



21 September 2012

To: Government members of the GFMD Friends of the Forum
GFMD Steering Group
GFMD Troika
Past, present and future GFMD Chairs

Cc: Invited 2012 GFMD civil society delegates

We write this letter as the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) and its member organizations.

The GCM (www.GCMigration.org) is a coalition of major international and regional civil society networks of migrant associations, migrants' rights organizations and advocates, trade unions, faith groups, and academia that has recently emerged out of ongoing collaborative engagement around the GFMD and the parallel PGA (People's Global Action on Migration, Development & Human Rights) process.

This letter is prompted by the 7 September letter from the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office inviting civil society delegates to participate in this year's GFMD and Common Space session with governments. Specifically, the letter indicated that funding is not yet available to support the participation of civil society delegates in the GFMD. The invitation and instructions that selected CSD delegates commence making travel, accommodation and visa plans without specific funding support, is extremely disturbing and unacceptable.

Without assistance, many civil society delegates will simply not be able to afford to participate, especially those from developing countries and low-income communities, and community-based institutions. Indeed, should assistance to delegates not materialize *within the next two weeks (by 5 October 2012)*, participation of civil society from developing countries and low-income communities will be negligible. It would be the first time in the history of the GFMD that support has not been available to civil society delegates.

We appreciate the efforts that the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), a GCM member and current GFMD Civil Society Days Coordinating Office, has made in raising resources for civil society participation. Last year, ICMC was able to secure funding assistance for about half of the civil society delegates, within an overall budget that was less than half the budget for the prior year's civil society GFMD programme. This year, working with a proposed budget that is again just half of the 2010 Civil Society Days budget, the Coordinating Office has actively pursued funding from foundations and governments for this year's civil society programme. We welcome the 2012 support confirmed by the MacArthur and Bancomer Foundations, Cordaid, the government of Switzerland, and through the Mauritian Chair. These donors have emphasized and contributed to the continuity of civil society's engagement in the GFMD. But to date there is insufficient support for the participation of civil society delegates in



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a location that is significantly more expensive than in prior years. We are very disturbed by this situation and urge swift action by governments to ensure the critical engagement of civil society stakeholders in Mauritius.

Many of our organizations and networks have a long commitment to the issues inherent to migration and development. Many of us work regularly in concrete partnership with governments and international organizations. Over the years, GCM members have invested significant time, internal resources and energies in regional and national gatherings leading up to the GFMD. Most recently, this includes a week-long gathering of unions in Brussels, Belgium, and a week-long gathering of African civil society representatives and GCM members at the inaugural African Civil Society Forum on Migration, Development and Human Rights in Accra, Ghana, both of which took place in September 2012. The Accra gathering alone brought together more than 40 representatives from the continent and internationally. There should be no doubt that civil society is growing a strong, vibrant and representative global movement to address migration, development and human rights.

Yet since the inception of the GFMD in 2007, we have annually experienced last-minute funding dilemmas that compromise the engagement of civil society in this important process. We are particularly concerned that the funding situation is so dire this year as the GFMD hosts its annual event for the first time on African soil.

As has been the practice of all previous Forums, we continue to support and encourage contributions of those civil society delegates to cover all or partial expenses, insofar as they are able. As a practical matter however, to rectify this year's funding situation and secure the participation of civil society delegates in Mauritius, we urgently seek funding to support airfares and accommodation for at least 125 civil society delegates (about half the total invited). At an estimated cost of about US \$2,600 per delegate, this would amount to US \$325,000. In order to make the requisite communications and arrangements, we would need to confirm such funding by **September 30** so that the Coordinating Office can properly notify potential delegates of travel assistance and travel arrangements can be made in a timely and cost-efficient way.

Another urgent matter concerns securing visas to enter Mauritius, an additional challenge for many given the fast approaching deadlines. We strongly urge the Mauritius government to work with the GFMD Civil Society Coordinating Office to provide visas on arrival for any invited delegate who is unable to secure a visa in their home country due to time sensitive restrictions.

Finally, for the future viability of the GFMD, the annual funding challenge for both the government programme and for civil society engagement must be systemically addressed. Adequate civil society participation should be included annually in the total Forum budget. The proximity of the UN High Level Dialogue in 2013 reinforces the need for systemic solutions. Members of the GCM have specific proposals that may remedy the longer term



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financial and programmatic viability of GFMD civil society days and consultations. We welcome an opportunity to discuss these at a later date.

All responses and correspondences can be directed through Colin Rajah, GCM Coordinator, at crajah@GCMigration.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

- *Ana Avendano & Karl Flecker, GCM Focal Points; International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)*
- *Carol Barton, Coordinator; Women and Global Migration Working Group (WGMWG)*
- *Catherine Tactaquin, Executive Director; National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)*
- *Colin Rajah, Secretary; Migrants Rights International (MRI)*
- *Michele LeVoy, Director; Platform for the International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)*
- *Milka Isinta, Co-Coordinator; Pan African Network in Defense of Migrants Rights (PANiDMR)*
- *Oscar Chacon, Executive Director; National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)*
- *Patricia Gainza, Co-Coordinator; Espacio Sin Fronteras*
- *Raul Delgado-Wise, President; International Network on Migration and Development (INMD)*
- *William Gois, Regional Coordinator; Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)*