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Highlights of Global and Regional Migration Dialogues

**Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)**

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Greece

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**Please check upon delivery**

Director General,  
Madam Deputy Director General,  
Excellencies and colleagues,

I would like to thank the IOM for inviting the Greek Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development to brief this gathering of the IOM Council on the achievements of the Third Meeting of the Forum hosted in Athens.

Deputy Minister Tzakri could not be with us today, as duty has called her elsewhere, but I will deliver this message on her behalf.

Let me at the outset express our appreciation to the Director General and Deputy Director General for taking such an interest in the GFMD, and personally attending the meeting in Athens.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the meeting in Athens and participate at the deliberations, due to obligations in Geneva. Thus, regrettably, I might not be in apposition to reply to any specific questions regarding the meeting.

I am happy to report that the Global Forum meeting, both on the Civil Society and the Government days, was successful in meeting its objectives. The discussions were open and productive; and resulted in some practical proposals for new approaches and policies. There was cooperation and complementarity between Governments and Civil Society, including an interface between the two on the last day of the Civil Society meeting, and a report to Governments on the Civil Society outcomes at the Government meeting.

The overarching theme of the Forum, selected by Greece and endorsed by the GFMD participating states, was "Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All". Our intention with this theme was to sharpen the development focus of the Forum and the role that migration can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We wanted to bring forward ways of integrating migration within development-oriented actions and thinking - but also to factor development more into migration policies.

Let me share with you today some of the major achievements of the Athens meeting, which may interest you as the key players of the Global Forum. These achievements need to be seen as part of the incremental growth of the Forum since its inaugural meeting in Brussels in 2007. You will remember that the original intention of the Forum – as agreed at the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2006 - was to create a global platform for governments to have informal exchanges on the many aspects and challenges of migration and its inter-linkages with development.

Belgium paved the way in 2007 with discussions on human capital development and labour mobility, the financial, social and other contributions migrants make to their home and host countries, and the policy and institutional coherence that should underpin all efforts to link migration and development.

Last year in Manila, the Philippine Chair spotlighted the human face of migration and development, while expanding on the achievements of Brussels. Manila opened the way for a frank, practical discussion of human rights, and the importance of sharing responsibility in protecting and empowering migrants for the development of the migrants, their families and society.

This year in Athens, we wanted to look more closely at how development can be a key to ensuring that, if people move, it is not out of necessity. With our overarching theme “Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All”, we aimed to support the initiative of the Secretary General to address the connection between root causes of migration and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

What have we achieved this year?

2009 has been a year of consolidation for the Global Forum:

Firstly, because a number of recommendations going back to the Brussels and Manila meetings actually came to fruition.

Secondly, there is more evidence now of a change in government thinking and actions towards greater coherence of migration and development policy-making. There is also a growing coherence within the GFMD between the Roundtable discussions and their outcomes.

One important organizational change to result from the Manila meeting, has been the establishment of the administrative Support Unit in Geneva, which now effectively backstops the financial, technological and administrative work of the GFMD and its Chair. We are grateful to IOM for hosting and giving its expert technical support to this Unit, and are pleased to see that government funding for the continued operation of the Support Unit is assured for the coming year.

We also saw the establishment of two ad hoc working groups within the GFMD, one on protecting and empowering migrants for development, and one on policy coherence, data and research. These were intended to keep track of specific GFMD outcomes.

The first ad hoc working group, on protecting and empowering migrants, co-chaired by the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates, supported the implementation of some outcomes from earlier Forum meetings, which helped to enrich the discussions in Athens. IOM, for example, was commissioned by the co-chairing governments to undertake a study on Migrant Resource Centres, which help prepare, protect and support migrants at several points in the migration life cycle.

Along with other international experts, IOM is also a member of the ad hoc working group on policy coherence, data and research, which, under the co-chairmanship of Morocco and Switzerland, is looking at research-related outcomes of the Forum.

We have this year moved forward a survey of governments, which shows how well the GFMD partner states are working towards policy and institutional coherence, particularly as a result of the GFMD process. At the regional level, IOM organized a meeting hosted by

the Royal Thai Government this year for heads of regional consultative processes on migration, to enhance exchanges of good practice among them. IOM also commissioned the first-ever assessment of the outputs and impacts of the regional processes, which was presented in Athens.

Turning to the concrete outcomes of the Athens meeting itself:

In Roundtable 1, we discussed mechanisms, strategies and actors that mainstream migration in development planning, and how to engage the diaspora and migrants in development policies and programs. We also examined how to address the root causes of migration through development, in light of the current global economic crisis.

In Roundtable 2, we looked at two critical phases in the life cycle of migration, the time spent abroad, and the return home. Smart and linked-up integration and reintegration strategies in countries of origin and in host countries can strengthen the human development of the migrants, and their capacities to contribute to the well-being of their families and their communities.

In Roundtable 3, underpinning all of these discussions were two sessions, one on policy and institutional coherence and related data and research, and the other on regional and inter-regional consultative processes. Both of these discussions have assured some continuity and coherence with the earlier GFMD meetings.

There were many recommendations out of the Roundtable discussions, which we do not have the time to outline in detail. These will appear in our final Report of the Proceedings. But here are some of the key recommendations:

1. Migration should be integrated into National Development Plans and Poverty Reduction Strategies; and into national adaptation plans regarding climate change.

2. Migration profiles, based on the European Commission's work (also with IOM), may be a useful tool for more countries to adopt, to achieve coherence between migration and development policy. These are owned by the countries concerned, but need to include data and analysis on both origin and host countries. Interested countries and international organizations are invited to liaise with the EC about how to improve the migration profiles, to be reported at the GFMD in 2010.

3. A Handbook could be prepared, containing lessons learned and practical guidelines for engaging the diaspora in development activities.

4. Governments should strengthen the capacities of diaspora organizations to contribute to development; and engage diaspora organizations in development planning of both countries of origin and host countries.

5. Partnerships between origin and host countries are needed to deal with the different aspects of the economic downturn. Data and experiences of impacts of policies should be shared between countries in a coordinated, unrestricted and transparent way to support these partnerships.

6. Further research is needed on evaluation techniques and indicators,

particularly to evaluate the impacts of integration policies on development (including cost-benefit analyses), the effectiveness of social protection policies from one country to another, and the impacts of migrant reintegration on local labour markets in countries of origin.

7. An observatory could be established to collect data and experiences with reintegration, to support future evaluations of reintegration programs.

8. A pilot program could be set up by the Bangladesh Government in partnership with banks and NGOs for low-cost pre-departure loans to migrants.

9. A database on Circular Migration programs could be developed as a tool for the Global Forum.

10. Networking between Migrant Resource Centres in origin and host countries should be strengthened, to ensure coherent information and support to migrants.

11. Migration and development questions should be included in the 2010 global census round, through the engagement of national statistics offices. The UN Statistical Commission should take this up at its next meeting in February 2010.

12. The mutually reinforcing roles of Regional Consultation Processes and the Global Forum should be strengthened, for example through regular exchange of information via the GFMD website.

The Greek General Rapporteur on Gender Issues reported that all Roundtables this year gave due regard to gender concerns, but that we still needed more gender-disaggregated data to inform policies. We need to know more about the women and children left behind by migrants, and the different labour market entry experiences of male and female migrants. Diaspora and migrants should support more development projects that address specific concerns of women and other vulnerable groups. And gender-sensitive integration practices by host countries like Greece, or origin countries like the Philippines, in the areas of information, training, advocacy and welfare support, could also be adopted or adapted by other countries.

We also had a discussion in Athens about the Future of the Forum. The next three meetings of the Forum are assured through the offers of Mexico, Spain and Morocco to host them. That should also allow sufficient time for a more thorough assessment of the GFMD before the next High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in the UN General Assembly in 2013.

Governments this year demonstrated a high level of knowledge and interest in the Global Forum. Most are satisfied with the way it is conducted, in accordance with the original Operating Modalities of 2007. They have re-affirmed that the process should remain informal and state-led.

Finally, we know that the key outcomes of the Forum are its policy recommendations. But one of the most remarkable achievements of the Forum has been the growing

cooperation among governments at practical levels. The government teams that form each year to prepare the Roundtables stand as one of the great successes of the Forum.

But all of this is not possible without the expertise and cooperation of our international and Civil Society partners. A number of key recommendations from previous years have been followed-up and funded by governments, but it is the expert international partners who have mostly implemented them, particularly our partners from the Global Migration Group, ILO, IOM, World Bank and others, both individually and as a group.

We are especially indebted to IOM for its untiring and generous support to the Forum at all levels – the secondment of a senior international migration expert to the Taskforce; drafting of background papers, such as for Roundtable 3.2; substantive input on a range of migration and development issues; and logistical support to the Support Unit; and more. We know that many of the good practices we are looking for already exist, or are being tested by you, in your project work on the ground with Member States.

We thank you again and look forward to working closely with our Mexican colleagues next year, and with all of you in future GFMD endeavours.

Before giving back the floor to our President let me also thank all those delegations that, during the previous days, congratulated Greece for the organization and results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> GFMD meeting.

Thank you