The Global Forum on Migration and Development:
A New Path for Global Governance?

Romeo Matsas

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Contact information :

Romeo E. Matsas
Research Fellow - Global Governance & Security
EGMONT - Royal Institute for International Relations
Rue de Namur 69
1000 Brussels
(32) 2 2234114 (gen) - (32) 2 2134023 (dir)
(32) 2 2234116 (fax)
r.matsas@egmontinstitute.be
www.egmontinstitute.be

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Romeo Matsas[*]
EGMONT Institute

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is a new initiative of the international community aiming to address the migration and development nexus in a practical and action-oriented manner. It is conceived as an informal, non-binding, voluntary and government-led process, open to all UN member states. Created in 2006 on the proposal of the UN Secretary-General, the GFMD held its first meeting in Brussels in July 2007[1]. This meeting brought together more than 800 governmental participants, representing over 150 countries, as well as 200 representatives of civil society from all over the world[2]. The purpose of this article is to present this prototypical initiative in the light of the global debate on migration and development, offer some reflections about its future and analyse its position with regard to other initiatives aimed at the management of global issues.

1. Migration as a global issue

By definition, international migration[3] involves more than one country. Nevertheless, being closely related to State sovereignty, this issue has been mostly managed- when it was managed at all- on a unilateral or bilateral basis. Throughout the last decade, however, migration became a hot topic on the international community's agenda, increasingly taking the form of a "global issue"- and its interaction with development gained further relevance, as the international community started looking for strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Movement of people has always existed and is there to stay. As stated by Chaliand, Jan and Rageau [4], a thousand years ago, there were no Germans in Berlin and no Russians in Moscow. A long term historical perspective further shows that "migration" has for long been a 'group' issue, with populations moving for settlement in new territories (conquering, fleeing, developing trade colonies, etc.). This trend shifted in the 19th century- with the exception of post conflict situations or nomadic movements- towards individual or familial large-scale migration (from Europe to North America for instance).

In 2005, the number of people living in a country other than that where they were born (generally considered as representing the number of migrants- but some may dispute this[5]) was estimated at 191 million (i.e. 3% of the world population)[6] with women constituting nearly 50 percent. While about

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[*] Romeo Matsas is a Research Fellow in the "Global Governance and Security" Program of EGMONT- The Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels, Belgium. From December 2006 to August 2007, he served as Assistant to the Executive Director of the GFMD Taskforce.

[1] The first meeting of the GFMD was organised by the Government of Belgium. This meeting included a civil society day (see note 3) and two days of meeting for governmental delegates organized through an international taskforce established within the Belgian Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.. More information of the GFMD, is available on the following website: www.gfmd-fmmd.org.

[2] The Civil Society Day of the first GFMD meeting was organized by the King Baudouin Foundation at the request of the Belgian Government. More information on www.gfmd-civil-society.org

[3] Migration is defined as "a process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants." International Organization for Migration, *Glossary on Migration*, Geneva, 2004, 78 pp. In this article, migration will be addressed separately from considerations of asylum and refugee policies, to which a different set of obligations apply. For more information, see the compendium published by UNHCR on the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugee and its 1967 Protocol available at http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf

[4] Chaliand G., Jan M., Rageau J-P., *Atlas historique des migrations,* Seuil, 1994, France, 140 pp.

[5] Even the United Nations acknowledge some difficulties in handling this concept: "Population censuses, which usually record the country of birth of the persons they count, provide the basic information leading to these estimates. Foreign-born persons are migrants because they must have moved at least once from the country of birth to the country where they live. But the foreign-born need not be foreigners. Foreign-born persons may be citizens at birth by, for instance, being the children of citizens of the country where they live, or they may be naturalized citizens." United Nations, *International Migration and Development*, Report of the Secretary General, A/60/871, note 1. More methodological considerations on this point are presented in United Nations, *International Migration Report 2002,* DESA Population Division, New York, 2002, pp. 9-11.

[6] To be compared with the 76 million international migrants in 1960 – i.e. 2.5% of the world population at the time. The rise in total figures is notably due to the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s, as former national citizens became 'foreign-born' with the creation of new

one-third of international migrants had moved to one developing country, a majority of them (115 million) lived in developed countries[7]. Some estimates, notably linked to climate change[8] or to demographic needs in developed economies[9], show this figure to be on the rise in the near future.

International migration today is a complex phenomenon combining human, social, political and economic aspects. Its development is closely linked to the globalisation process, which makes societies more open to each other and communication and transport easier. International migration therefore sets a double governance challenge: first, by touching on different policy areas (employment, aid, integration, trade, security, etc…), it requires domestic coordination between various governmental agencies- which may fall under the jurisdiction of different levels of governance. Second, because it has an impact on nearly all countries worldwide, migration also requires a global response, which must further take into account the specificities of each national situation.

The last decade has shown increasing interest from the international community in migration, characterized both by a progressive acknowledgement of the need to address this issue in a multilateral framework; and by a departure from an approach limited to security considerations. This has taken the form of international conferences and reports that culminated in the United Nations' High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development of September 2006 (where the GFMD process was initiated). Among these initiatives, one can mention the UN Population and Development Conference held in Cairo in 1994[10], or, more recently, the works of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM)[11], as well as several reports released by international organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) or the World Bank.

At the operational level, projects were increasingly implemented by bilateral or multilateral agencies, and the number of regional venues to discuss migration-related issues increased, while international organisations made a move for greater coordination amongst themselves by setting up the Global Migration Group[12]. In parallel, major actors of the international community, such as Russia or the EU, started thinking about (re)implementing migration policies, respectively bringing back nationals abroad or attracting new labour immigrants.

On the eve of the GFMD process, this proliferation had at times created coordination challenges among actors and gatherings with sometimes overlapping mandates, and the management of international migration appeared fragmented and incomplete according to the issues or countries concerned. In parallel, despite this increasing activity at the global level, migration was still perceived as an issue closely linked to State sovereignty, and its link with development, even though evidenced by research and specific projects, had only been systematically operationalized in a limited way. Building on this landscape, and creating a culture of working together at the global level, were some of the first challenges faced by the GFMD process.

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states. Source: United Nations, *Trends In Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision*, DESA Population Division, Pop/Db/Mig/Rev.2005/Doc, February 2006

[7] The main destination countries today are the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Germany, Ukraine, France, India and Saudi Arabia. Source : *Ibid*. In some countries- such as the United Arab Emirates or Qatar for instance- migrants constitute more than half the population. Source : International Organization for Migration, *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration,* IOM, Geneva, 2005, page 389. In the European Union, in January 2006, the number of third-country nationals totaled 18.5 million, i.e. 3.8% of its population. Source : European Commission, *Strengthening and monitoring measures for integration policies in the EU: the Commission adopts the Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration,* Brussels, 12 September 2007, IP/07/1314

[8] The Stern Review on the economics of climate change, for instance, puts forward some estimates that approximately 200 million people may be permanently displaced as a consequence of climate change by 2050. Stern N., *The Economics of Climate Change - The Stern Review*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2007, page 56.

[9] See United Nations , "Replacement Migration: Is It a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?", DESA Population Division, available at http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration/migration.htm

[10] Chapter X of the Cairo Programme of Action called for an "orderly international migration [that] can have positive impacts on both the communities of origin and the communities of destination" and mentioned issues such as remittances, temporary migration, transfer of knowledge, skills and technology, transferability of pensions and other work benefits as fields of international actions, urging governments "to adopt transparent international migration policies and programmes to manage those flows". Source : Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, September 1994, available at http://www.unfpa.org/icpd/icpd_poa.htm

[11] Global Commission on International Migration, *Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action*, Switzerland, 2005, 88pp.

[12] The Global Migration Group is based in Geneva and brings together representatives of the ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UN DESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC and the World Bank.

The migration and development nexus.

As we can see, migration flows are important – even in countries that do not have an active migration policy – and will be needed in the future. In origin countries of migrants, protection of nationals abroad, maintaining links with the diaspora and avoiding the counter-effects of migration on national development (such as brain drain) are among the main priorities. At the other end, the migration debate in receiving countries, such as within the EU, is mostly centred around the necessary economic, social and cultural integration of migrants and their descendants; strong security concerns; the need to disentangle protection of refugees from economic migration; timid initiatives for re-opening the debate on migration policies while managing public sensitivities; and the necessity to develop a common migration policy at the EU level.[13]

In this context, legal migration actually appears to offer opportunities for better policy planning in various areas, such as economic growth, development and social cohesion, including integration or protection of migrants' fundamental rights and the social security of local populations – elements that are central to ensuring public support for migration policies. Also, one may expect that offering legal migration opportunities would reduce flows of irregular migrants and have an indirect impact on refugees and asylum seekers' flows, as, today, overstretching the 1951 Geneva Convention is often perceived as the only way of entering and staying in some countries.

In addition, there is a growing realisation at both ends of the migration chain that migration policies would be more efficient if they included development considerations; and, conversely, that development policies gain in efficiency if migration is included in their planning. This approach nevertheless requires first to go beyond too strong a focus on the economic and growth aspects of migration, and second to avoid considering development as merely the "grease" that enables the international community to tackle the sensitive issue of migration in a multilateral framework.

On the one hand, development policies can be better planned and implemented if due account is taken of migration aspects such as expatriation of highly skilled professionals, or the role remittances and diasporas can play if aligned with national development efforts. Migrating is a fundamental right, not least enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 13) – even though counterbalanced by the sovereign right of States to allow entry on their territory. Therefore, development efforts should not look at limiting migration flows – which can further prove to be beneficial for both countries of origin and destination – or be "instrumentalized" for the regulation of migration flows. Development policies must rather focus on redressing root causes that make people migrate out of necessity rather than by choice. To that end, development policies must look at the provision of livelihoods, taking a broader approach than focussing only on increasing income (as having only more money at one's disposal, *caeteris paribus*, may just provide more opportunity to migrate) and ensure redistribution of benefits arising from migration. Aid can also support developing countries' national capacities to deal with challenges arising from in- and out- migration flows (brain drain for sending countries, accommodation of irregular migrants in transit countries etc.).

On the other hand, migration policies can also be more efficient if development is taken into account. First, because today's migration proposals from countries of destination mostly focus on highly skilled professionals, which can deplete countries of origin's working forces and hamper achievement of development goals. Second, for migration policies that aim at the return of the migrants at some point, pursuing parallel development efforts in the country of origin is key, if incentives are to be provided to the migrants to return, in terms of job opportunities, education level for their children, access to qualitative health systems etc. Also, if diaspora projects or remittance-related investments are to be effective, development efforts are needed in the country of origin, in the area of governance, private

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[13] For an overview of the intra-European debate on migration, see, for instance, Ragaru N., Krulic J. (ed.), *Flux migratoires, immigration, altérité : Débats politiques et réponses européennes*, in La revue internationale et stratégique, n° 50, été 2003, PUF, France, pp. 71-164. A brief presentation of the European Union's « Global Approach to Migration » is given by Collet E., *The 'Global Approach to Migration': rhetoric or reality?*, The European Policy Centre, Policy Brief, Brussels, November 2007, 4 pp.

sector development etc. to create an enabling environment for these to succeed.[14] Beyond that, looking to migration as an alternative to development runs the risk that governments from countries of origin lose any incentives for necessary reform (in the labour market, for instance, as pressure from highly skilled unemployed would be lowered through sending them abroad) while, in receiving countries, resorting to cheaper – migrant – labour forces, could be a disincentive to invest in innovative technology: two elements that would eventually prove to be counter-productive to improving the management of migration flows.

2. The Global Forum on Migration and Development

2.1. Concept

In September 2006, the United Nations organised the High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development in the framework of the General Assembly. The purpose of this meeting was to *"discuss the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impacts"* while having "*a strong focus on policy issues, including the challenge of achieving the internationally agreed development goals*".[15]

Throughout the process leading to this meeting, many States expressed their interest in continuing the dialogue on the migration and development nexus beyond the HLD. However, difficulties rapidly appeared on the modalities to address this issue – perceived both as new and closely related to States' sovereignty – in a multilateral framework. Further, previous attempts to properly tackle migration at the global level had sometimes given rise to international tensions between countries of origin and receiving countries, as for instance illustrated by the debate around the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 1990. As stated by the UN Secretary General in his opening address to this event: *"Just a few years ago, many people did not think it possible to discuss migration at the United Nations. Governments, they said, would not dare to bring into the international arena a topic on which their citizens are so sensitive*".[16]

Finding a middle way between this growing interest and the difficulty of globalizing the migration debate, the Secretary General proposed the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), presented as a forum led by member states, which would offer them a venue to informally discuss challenges and opportunities offered by the migration and development nexus, and engage "*with relevant stakeholders (…) including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), experts and migrant organizations*".[17] Belgium offered to organize the first meeting of this process, in July 2007.[18]

Amazingly when compared to other global governance initiatives, the operating modalities for the GFMD process were not formalized at its inception but had to be progressively defined throughout the preparation of its first meeting. Rather, the President's Summary[19] published at the end of the HLD only repeated general guidelines such as, for instance, the informal and state-led character of the

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[14] For more on remittances and development, see in this same issue, *Ratha D., Matsas R., Making Remittances Work for Development : Moving Ahead the GFMD Agenda.*

[15] United Nations, *International Migration and Development,* Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, A/Res/58/208, 23 December 2003

[16] *The Secretary-General Address to the High-Level Dialogue of the General Assembly on International Migration and Development,* New York, 14 September 2006

[17] United Nations, *International Migration and Development,* Report of the Secretary General, A/60/871, para. 40-41.

[18] When making this offer, Belgium already had a track record of various initiatives on migration and development both at the conceptual and operational level as well as on initiatives aimed at strengthening effective multilateralism. For instance, besides development projects carried out with international organisations, several conferences had been organised with different national and international partners on issues such as, for instance, the role of Sub – Saharan African diasporas in development (in May 2004) or the management of international migration at the broader European level, the migration and development nexus and the global governance of international migration (the last three in early 2006).

[19] United Nations, Summary of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, Note by the President of the General Assembly, A/61/515, 13 October 2006.

process (that should not produce negotiated outcomes or normative decisions); the necessity to avoid duplicating existing initiatives; a strong focus on actions to be implemented; and the limited role foreseen for the UN and other international organisations as well as for civil society.

Clearly, as stated by the UN Secretary General in his aforementioned speech, there was "*no consensus on making international migration the subject of formal, norm-setting negotiations*" but the Forum "*would allow us to build relationships of trust*".

2.2. A structuring framework for the migration and development nexus

Despite these limitations and lack of clearly defined operating modalities, the inception period of the GFMD process – running from September 2006 to July 2007 – progressively initiated a structuring framework to address the migration and development nexus at the global level, in terms of content and thematic priorities as well as by providing a global platform for dialogue around this issue. This framework is the result of an incremental, confidence building approach that brought together the vast majority of the wider international community (governments, international organisations, civil society, etc.) in a transparent and participatory manner. While this approach has established a legitimate basis on which interested stakeholders are invited to build future initiatives related to the migration and development nexus, its actual acceptance by the wider international community may however challenge this result (see below).

In this perspective, a first initiative was the launch of a global survey on thematic priorities to be addressed by the GFMD (see description of these themes below) the impressive number of responses to which shows the great interest of the international community.[20] In parallel, respondents were invited to appoint a focal point as interlocutor for the GFMD, who also had to be of a sufficiently high level to bring together the various internal policy departments working around these issues in order to increase domestic coherence.[21] As a result, a worldwide network of officers in charge of the migration and development nexus was created, which could also act as a basis for more global coherence and coordination.

Transparency and participation were further ensured by close consultation and international pooling of governmental, international organisations' and civil society resources for designing the contents of the Brussels meeting. While preparation for the civil society day showed great dynamism and flexibility by relying on networking and internet-based consultations, the governmental meeting was elaborated, firstly, in close consultation with the Friends of the Forum (an open-ended, consultative body whose three initial meetings brought together an average of 200 participants representing 100 countries and observers) and, second, by organising each of the meetings' working sessions through international teams of governments and institutions.[22]

Two other elements further play a key role in this framework. First, the GFMD process helped forge consensus within the international community by constantly reinforcing basic principles to guide the work on the migration-development nexus. One of these overriding principles was the need to ensure that development aid is not 'instrumentalized' for the regulation of migration flows; or, conversely, that migration is not seen as an alternative to national development strategies. Second, during the first GFMD meeting, governmental delegates also agreed on provisional operating modalities (see below) and put forward practical proposals which are expected to provide a basis for future activities by interested stakeholders.

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[20] This first attempt to survey the international community's opinion on this topic attracted responses from more than 120 UN member States as well as the Holy See, the European Commission and several international organisations.
[21] This directly responded to the "coherence at home" principle put forward by the GCIM as a facilitating factor for more coherence at the global level. See Global Commission on International Migration, op. cit.
[22] This pooling of resources represented a fair balance among developing and developed countries and regions: 43 country representatives, 12 international organizations and 7 civil society representatives as well as the European Commission were engaged in these teams. See *Report of the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development,* Bruylant, forthcoming 2008 .

2.3 Institutional and thematic future of the GFMD

If, from a global forum, the GFMD intends to evolve into a global player, it will need to consolidate itself and show its ability to influence the global agenda on migration and development. This will require clarification of both its 'mandate' and institutional structure, and of its relations with the different actors of the international community.

As mentioned above, participants agreed during the first GFMD meeting on some provisional operating modalities intended to be assessed and revised, as appropriate, during the second GFMD meeting to be held in Manila, the Philippines, in late 2008. These modalities reveal several gaps, understandable due to the early stage in which the GFMD finds itself, to the prototypical nature of its evolution, to the nature of the topic addressed (new, linked to State sovereignty etc.), but they also reflect a lack of agreement (at this stage) among the participants on the final form of the process. These gaps will nevertheless need to be filled to enhance the role of the GFMD in the medium-to-longer term.

"Institutionally" speaking, these operating modalities include a Chair-in-Office; a Troika, comprising past, current and future Chairs-in-Office; a Steering Group, based in Geneva; and a support structure, which, far from serving as a "full-fledged" secretariat, only assists the Chair-in-Office with a limited mandate (archives, website etc.).[23] In parallel to that, each Chair-in-Office gathers an international task force in charge of the organisation of the meeting. Designation processes and specific mandates of these various players need to be clarified, as they may give rise to internal tensions over time, but, more importantly, as a lack of institutionalisation may hinder the ability of the GFMD process to enhance the coherence of the global agenda on the migration and development nexus.

In regard to other international bodies, informal working methods or lack of permanent secretariat are neither unprecedented nor necessarily synonymous with under-achievement, as shown by the G8 or the Kimberley process[24] (to name but two initiatives that present some of these characteristics). Nevertheless, the GFMD deals with a wider group of participants and takes place in an international environment where other well-organised players are already active. Therefore, a certain level of institutionalisation may be needed to ensure both the smooth running of its internal activities and, more importantly, its visibility and very relevance, to be assessed on the basis of the actual implementation of proposals put forward during its meetings.

With regard to the latter, the key issue lies in defining the role of the aforementioned support structure. Several models drawn from existing international practices could be looked at in order to strike a balance between the need to ensure the process' efficiency and maintaining its current added value to the international debate (speed and networking abilities, informal gathering, participation on equal footing of aid donors and recipients of aid, sending and receiving countries etc.). In this regard, without entering into too much detail, various levels of flexibility exist between keeping the GFMD in its current – mostly "ad hoc" – formula and a full-fledged institutionalisation, which could transform this process into a new international organisation, depart from its initial State-led character, create new governance challenges and, ultimately, be counter-productive to the achievement of its mandate.

Today, after its first meeting, the GFMD entirely relies on voluntary uni-, bi- or multilateral initiatives of the wider international community to implement the proposals put forward. It also maintains the opportunity to promote some of these projects through the Marketplace,[25] which also relies on participants' voluntary contributions. Nevertheless, implementing projects on transnational complex issues and in conjunction with different national or international agencies may be forbidding for many

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[23] See "operating modalities" in *ibid*.

[24] The Kimberley process has no permanent secretariat. Implementation of its decisions and recommendations are left to participants themselves, and supervised by peer reviews. See more information at note 30.

[25] In coordination with the GFMD, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs created a web-based marketplace where countries could post requests for specific support for projects to which potential partners could respond. Thirty-two such meetings were held during the Brussels meeting. For more information, see *Report of the first meeting ..., op. cit.*

stakeholders. Further, leaving it entirely to voluntary approaches may, in the medium term, create duplication or incoherence, contradicting one of the main objectives of the international community in regard with the migration and development nexus.

Therefore, a GFMD permanent support structure may be needed to ensure the coordination of the implementation of its proposals, which, ultimately, equates to the relevance of this process. Far from implementing projects itself, this structure's role should be limited to coordinating the major partnerships and activities carried out by the various international stakeholders, with whom the final decisions on relevance and modalities to implement these projects will always remain. This structure could for instance keep track of implemented proposals, and advocate that no proposals are left behind, ensure their coherence with other initiatives related to the migration and development nexus, and make sure that lessons learned are widely disseminated.

Beyond that, but closely related to this first issue, the relations of the GFMD with the other players in the international set will need to be clarified: first and foremost with national governments – where the informal and dialogue approach should be preserved – but also with the United Nations system and other international organisations, as well as with the broader civil society.

Relations with governments

With regard to States, the first issue to be clarified relates to the actual and longer term status of the GFMD. Options here range from a new international process, which could possibly play a role in defining the global agenda of the migration and development nexus, to simply an annual meeting to discuss practical aspects related to it.

As mentioned above, most of this will depend on the extent to which national and international players will voluntarily build their future activities on the proposals made during GFMD meetings, notwithstanding their informal character, and the progressive institutionalisation of the GFMD process.

This evolution will have to respect two elements that are at the core of the current added-value of the GFMD: its articulation around a relationship among equals (enabling the expression of differences between sending and receiving countries as well as between donors and recipients of aid) on the one hand and, on the other hand, its informal and dialogue-based platform character. Should, for instance, opinions expressed by participants in GFMD meetings be perceived as national commitments – while today its working sessions are held under the Chatham House Rule – this added value would run the risk of progressively being lost.

Further, alternative options to ensure "compliance" (such as peer review, binding decisions, jurisdictional organs, etc.) have to be ruled out in the GFMD context, due not only to its informal character, but also to their inappropriateness with regard to the achievement of its mandate, to the very nature of the migration and development nexus, and to the sensitivity of migration issues at the national level both for governments and their public opinion.

In parallel to that, two more practical elements may need to be revised in order to enhance the GFMD's role. First, the fact that the GFMD meets every year, while most of its decisions require medium term implementation by interested stakeholders. A meeting every two years may therefore be more appropriate. The second aspect is related to the level of its participants, currently limited to high-level senior practitioners to enable a more technical and less formal discussion. Participation of political leaders at ministerial level could however facilitate the domestic implementation of proposals put forward during GFMD session. Therefore, future GFMD meetings could provide space for a higher level segment, while the bulk of its activities would continue to be discussed at senior practitioner level. This high-level segment could perhaps in some years take the form of a Head of States and Governments gathering, to give more impetus to the process.

Relations with the UN system

Even though launched in the aftermath of the aforementioned High Level Dialogue, the GFMD is not officially part of the UN system, but maintains links with it through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development and the participation of the UNSG in its meetings (to whom the GFMD Chair-in-Office also conveys its final report).[26] As stated in the aforementioned President's Summary[27] of the HLD, *"the precise relationship between the forum and the United Nations was the subject of some debate"*. An assertion that can be perceived as a willingness of States to limit the involvement of other-than-governmental actors in a global debate around an issue considered so closely linked to their sovereignty.

However, as the need to enhance the GFMD process is mentioned above, its relationship with the United Nations must correspondingly be enhanced to avoid giving the impression that global issues are better dealt with outside the UN framework. This would in the medium term undermine the UN's legitimacy as well as effective multilateralism, to the detriment of smaller and/or developing countries.

In this regard, the current GFMD set-up must be seen in the broader context of managing global issues where, after a decade of mega-conferences (Cairo, Beijing etc.) and various initiatives of mandating high-level panels (Alliance of Civilizations, GCIM etc.), global issues such as climate change, governance of the Internet or migration seem to be increasingly dealt with in the margins of the UN framework.

A closer look at these models offers interesting thoughts for the possible revision of the GFMD operating modalities as they can be seen as efforts to strike a balance between the legitimacy that the UN framework provides (universality etc.) and the dynamism and flexibility required for global issues to be efficiently addressed (less formalised and political debate, avoid North/South divide, open to other than governmental key stakeholders, need for practical or technical solutions etc.). Such are for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC),[28] a driving force of the global environmental debate, or, more recently, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF),[29] and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. [30]

In this regard, the GFMD could become a strong partner to the UN's work on international migration. One division of labour could be for the GFMD to provide an informal platform for all stakeholders to meet, discuss and exchange specificities of the migration and development nexus, while the UN General Assembly would give the political 'impetus' on the general thematic guidelines along which the international community – and the GFMD – should work, and discuss possible 'legislative' gaps that may be pointed out through the GFMD informal discussion. By filling such a role the UN would furthermore be able to coordinate the broader global context, and ensure coherence between activities

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[26] See: operating modalities in *ibid.*

[27] United Nations, *Summary of the High-level Dialogue …*, op. cit, par. 22

[28] The IPCC was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation and the UN Environmental Programme, Its role is "to assess on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation". Review by experts and governments is an essential part of the IPCC process. The Panel does not conduct new research, monitor climate-related data or recommend policies. It is open to all member countries of WMO and UNEP. Source: International Panel on Climate Change, *16 Years of Scientific Assessment in Support of the Climate Convention*, December 2004 available at http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/10th-anniversary/anniversary-brochure.pdf

[29] The IGF results from the Tunis Declaration adopted at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society which created it as a "multi-stakeholder policy dialogue" and defined its mandate, functions and relations with other actors involved as well as its non-binding character. See more specifically articles 67, 72, 73 and 77 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.doc. Since its inception, the IGF has held two annual meetings, in Athens (2006) and Rio de Janeiro (2007). More information available at: www.intgovforum.org

[30]The Kimberley Process aims at stemming the flow of "rough diamonds that are used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments". It results from an initiative of governments that met in Kimberley, South Africa, in 2000 and was subsequently officially constituted by the UN General Assembly (A/Res/55/56) and was later supported by various resolutions of the UN Security Council. The Kimberley process' multi-stakeholder membership includes nearly all states and industry concerned by the diamond trade (and provides observer status to key NGOs) covering approximately 99.8% of the global production of rough diamonds. http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/

related to the migration and development nexus and other development or security efforts (see conclusion).

Interestingly, one can also make the hypothesis that sensitive issues to be tackled in the formal UN environment could be first broached within the GFMD framework, thereby laying the ground for possible commonalities among partners before being addressed at the UN. This could, for instance, be the case for the debate around the aforementioned 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which is still dividing the discussion today at the international level.

Relations with international organisations, civil society and other stakeholders

The relationship between the GFMD process and other international stakeholders similarly needs to be enhanced in order to increase its ability to influence the global debate on the migration and development nexus and see its proposals implemented. Here also, the three models presented above provide interesting examples of the way they associate other-than-governmental actors with their work. While "scientists" are associated with the activities of the IPCC, more striking are the intrinsic multi-stakeholder memberships of the IGF and the Kimberley process.

The GFMD operating modalities have limited provisions for links to be established with the Global Migration Group (GMG), the loose coordination network of international organisations working on migration, and with civil society. As policy coherence is one of its main goals, the GFMD needs to better engage with these key players, not only to benefit from their expertise but also to open dialogue with them, and create a dynamic around its activities on which these actors could base their future initiatives. To this end, the GFMD should also go beyond establishing relations with GMG-affiliated international organisations, and take stock of other initiatives by regional or other international partners (from RCPs to regional development banks, the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* etc.) in order to avoid replicating existing activities or debates, running the risk that proposals may sometimes contradict each other.

Some may discuss the qualification of the GFMD as 'global' and present it as 'international' due to its strong focus on dialogue among states.[31] Without entering further into this discussion, practical improvements appear to be needed with regard to civil society's involvement in the GFMD activities such as, for instance, a differentiated approach for civil society's different constituencies (private sector, NGOs, migrants associations, academics etc.). More importantly, longer term adaptation may also need to be looked at as many proposals put forward by GFMD governmental sessions require partnerships with civil society at the design or implementation phase. Therefore, on the model of the three aforementioned initiatives, increasing involvement of civil society in the GFMD governmental sessions may be appropriate – and is actually enabled by the technical and informal character of the GFMD meetings. This evolution will progressively lead to the question whether, at some stage, the civil society day should not be merged with the GFMD governmental meeting.

Beyond that, the scholar's perception of other-than-governmental actors complying *de proprio motu* with guidelines set up by governments, is unlikely to be met in the current case, due notably to the informal character of the GFMD process, but also to the reality of international relations in today's globalisation era. Therefore, States willing to support the sustainability and relevance of GFMD activities over the long term may also need to actively sustain coherence efforts through, for instance, the position they defend within other international organisations or fora, their funding policy of non-governmental development actors or through the public-private partnerships they may implement.

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31 To use a distinction made in Bruhl T. and Rittberger V., *From International to global governance : Actors, collective decision-making, and the United Nations in the World of the twaenty-first century*, in Rittberger V. (ed), *Global Governance and the United Nations System*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2001, pp. 1-74. This view was adapted to the migration debate (in the pre-GFMD era) by Channac F. *"Global or International Governance for Migration? Building up Co-operation and Enhancing Multilateralism from Regional to Global Level"* presented at the GARNET Workshop *"Theoretical Issues on the EU, UN, Global Governance and Political Multilateralism*" (UNU-CRIS and ULB, 21-22 September 2006, Bruges), GARNET (JERP 5.2.3).

Themes for future GFMD meetings

The first GFMD meeting was articulated around three main themes: human capital development and labour mobility (highly skilled migration and brain drain; temporary labour migration; the role of the non-state actors; circular migration); remittances and other diaspora resources (reduction of cost and formalization of transfers; micro and macro impact of remittances on development; and partnerships to be established between governments and diaspora organizations); and enhancing institutional and policy coherence and promoting partnerships (measuring migration's development-related impact; coherent policy planning; the role of regional consultative processes on migration and development). Human rights, gender and root causes of migration were addressed throughout the meeting as cross-cutting issues.

These themes resulted from the aforementioned survey; and themes for future GFMD meetings will be decided by their participants. As this evolving process is likely to throw up new themes, a prospective analysis of the current context of international migration helps to point out some topics for consideration: South-South migration, where development challenges are important; social and cultural integration of migrants, to ensure long term stability of migration policies; social impact of climate and environmental changes, where solutions have to be found not only in migration but also development (making it a key topic that could only be addressed by the GFMD); or, finally, internal migration and its impact on developing countries' urban development. Beyond that, one may also think of broadening the scope of the GFMD by addressing 'mobility' rather than 'migration', and thus include other international movements of people, such as study travels or even tourism.

Finally, a broader discussion on a common vision for the migration and development nexus might need to take place. But as this may be a source of tensions, and could jeopardize the whole GFMD process in its early stage, more time may be needed before launching this dialogue, which will also require engaging with a higher level of participants.

3. Conclusion: The GFMD, a new path for global governance?

Suggestions to improve the governance of international migration are numerous.[32] Specific critics of the global governance of international migration (in the pre-GFMD era) mainly focused on the lack of coherence in agenda-setting and definition of the issues; the lack of binding multilateral agreements; and the limited involvement of civil society.[33] In its report, the Global Commission on International Migration presented four challenges to be addressed for enhancing the governance of international migration: policy coherence at the State level, coordination of policy-making and implementation; enhancement of capacity; and further cooperation among States. It consequently suggested a multi-level governance model for international migration and made various proposals for the global level, ranging from the creation of a global agency for economic migration, to modifying relations between the IOM and the UN, or the creation of an Interagency Global Migration Facility etc.[34]

Through its incremental and confidence-building approach, the GFMD has initiated responses to some of these observations. For example, the creation of a worldwide network of focal points, which are key to internal and international coordination and coherence; the regular involvement of civil society, with the "civil society day" being an integral part of the GFMD activities; and the framing of the "migration and development" issue through the aforementioned global survey and the discussions in the first meeting.

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[32] See for instance, Rischard J.F., *High Noon, 20 Global Issues and 20 Years To Solve Them*, Perseus Press, Great Britain, 2002, page 146; Newland K., *The governance of international migration: mechanisms, processes and institutions*, GCIM, September 2005, Geneva, 19 pp.
[33] See for instance an interesting comparison between global governance of environmental and migration issues and a deep analysis of the role of regional consultation processes in creating global coherence, respectively in Green J., Thouez C., *Global governance for migration and the environment : what can we learn from each other ?*, Global Migration Perspectives, n°46, Global Commission on International Migration, September 23005, Geneva, 16 pp. and Thouez C., Channac F., *Convergence and divergence in migration policy : the role of regional consultative processes,* Global Migration Perspectives, GCIM, N°20, January 2005, Geneva, page 5.
[34] Global Commission on International Migration, *op. cit.*, chapter 6.

However, the means to ensure compliance do not exist, and its agenda-setting ability has to rely on other actors' good will. Further, even after the launch of the GFMD process and for reasons explained above, one may expect that entering into multilateral agreements on the global management of migration will take time.

Nevertheless, the GFMD's first year of activity has demonstrated some constitutive elements that may inspire other initiatives to manage new global issues.

These include for instance the GFMD's reliance on non-binding rules of procedure that enable non-politicized debates and the creation of a culture of dialogue; its avoidance of substituting existing mechanisms, which avoids spending time on discussions to create new institutions and immediately enables practical solutions; its transparent and participatory approach; and its focus on action-oriented outcomes, which prevents it from being seen as an additional 'talk shop' and precludes political discussions that could jeopardize the process in its early stage. Finally, more linked to the specificities of the migration debate at the global level, it defused the "migration chain" (i.e. countries of origin, transit and destination of the same "chain" do not face themselves but are mixed with other countries in a similar situation) which enabled the debate to take place on a more equal footing. A similar observation can be made with regard to the relationship among donors and recipients of aid.

This article nevertheless looks beyond the sole management of global issues and is based on the definition of global governance provided by Belgium's Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations in 2004 as "enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and legitimacy" of the existing multilateral institutions, and filling the gaps in the regulatory frameworks when needed.[35] This approach aims at the creation of driving engines at the global level that make possible a participatory and democratic definition of forward-looking policy goals, and which are supported by means to ensure compliance.

In today's globalisation era, which fully unfolded after the fall of the Berlin wall, governments are increasingly called upon to respond to global issues and their subtopics – ranging from climate change, to security, energy, migration, world inequalities etc. – which all urgently need to be solved. Global issues further occur in a world that is deeply interconnected both across countries (as terror attacks in one place could create economic downturn in a country located at the other end of the world) and among policy domains (as the number of typhoons in one region can be the result of energy consumption in another region of the world).

No single actor could handle these issues – not even a world government if there were to be one. These responses rather require States to face a double governance challenge in a rapid and flexible manner: domestic coherence – going beyond the sole range of public authorities – and international cooperation. Beyond that, there is a need to adapt the current international architecture to these new challenges and to the rise of new players (the private sector, NGOs etc.), while keeping the ultimate decision-making power with national governments.

Therefore, taking as a cornerstone the sovereign right of states to decide who should enter or stay on their territory, and based on the multi-level approach suggested by the GCIM report (as not all aspects have to be dealt with at the global level), a new form of global governance for the migration and development nexus could emerge, which, at the global level, would take the form of a triangular partnership between the United Nations, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and the relevant international organisations.

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[35] Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, *"Global Governance, The Next Frontier"*, Egmont Papers, Nr. 2, Academia Press, Brussels, 2004.

At one end, the United Nations, as the legitimising universal body where all States gather, would be in the driving seat. Playing a consolidated role of coordination and political leadership, it would set the long-term agenda and produce normative decisions when and where needed.

In parallel, as not all issues of the migration and development nexus can be addressed in all their complexity in the heavily formalised UN framework, the GFMD would provide space for States to gather with other stakeholders to discuss more detailed and technical approaches; exchange experiences and best practices; create partnerships and define proposals and guidelines; as well as for first approaches to innovative themes and ideas and for the broaching of internationally binding negotiations.

Finally, implementation of decisions and proposals resulting from these works would rest with the wider international community, the efforts of which would be supported, when needed, by the works of relevant international agencies.

Broadening the scope of this partnership to other global issues, this division of work could hail a new era in global governance. States, which should remain the cornerstones of this global architecture, would be represented at the three corners of the framework, and consequently have a key role to play in ensuring the coherence of the system. Enriched by expertise of other international actors – through informal multi-stakeholders' platforms of which the specific design could vary according to the topic addressed – they will be in a better position to define the necessary practical actions and guidelines to be implemented by the wider international community (governments, international organisations, private sector, NGOs, academics etc.). International specialized agencies would further play the key role of ensuring the relevance of this partnership, by supporting implementation of these efforts, according to their respective mandate.

Inspiring this triangular framework, the GFMD process could perhaps open a new path for global governance, which would be better adapted to the challenges of globalisation and, ultimately, to the needs and expectations of the world population in the 21st century.