, and how can we map our own good practices when it comes to migration? There is huge potential to build on this, but it was also a huge effort to pull this together.

The main takeaway from the GFMD is that we have a long road ahead of us, and we know that in the future implementation of the GCM, partnerships are going to be vital to our success, so now is the time to reflect on what our strengths are, how we can contribute, who we can work with. 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.
The Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the GCM opened on the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with the ceremonial adoption of the GCM, officiated by the Conference President, Nasser Bourita of Morocco (adopted by 164 Member States present). Following the adoption, there was a plenary debate, which was held all day on December 10-11. While the plenary was very similar to many UN proceedings, in which Member States presented their prepared statements, this was one of the first opportunities we have had to hear individual Member States explain their positions, especially those from small delegations who did not participate actively in the negotiations, and those who were spoken for by a group (for example, the 27 countries belonging to the European Union). Many came prepared and offered initiatives they are already launching for implementation. Credit should be given to civil society, and the NGO Committee on Migration, for our work meeting with Member States to advocate for this type of participation over the course of the previous several months. Among the speakers, there were 13 Heads of State, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel. At the very end of the plenary, Marvie Misolas from the Maryknoll Sisters and the NGO Committee on Migration, was one of the only civil society members that was granted the space to deliver an official statement.

There were also events and meetings outside of the main plenary hall. There were two interactive dialogues on “Promoting action on the commitments of the GCM” and “Partnerships and innovative initiatives for the way forward.” There were also opportunities to network and advocate with delegates from Member States and other civil society colleagues to discuss future plans. There were also press conferences, including one from the Women in Migration Network to share and promote the Marrakech Women’s Rights Manifesto. There was also an event to celebrate and commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, featuring remarks from the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, the President of the General Assembly, Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and two former High Commissioners for Human Rights, Louise Arbour (currently Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration), and Mary Robinson (currently Chair of The Elders).

One of the themes that emerged at this event, and throughout the week was the issue of misinformation aimed to undermine the human rights agenda. During the Opening Ceremony, the Secretary-General stated “We must not succumb to fear and false narratives,” and SRSG Louise Arbour said “It is surprising that there has been so much misinformation about what the compact is and what the text says.” These comments were made regarding the shift in narrative around the GCM that happened between when the text was agreed in July and when it was adopted in December. A coordinated far-right online misinformation campaign pressured mainstream European parties in order to change European governments’ positions on the GCM. According to analysis by academic researchers, starting in September 2018, a coalition of anti-Islam, far-right and neo-Nazi sympathizers fueled a surge in social media activity about the pact, which until then had garnered little attention. The burst of activity, including tweets, videos and online petitions, prompted politicians in several countries to take notice of the previously uncontroversial pact and revise their views. In Belgium, the controversy led to the collapse of the government. In his statement to the Intergovernmental Conference, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel defiantly said that he would stand strong because he believes that the GCM is the step forward
to build a better world, a fairer world, and that the international community is stronger if it responds to these challenges together and with courage. “I have chosen multilateralism. My country is going to be on the right side of history.”

The rapid move from online activity to political reality is an example of how a process can be hijacked by what researchers describe as a global network of nationalist, far-right activists. Analyzing tweets and posts on YouTube and Facebook, the researchers found that “right-wing extremist and right-wing populist actors played a disproportionate role” in influencing the discussion around GCM. While the agreement was barely talked about on social media until mid-September, far-right and right-wing populist influencers discovered the issue in mid-September and began spreading large-scale distorted interpretations and misinformation about the GCM. 75 of the 100 most popular videos discussing the GCM on YouTube were created by right-wing populists and anti-migration campaigners, far-right extremists or conspiracy theorists. At the event for the 70th Anniversary of the UDHR, Jacob Dubbins, co-founder of Conscious Advertising Network, spoke about the dangers of hate speech in the media and how it is strategically disseminated through advertising, and stated that the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the GCM was specifically targeted. Dubbins’s organization, Conscious Advertising Network, is a coalition of a diversity of actors working to change this dynamic through six manifestos addressing: fake news, hate speech, anti-fraud, diversity/inclusion/equality, children’s well-being, and informed consent. Throughout the Intergovernmental Conference, civil society, friendly governments and UN leaders dismissed and countered the claims that the GCM violates state sovereignty. Although there were small efforts by civil society in Marrakech to counter the negative media surrounding the GCM, these measures were launched very late in the process and did not scale up quickly enough to match that of the counter-campaigns. As we begin to discuss strategies and ways forward for implementation, follow-up and review, it will be critical to address can we better mobilize public opinion via social media, and can we construct a strong common media strategy with civil society partners and other stakeholders.

UN WebTV archives, including full sessions of the plenary, dialogues, press conferences and the 70th Anniversary of the UDHR event are available here: Videos from December 10, Videos from December 11.

General Assembly Vote on the Global Compact for Migration Resolution – December 19, 2018

After the ceremonial adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in Marrakech, the resolution returned to UN Headquarters in New York on December 19 for the official decision of the General Assembly. Since the resolution was not adopted by consensus, there was a vote. Knowledge of when vote was taking place was not well-promoted, and the timing of the vote so close to Christmas meant that there was very low attendance in the room of observers and civil society actors. The results of the vote were as follows: 152 countries voted in favor, 5 countries voted against (Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Poland, and the United States), and 12 abstained (Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Italy, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Romania, Singapore and Switzerland). 24 delegations were not present. Many of them were small countries with small delegations, for example Kiribati and Vanuatu. Since the vote, the numbers have shifted slightly - countries that were not present for the vote, such as Panama, later expressed a yes vote, and Brazil has said that it is withdrawing its support. For summaries of Member State statements delivered at the GA vote on the GCM click here.
The following are general recommendations for civil society in the months and years ahead. As an organization, and as members of larger civil society coalitions, we should keep in mind how our contributions can fit into a larger strategy and fabric.

- **Facilitating/participating in national-level advocacy, and advocating for and ensuring a greater inclusion of migrants and diasporas in policy-making mechanisms**
  - For example, organize and participate in national meetings for civil society to strategize within each country (as this is the level at which actual change and implementation can take place). From this a regional strategy can emerge.
  - Develop national and local action plans for the inclusion of migrants, based on the principle of non-discrimination, in order to reduce vulnerability and isolation and to enhance participation of migrants in decisions that affect them.

- **Facilitating popular education to build understanding of/support for GCM**
  - For example, counter the distortion of facts with clearer and more plain language training materials (to help the broader public understand what the GCM is), providing educational toolkits/guides, using social media and other communications tools to promote understanding and support, and developing tailored messages to respond to states’ sensitivities around various issues.

- **Mapping good practices that are already in place**
  - Conduct a mapping of our own activities related to migration that could be aligned with the GCM and migration-related SDGs. This process for Good Shepherd began earlier this year. Establishing new practices and monitoring tools 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
  - Facilitate the creation of platforms to share good practices, for example by identifying “GCM Champion states.” Identify and monitor government-led laws, policies, and partnerships that have already been enacted and are supporting the objectives and comments of the GCM
  - Promote greater dialogue and stronger partnerships between all stakeholders at all levels, including national and local and regional authorities, private stakeholders, employers, trade unions, and the media

- **Mapping gaps in national legislation vis-à-vis social protection for migrants**
  - Raise awareness in relation to how these gaps are leading to lack of social protection for migrants

- **Building support for legally-binding conventions aligned with/linked to objectives of the GCM**
  - Examples: Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (CRMWF), Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW), related ILO Conventions. Ensure we are bringing migration into the discussion whenever these tools are raised/mentioned.
  - The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, Felipe Gonzalez, will present a report to the UN General Assembly in September 2019.
  - The Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers (CMW) is currently elaborating a General Comment No. 5 on Migrants’ Rights to Liberty and Freedom from Arbitrary Detention.
  - The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is currently elaborating a General Recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration. The concept note is available here (comment period has closed, but written submissions can be reviewed here).

- **Advocating for migrants and migration issues within related/linked processes, emphasizing 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. Adopting a holistic approach which links to work on poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate change**
The Way Forward—Continued

- Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals – the HLPF in July 2019 will cover SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, all of which have links to migration.
- Climate Summit, opening of GA, September 23, 2019
- Reporting mechanisms for Paris Climate Agreement, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Katowice Rule Book
- Beijing+25 review process, including national and regional level reviews through the regional economic commissions that will feed into UN Women’s global report that will be submitted to CSW64. From April 2019 to February 2020, national consultations and regional preparatory meetings for CSW64 will take place. In Summer 2020, UN Women, civil society and member states will convene Global Gender Equality Forum. In September 2020, the UN General Assembly will have a 3-day Special Session in commemoration of Beijing+25.
- Pushing for meaningful civil society participation in UN Network on Migration, including designated space for migrants.
- Be present and insert our voice in upcoming series of events on migration at UNHQ, including the International Migration Review Forum, which will take place every 4 years, beginning in 2022, with regional reviews taking place in alternating years, beginning in 2020.

GFMD 2019 – Ecuador

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. The Ecuadorian Chairmanship is focused on the central theme: “Sustainable approaches to human mobility: Upholding rights, strengthening state agency, and advancing development through partnerships and collective action.” Under this theme, the main three substantive focuses of the Chairmanship are:

1. Joint responses to mixed migration flows: Partnerships and collective action to protect rights.
2. Migration narratives and communication: What role, responsibility and resources do governments have?
3. Addressing human mobility as part of urban and rural development strategies.

The Chair’s substantive and operational priorities are outlined in the Draft GFMD 2019 Concept Paper.

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Thank you