

## **Background**

In September 2006, the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development took place in the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Over 140 Member States discussed the global implications of international migration and the mutually beneficial interaction between migration and development. The High Level Dialogue made explicit the close relationship of development policies with migration policies, and reaffirmed how good migration governance can contribute to development and examined the impact of development policies on migration.

As a result of these discussions a large number of UN Member States expressed their interest in continuing the dialogue on migration and development by means of an informal, voluntary and state-led global forum. Belgium took the initiative to organize the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), in Brussels on 9-11 July 2007. The next GFMD will be held in the Philippines in 2008.

The GFMD is not a decision-making process but rather a platform for policymakers to share information on ideas, good practices and policies regarding migration and development, and to explore new initiatives for international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

A key added value of the Forum for Member States and other actors is to produce concrete and action-oriented outcomes, including new policy recommendations, innovative pilot programmes, development of partnerships and removal of obstacles to seek mutually beneficial effects.

The Forum meeting in Brussels comprised of two interrelated parts: a meeting of civil society actors on the first day; and a discussion by government representatives on the second and third day. An independent event of civil society is also held parallel to the GFMD, which is the Global Community Forum.

### **Civil Society day (9 July, 2007)**

Civil Society day was the official process planned by the Belgium government through the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF). It was held a day before the actual GFMD.

The programme of the civil society day mirrored the actual agenda that was discussed by the GFMD. The topics include:

- Human capital development and labour mobility: maximising opportunities and minimising risks
- Temporary labour migration as a contribution to development: low skilled migration and addressing irregular migration
- How can circular migration and sustainable return benefit development?
- Measures to increase the development value of remittances

However, according to comments from the participants, the Belgian government provided inadequate space for comprehensive civil society inputs into the process. The government even went to the extent of determining the agenda for civil society.

### **The Global Community Forum (10 & 11 July, 2007)**

The Global Community Forum aimed to reintroduce the voice and concrete contribution of migrants, non-government organisations and civil society in the global debate. It was organised by Migrants Rights International (MRI), Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Workers (PICUM), National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA).

The Global Community Forum was a major convergence of migrants associations and networks, fair trade groups, human rights and development organisations from around the world. About 120 participants represented all continents.

The program of the global community forum began with a debriefing and report back of Civil Society Day. The second plenary was about the state of human rights of migrants. Five speakers from the various continents gave a short overview of the situation in each region. Rex Verona from the Asian Migrant centre provided the Asian perspective.

The entire afternoon of the first day, had two full cycles of workshops. They included

- Domestic workers forum (a three part workshop)
- Temporary labour migration programs and vulnerability of migrant workers
- Concrete programming in migration and development  
How the EU frames and funds it?  
How NGOs already do migration and development (2 part workshop)?
- Advocacy, campaigning and activities for change, Radio 1812 and campaign against high cost of remittances
- International trade and migration policies
- Detentions and deportations
- The International Protection Regime: Campaigning for Universal Ratification and Effective Implementation

CARAM Asia Regional Coordinator, Cynthia Gabriel attended the two workshops below:

#### 1) Domestic Workers Forum

- Human Rights Watch(HRW) is taking the lead in trying to convene and develop a global campaign on foreign domestic workers
- The new alliance called United for Foreign Domestic Workers formed following the launch of CARAM Asia's toolkit in Jakarta was announced there. A statement on the formation and the rationale for the campaign was also shared with the group.
- The workshop was broken into three parts. The first part was a sharing of issues, and a lot centered on the labour and rights aspects of domestic work, to legislate domestic work as work and to advocate for a day off.
- The second part of the workshop moved into planning and strategising.
- The third part strengthened suggestions for collaboration and working together.
- HRW will work to further coordinate the initiatives of different regions, and will prepare a report of the 3 part workshop.
- Asian NGO participation were the strongest compared to other continents.

#### 2) Detentions and Deportations

- Malaysia was used as a typical case of a receiving country that resorts to detentions and deportations as a way to manage migration and flows of undocumented migrants.
- Some discussions were held on how to shift the issue from national security arguments to include human security factors.
- Examples from other continents were also shared on how post 911, migrants have become more vulnerable to abuse and discrimination in the fight against international terrorism.
- Need a special strategy on undocumented workers

The second day of the global community forum focused on updates on CSO participation at GFMD (12 representatives were chosen among civil society groups). John Bingham from the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) elaborated the situation inside the GFMD, where the interests were high on the economic aspects of migration and how migration can be promoted as a means to economic integration and development. Overall the discussions that went on during GFMD only focused on labour aspects of international migration as well as the economic outcomes of migration.

### **Planning for GFMD 2008 in the Philippines**

There were strong proposals that the next GFMD should include significant participation of migrants and more national level consultations and meetings should be supported and organised prior to the GFMD.

Engaging stakeholders at the national level was seen as an important build up to the regional and international commitments that governments need to adhere to.

Since there was a clear gap in terms of content and analysis of on aspects such as health rights of migrants, CARAM Asia can play an important role to bridge this gap of migration and health issues within the development discourse.