

12 April 2018

## Civil Society first thoughts on GFMD CSD timeline, Morocco 2018

### Background

The GFMD Civil Society Days are a valuable moment in the annual calendar for civil society discussion, debate and strategy. As in previous years, the CSD taking place in Marrakesh in December this year is expected to be an important space for civil society actors from all over the world and with a diverse range of backgrounds, expertise and contexts to share their experience, and engage constructively with governments on key issues. The ISC has expressed energy and enthusiasm to work with the GFMD Co-Chairs again towards this goal.

This year, discussions will naturally orbit around the expected adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in terms of both the content of the Compact and also in how civil society would like to engage at every level with the new global migration governance architecture that the adoption of the Compact will herald.

### GFMD 2018 Timeline

The timeline and structure of the GFMD Civil Society Days 2018 were discussed at both the first and second International Steering Committee meetings this year, on 15 February and 20 March respectively. Given that the Inter-governmental Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Migration is expected to take place on 10-11 December in Morocco, and will be closely linked to civil society organizing around the GFMD, concerns were raised by various ISC members about the *viability* and *affordability* of the traditional timeline and structure of the Civil Society Days, as is seen in Scenario 1 below:

#### Scenario 1

Mon 3 Dec	Tues 4 Dec	Wed 5Dec	Thurs 6 Dec	Fri 7 Dec	Sat 8 Dec	Sun 9 Dec	10-11 Dec
		Common Space	1st GFMD Gov Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> GFMD Gov day			Inter-gov conference
1st Civil Society Day	2 <sup>ND</sup> Civil Society Day	Common Space					Inter-gov conference

With the timeline in this scenario meaning a gap of four days between Common Space and the inter-governmental conference to adopt the GCM, the ISC expressed concern that many civil society actors will not be able to attend both, including many who have contributed to many previous GFMD Civil Society spaces and who are also engaging with the development of the GCM at national, regional and/or global level. Both the issue of time (nine days from the first civil society day to the end of the Inter-governmental conference) and the issue of resources (accommodation and expenses for at least eight nights) contributed to their concern.

Scenario 2 below is another possible timeline for the GFMD this year, but partners again raised concerns about a number of issues that may arise with this structure. Again, the gap of three days

between the end of the Civil Society GFMD and the beginning of the Inter-Governmental Conference poses a budget challenge. Even if separate fundraising centred on a possible civil society organised event on Sunday 9 December, the night of Friday 7 December would need to be accounted for. Also, concern was raised over the positioning of Common Space at the very start of the GFMD for governments. Given the importance of this space to bridge the GFMD and GCM in terms of content, connecting the spaces and building partnerships, the ISC felt that the Common Space might be much better placed later in the week.

**Scenario 2**

Tue 4 Dec	Wed 5 Dec	Thurs 6 Dec	Fri 7 Dec	Sat 8 Dec	Sunday 9 Dec	10-11 Dec
	GFMD Common Space	1st GFMD Gov	2 <sup>nd</sup> GFMD Gov Day	<i>Other events (Global Mayoral Forum tbc)</i>		Inter-gov conference
1st Civil Society Day	GFMD Common Space	2 <sup>ND</sup> Civil Society Day				Inter-gov conference

In light of these concerns, the International Steering Committee has put together something of an alternative timeline for the consideration of the GFMD Co-Chairs (see table below). As with the other two scenarios, the ISC recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages with this model, and is very willing to discuss the different possibilities for the GFMD space in more depth with the Co-Chairs.

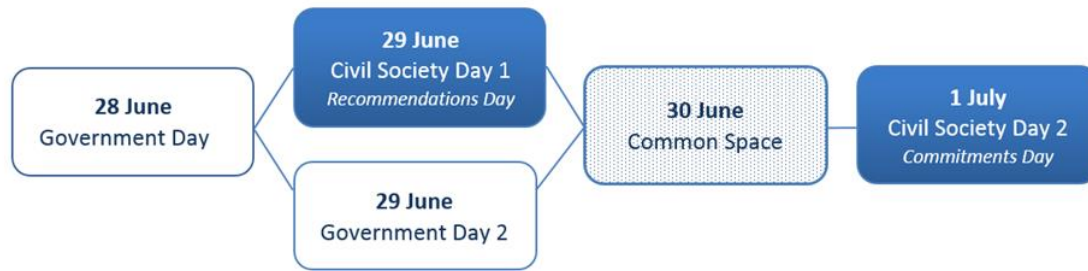
**Scenario 3 (alternative scenario)**

Wed 5 Dec	Thurs 6 Dec	Fri 7 Dec	Sat 8 Dec	Sunday 9 Dec	10-11 Dec
1st GFMD Gov Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> GFMD Gov	GFMD Common Space	<i>Other events (Global Mayoral Forum tbc)</i>		Inter-gov conference
1st Civil Society Day	2 <sup>ND</sup> Civil Society Day	GFMD Common Space			Inter-gov conference

This timeline is being suggested for several reasons. First, it significantly shortens the timeline of events in Morocco for GFMD Civil Society Days participants who also plan on attending the inter-governmental conference to adopt the GCM, and makes the financial and logistical coordination more manageable. Based on the GCM Stocktaking Meeting in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico last December, we estimate that the number of civil society delegates to attend the inter-governmental conference would be in the region of 100, but this is yet to be confirmed by the UN organizing team.

In feedback on the GFMD Civil Society Days 2017 evaluation survey, the majority of respondents felt that the unusual structure of the GFMD programme in Berlin was effective in terms of framing the civil society discussions around joint strategy and advocacy towards governments (see GFMD 2017 structure in image below). While this proposal for Morocco 2018 is again not conforming to previous GFMD structures, last year’s example perhaps suggests that such change and innovation can work to the advantage of both the organisers and participants.

Structure of 2017 GFMD:



On the other hand, one concern raised with this alternative scenario is that with the civil society and government spaces overlapping on both days it might significantly reduce the opportunity for dialogue between state and civil society actors. In order to ensure that the GFMD continues to strengthen its long history of trust building, partnership and dialogue, we would suggest that Common Space becomes explicitly charged with providing space to identify shared interest and strong convergence (not necessarily full consensus) among state, civil society and private sector stakeholders on important issues.

As one way of working towards this, perhaps some innovations to the Common Space structure could be considered. We would be happy to discuss options and possibilities with you. Some first thoughts that were raised by our ISC colleagues include:

- incorporating the informal ‘tea-table’ discussion model into the Common Space programme to foster more space for informal exchange and consensus building;
- offering more unstructured “open” space for exchange and conversation between government and civil society participants, perhaps in an evening reception;
- ensuring that the majority of time in the Common Space programme is given to breakout sessions, and structuring them in such a way so as to foster meaningful dialogue and exchange, rather than formal interventions.

As the GFMD Government Concept Paper mentions, the proposed aim of Common Space this year is to address the role of GFMD in the context of the GCM while taking into account the SDGs. If Common Space were to occur following the two full days of exchange during the GFMD Government Days and Civil Society Days, the discussions of both would likely enrich the Common Space dialogue and pave the way for the inter-governmental meetings on 10-11 December on GCM adoption and implementation. This timeline would also perhaps anchor the Common Space discussions, as they could focus on multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership within these two global processes. We invite you to read the one pager “Civil Society first thoughts on GFMD Common Space 2018” for an elaboration of this thinking.

***/Thank you!***

The ICMC Coordinating Office,  
on behalf of the International Steering Committee for the GFMD Civil Society Days