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The 8th Global Forum on Migration and Development, 13-15 October 2015, Istanbul, Turkey: The “Plan B” Migration Governance

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The 8th Global Forum on Migration and Development, 13-15 October 2015, Istanbul, Turkey

The “Plan B” Migration Governance

In the middle of the most serious humanitarian crisis, since the second World War, caused mainly by the Syrian turmoil and armed conflicts that compelled thousands of people to cross international borders, Turkey has organized and hosted the 8th Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The meeting took place in Istanbul last October (13-15/10), just after the terrorist attack in Ankara and on the eve of the Turkish presidential elections.

It worth's mentioning that today, Turkey shelters close to two million Syrians under temporary protection of whom some 250.000 live in accommodation centers while more than 660.000 people have left our east neighbor and crossed the sea borders arriving to the Greek islands in the Aegean. In October alone, Greece has received more than 200.000 refugees and migrants originating from Syria, Afghanistan, Irak, Pakistan and Somalia.

It is not surprising, given the situation in the region, that the overcatching theme of the meeting focused on “Strengthening Partnerships= Human Mobility for Sustainable Development”. As the title of the Forum and of the meeting show, the issue at stake of both is the migration-development nexus. The theme of the recent meeting signals recognition that international migration cannot be addressed effectively by any one country alone or by states without the cooperation of others stakeholders. It also emphasizes that mobility (migration) within the eight policy framework is a positive factor for development. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMA) is an initiative of the UN Secretary General. It has been launched in 2007 and hosted by eight countries (chairs in office) in succession, namely Belgium, the Philippines, Greece, Mexico, Switzerland, Mauritius, Sweden and finally Turkey.

The GFMD is a state led, non-binding process for dialogue and cooperation among 140 countries all over the globe on issues of Migration and Development. As Peter Sutherland, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration pointed out in his forward in Stockholm, “the Forum created a safe space in witch stakeholders from around the world can gather, learn, deliberate and faster cooperation – far from the destructive distractions of domestic polities. It has allowed states to establish a common understanding of migration and to see clearly that many of the policies that states need to pursue are not ones that oppose the interests of migrants to the interest of states”.

The Forum has entered last year a new and exciting period, following the second UN High Level Dialogue, witch produced a declaration on migration and development that crystallized an agenda for action shared by the entire international community.

Through the common efforts, of governments and international organizations, in partnership with civil society (the GFMD Civil Society Days take place over two days immediately preceding the Forum Meeting), the GFMD has become a more effective broad multi-stakeholder platform for exchanging good practices and lessons learned on migration and development.

The 8th GFMD meeting in Istanbul had three main objectives:

- Enhancing migrant focused migration, incorporating a variety of perspectives on a migration management which gives the priority to the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants, including the views of civil society and migrants themselves.
- Recognising the development impact of migration in public policies, incorporating migration in discussion of development policy at all levels from the local to the global, up to and including the adoption of the post 2015 UN Development Agenda.
- Engaging relevant stakeholders in strengthening the linkages between migration and development, enabling the dialogue among states and abroad range of civil society actors, the private sector, international organizations and other stakeholders.

The meeting was organized through three Round Tables, each with two sessions. Three thematic meeting on cross-cutting issues were hold at the preparatory stage with a view to provide more evidence-based inputs into the final discussions.

The first Round Table dealt with:

- Partnerships to prompt inclusion and protect the human rights of all migrants in order to achieve the full benefits of migration.
- The reduction of the human and financial migration costs. Through cooperative approaches in order to achieve fair recruitment practises and lower remittance fees.

The second Round Table targeted at:

- Mainstreaming migration into planning at the sectorial level
- Making migration work post 2015=implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On the second target will elaborate further on below since the 8th GFMD tried to analyze the place of migration in the SDGs to explore ways of achieving the migration related targets included in the post 2015 agenda as well as the possible contribution of the Forum to this effort.

The last Round Table explored the new and emerging issues in international migration and more precisely:

- The enhancement of human development and human security for forced migrants (refugees, people affected by natural and manmade disasters and environmental degradation) through international corporation on labor market access, educational opportunities, family reunification and other avenues of mobility as a triple win process witch can lead to burden sharing beyond traditional humanitarian approaches. With government budges under stress almost everywhere and particularly in refugee-hosting countries such as Greece, Turkey, Italy, Jordan and Lebanon it is clear that the traditional “care and maintenance” model for refugees and mixed flows, is unsustainable.
- Private sector-government partnership to support migrant diaspora entrepreneurship and job creation, with a focus on small and medium enterprises.

The three thematic meetings on cross-cutting issues explored respectively the place of migration in the post 2015 UN development agenda the role of communications in promoting widespread recognition of the benefits of migratuion, improving public perceptions of migrants, combating discrimination and promoting integration and last but no least the contribution of women migrants (48% of the worlds international migrants) to economic and social development in countries of origin and destination, addressing their specific needs.

Although of a first look, the third Round Table seems to be the most interesting one, at the present conjunction, we consider that the second one on Migration in the context of the 2030 Development Agend deserves a more detailed presentation since it touched upon the root causes

of migration and forced displacement of populations, namely poverty, increasing inequalities between and within states, discriminations and violation of human rights. The elimination found the fight against these phenomena which trigger massive movements of people are reflected across the Agenda 2030, including in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), related targets and eventually indicators.

Efforts have been made within Round Table 2.2. (R.T.) to identify possible planning at different levels and consequent actions for full and effective implantation of the migration – related and relevant targets in both the 2030 Agenda and the relative Addis Ababa Action one. The latter has been adopted in July 2015 during the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and has provided additional food for thought to the RT2.2 discussions.

At this point, previous to the presentation of the SDGs and the discussions on the possible role of the GFMD in their follow up and review, we should stress that development can eliminate the root causes of migration in both source and receiving countries.

The Post 2015 Development Agenda comprises (17) seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accompanied by targets and will be further elaborated through indicators focused on measurable outcomes:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The RT 2.2, taking into consideration the Declaration that set the context and tone of the Agenda 2030, which stipulates that all states should ensure the human rights of all migrants and secure commitment to “leave no one behind”, has selected four migration related SDGs targets which countries should achieve. All countries should provide coherent and comprehensive

responses to migration challenges through mainstreaming migration into respective planning processes and instruments of development, such as national development plans, sustainable development strategies, relevant sectorial policies.

The list of migration related targets includes:

- Target 8.8 on labour rights and safe and secure working environment of all workers, including migrant workers, particular women migrants (bola).
- Target 10.7 on safe, orderly and regular migration including through well-managed migration policies.
- Target 10.c reducing cost of migrant remittances.
- Target 17.18 on data desegregation in relation to migratory status.

The specific target 8.8 focuses on promoting sustain aid inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

As far as the 10.7 and 10.c specific targets are concerned, it would be worth nothing that are set within the wider context on addressing inequalities. These targets commit to improve migration governance through “planned and well managed migration policies” and to reduce costs of migrants’ remittances to lower than 3 percent of the amount remitted and also to eliminate the remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 percent.

The fourth specific target is set within the means of implementation of migration related targets, promoting interlinkpages across various targets and indication and informing decision makers on how they will mobilize resources to achieve the SDGs.

Indicators accompanying SDGs and targets are still under elaboration by the Inter-Agency Expert Groups, as mandated by the UN Statistical Commission. The Agency will set by mid 2016 a limited set of indicate global indicators while the wider set will be left for each country to develop through consultation, taking into account national realities, circumstances and priorities. Besides the process to develop a set of indicators establishing a functional architecture in witch progress can be assessed is also under discussion. At the global level, the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will lead the follow-up and review of SDGs by facilitating the sharing of experiences and by promoting system –wide coherence and coordination of sustainable policies. The Post 2015 Development Agenda also provides for thematic reviews at the global level, supported by the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and other intergovernmental fora.

At the regional level, it is proposed that States identify existing mechanisms and multistakeholder processes to engage in peer learning, corporation and discussion or shared targets.

A part of the above mentioned Migration related SDG targets, a number of migration relevant ones can be found out of the total 169n targets of SDGs.

The latter are indirectly interlinked with the root causes of migration (poverty, hunger health and education systems, unemployment child labour, climate related hazards and natural disasters) as well as with migrants integration in the host societies and their contribution to development (social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, economic or other status, make cities and human settlements, peri urban and rental areas inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable promote peaceful and inclusive societies, encourage effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships etc).

We referred above to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the outcome of the Conference of the Financing for Development as a complementary document to the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda contains a number of commitments to realize the potential that migration and remittances hold for development, addressing as well the obstacles to flows of remittances, including banks withdrawing

services, mitigating the impact of money laundering and combating financing of terrorism.

The discussions of the RT 2.2 drawing on recent and on going developments on the issue of Migration and Development, trying to identify the possible role of the Global Forum in migration as its possible place to the institutional architecture of assessment.

The more obvious role that GFMD can play, emanates from its proper nature and its terms of reference, as a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned on the progress made towards migration related SDG targets, the inclusion and the contribution of migrants in the attainment of SDGs (not felt behind).

Any other option for a more decisive involvement in the GFMD in thematic follow-up and review of migration related SDGs would require changes in its operating modalities and probably with its links with the UN System which for the moment are mediated through the special Representative of the UN secretary General Mr.Sutherland. The discussion has been opened and options have been put on the table for further consideration. Bangladesh, which is the new chair in office of the GFMD will carry out future discussions on the future of the Forum. What is of outmost importance is that the GFMD has survived the economic crisis and remains the most well placed International Forum to explore the Migration-Development nexus and to lead relevant discussions in the field.

The GFMD is above all a reminder to the international community, today more than ever since its establishment, that development remains the only effective and long-term solution for orderly migration out of choice and not out of need as it is the key for ending armed conflicts and the forced displacement of populations all over the world, including the elimination of radicalism and terrorism.

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International Society for Labour and Social Security Law (ISLSSL), XI European Regional Congress, Young Scholars Session – European Embryo, Dublin, 17-19 September 2014

The ISLSSL XI European Regional Congress was held in Ireland (Dublin) on September 2014 and in particular in the University College Dublin (UCD). The main focus of the discussion was put on the reforms in the field of labour law, while the reforms of social security law were examined to a smaller scale. The Young Scholars Meeting took place on the first day of the conference having as a coordinator Professor Stefano Bellomo. When the initiative of the Young Scholars' Session started, each national representative was requested to prepare a report to expose the impact of the economic crisis on the recent evolution of the National Labour Law systems in the European Countries (by the different sides of employment contract law, trade union law and collective bargaining and the social security law). The reports of each national group of young scholars of the European Embryo can be found on the website of the ISLSSL¹, the results of which were illustrated by the respective national representatives during the Session scheduled. The countries represented by the respective national teams were: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland,