

Sophie van Haasen

Coordinator, GFMD Mayors Mechanism

Remarks in session 3 of GFMD Closing Ceremony: Reflections of the GFMD Mechanisms on the 13th GFMD Summit

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Thank you Chair,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

- It is an honour to be here with you today, and a true privilege to hear from my fellow mechanisms, but also to hear warm words from Ambassador Mona, Estrella, Mayor Alfelor, and Marta representing the force of youth in this process. Your testimonies were a strong reminder of how we got here, the immense legacy this process has and what we can achieve.
- I am happy to share a few words on behalf of the three Mayors Mechanism partners – UCLG, MMC and IOM.
- Let me join those before me with thanking the UAE for an excellent Summit and for your leadership throughout this year. It has been an extraordinary and challenging one, and you have done it with vision, making sure all stakeholders were included throughout its activities. Let me also thank the roundtable co-chairs and thematic leads for opening the process and to the Support Unit, who has been critical to get us to where we are today.
- As the Mayors Mechanism, it is just the second year that we are in this space and it is within this chairmanship that we've been a full part of all GFMD activities and the Summit: just this week we have over 25 local governments in a speaking role and more than 90 registered local and regional governments participating throughout the week.
- Our networking session on Friday was a landmark meeting: it was the first time that the GFMD created a dedicated space for us to exchange directly with States on difficult issues, including policy coordination, legal frameworks and municipal access to funding.
- Some of the key messages' cities brought to the table this week:
  - Let me start with the words of Mayor Sala in the Opening of this GFMD: 'many of us are migrants, our children will also be migrants, and migration

has brought our world innovation, development and resilience’.

Acknowledging this, we heard throughout the summit testimonies of how local leaders have stepped up in the Covid-19 crisis in so many critical ways, whether that’s providing equal access to testing, direct cash assistance regardless of status, or sanitation services in underserved neighbourhoods.

- Cities also said many times that they cannot do this alone and shed light on some of the challenges that they face. For example, many local governments have the commitment to reach all residents, legal status does not affect how and what type of services they extend. However, in practice, they often lack mandates, information and resources. Irregular migrants are particularly hard to reach, and cities have called on states to address this, for example by expanding pathways and regularization programmes, as smart policy tools that keep everyone safe.
- In building effective labour migration policies and skills matching, local governments have said to stand ready to work with national governments to ensure policies are rooted in local realities, in particular when it comes to protecting migrants in the informal sector. They can help gather local data and are also well placed to connect the different stakeholders, not only to protect migrants, but to enable migrant entrepreneurship and economic inclusion. Cities themselves are also increasingly setting up their own city-to-city partnerships for skills matching and have so much to bring to this conversation.
- Protecting migrants from any kind of discrimination and creating stronger, balanced and more resilient narratives on migration is not an end in itself but a tool for cities to ensure everyone can feel safe. Cities’ experience shows that engaging with the general public and addressing their real concerns is key to achieving this. Giving migrants a voice in local policy making, which we have heard a multitude of cities do, can be a powerful tool to bring communities together. Partnerships, including the one in the Working Group on Balancing Public Narratives, which we chair with Ecuador and Canada, will remain an important platform to connect and share experiences with others.
- We also heard cities talk about structural challenges and opportunities, and I’d like to lift up two in particular:
- **Local – national policy coordination:** While no one size fits all, we heard Cities and States share insights on how local – national coordination and communication mechanisms pre-dating the pandemic, have positively impacted the ability of a country to respond to during the pandemic and set up inclusive responses, and we heard examples from Canada, Morocco and Ecuador in our networking meeting of how that may practically work. We have also heard clear calls from cities to improve this coordination, in

particular where legal frameworks keep competencies to address e.g., integration policies, centred at the national level.

- **Lastly, access to funding:** cities are increasingly asked to do more with less. This was true before the pandemic, but the pandemic's economic effects make this even more apparent: in 2021 alone, African cities are projected to lose up to 65 percent of their revenues. Globally, cities may face a 25 percent loss, which will and already has huge effects on those who need it most. In particular secondary and smaller cities will be hardest hit. Cities have called for increased access to international funding and have stressed the importance of innovative and new funding schemes, including the city-led 'Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response' and the important precedent of the Migration Multi Partner Trust fund, which includes city-led organisations as part of its Steering Committee.

Now looking forward:

- As the MM we are fully committed to the GFMD and will continue to mobilize through 2021. Aside from actively continuing the co-chairmanship of the narratives work, we will be launching a Call to Local Action this Spring. Following the Mayors Marrakesh Declaration, and building onto the successful Mayors Mechanism partnership this year, this Call to Action will seek to showcase and lift up the actions cities are taking to implement the GCM and GCR in unison. The GFMD will provide an important space for reflection for this, and we look forward engaging with you the coming months.
- In terms of thematic priorities, we all know this year will still be a COVID-19 year unfortunately. This year the GFMD showed it was the space to have the open conversation across all actors and has really shown its ability to nurture this search for common ground. We hope the GFMD will continue to anchor this conversation either in a working group and / or through a core focus of the GFMD programme.
- Connected to but beyond the high priority of COVID, other thematic priorities of importance to local authorities this year remain:
  - Building partnerships for access to services regardless of status,
  - Enhancing pathways towards regularisation to foster inclusion, civic participation and trust building.
  - Empowering local governments through decentralization of actions and budgeting, and access to international resources.
  - Building stronger, balanced and more resilient narratives on migration
  - And the important and newer issue of the impact that climate change will have on migration
- We are happy to see so many of these topics have already been discussed in depth this week and are prioritized by our fellow mechanisms as well, and we're excited to continue the work in 2021.

- While there is no Chair confirmed, we stand ready to work with the working groups, our fellow mechanisms and Steering Group the coming months, and hope we will be able to count on a strong support structure to support the GFMD going forward.
- And to close: as the Mayor of Iriga said: the GFMD is a unique space for us, it is the only one that has successfully fostered trust between States and all stakeholders and is truly inclusive while state led. This week has proven once again how important that is.

Thank you Chair.