

THE 6TH MAYORAL FORUM ON HUMAN MOBILITY, MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FROM LARGE MOVEMENTS TO THE GLOBAL COMPACTS: CITIES AS FIRST RESPONDERS

Press Release

Quito, 3 February 2020

Over 80 mayors and officials from 56 cities and regions convened in Quito, Ecuador, to exchange practices on migration, development, and displacement and participate for the first time as formal stakeholders in the state-led Global Forum for Migration and Development.

On January 22nd, over 80 mayors and officials from 56 cities and regions gathered in Quito, Ecuador, for the [6th Mayoral Forum on Migration and Development](#) within the [Global Forum for Migration and Development \(GFMD\)](#). While in the past city representatives were invited to the GFMD only on an ad hoc and informal basis, this was the first time in the history of this state-led Forum that local authorities were formally recognized as a key stakeholder and allowed to interact with national counterparts during Government Roundtables and Common Space sessions.

This recognition is important: Today, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas. 80% of the world's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and two thirds of all refugees live in cities. This trend will only continue as climate change is expected to displace another 200 million people by 2050, the same year that 68% of the world's population is likely to live in cities. Cities are clearly at the forefront of migration challenges and opportunities, but they are asked to do more with less. They face shrinking budgets, lack of full competency or legal authority to act, while managing competing needs of existing vulnerable communities. Cities cannot do this work alone; they need the support of each other and of the international community at large.

The theme of this year's Mayoral Forum was '***From Large Movements to the Global Compacts: Cities as First Responders***'. Discussions focused on the implementation of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, and on the [Marrakesh Mayors Declaration](#) adopted in 2018.

Cities also joined a **Call to Local Action on Migration** to elevate existing work and accelerate new action on both Compacts, and committed to partner with governments and stakeholders to ensure that human-centred migration policies are effectively implemented, but with three asks:

- **Access:** institutionalize cities' access and influence in the GFMD and other state-led processes.
- **Policy Coherence:** create structures and processes to regularly and meaningfully consult cities on national migration policy and operations.
- **Partnerships:** test and invest in new partnership models whereby cities work directly with humanitarian and development actors and can access technical support and financing.

Mayors welcomed the commitment by the incoming 2020 GFMD Chair, [the United Arab Emirates \(UAE\)](#), to closely consult and involve local authorities in the yearlong GFMD process, and they stand ready to contribute and partner with states, civil society, private sectors and other stakeholders.

Key takeaways from this year's Mayoral Forum and GFMD:

- Cities fill the gaps of international and national responses by putting protection and inclusive access to basic services for all first, regardless of status.
- Cities and national governments may differ in approach, but they ultimately share common internationally agreed goals – from the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Global Compact for Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, and others.
- There is no delivery of international goals, if cities do not deliver. Cities call for more support from national governments to fulfil their mandates as the closest level of government to people.
- Cities ask not to be viewed just as implementers of global goals but key partners in defining and reporting on those goals and call for more multilateral interaction among levels of governments and stakeholders, including in the GFMD level.

Quotes:

- **Mr. Di Candia, Mayor of Montevideo, Opening Ceremony of the GFMD:** “It is in the streets that we see the fruits of successful migration policies, but also where we find the biggest scars of policies that have failed. Every decision, every inaction - national or global - leaves a mark in our squares.”
- **Mr. Vitorino, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Opening Ceremony of the GFMD:** “The establishment of the GFMD Mayors Mechanism in 2018 brings a crucial stakeholder to the table, recognising the key role of cities as first responders to migration and as a source of extensive knowledge on the real challenges and opportunities that migration presents to communities.”
- **Ms. Saiz, Secretary General of the United Cities and Local Governments, Mayoral Forum Opening:** “The issue of local service provision should be at the heart of any discussion of migration policy. We talk too much about borders, migrant contention and access to documentation, but what the international community doesn't talk about is how we can distribute our available resources differently, so everyone can benefit and access basic services. This is also a core principle of Agenda 2030 and sustainable development for all.”
- **Mr. Jurado, President of CONGOPE, Mayoral Forum Opening:** “Cities are in charge of providing services, responding to the needs of our citizens and building infrastructures, but we also have the responsibility to build citizenship in our territory when it comes to the governance of migration, inclusion and cohesion.”
- **Ms. Pizarro Peña, Mayor of La Pintana, Mayoral Forum Opening:** “We need to translate international policies and conventions into national law so that local authorities are able to act.”
- **Ms. Zanuso, Executive Director of the Mayors Migration Council, GFMD Roundtable 3.1:** “As donors, as recipients of international funding, as diplomats, states can partner with cities on migration policy and set the example for others. If some governments change, more will change. Why? Because change is contagious.”
- **Mr. Guerrero, Mayor of Campillos, GFMD Common Space Closing:** “In our daily work we build new narratives on migration. As locally elected officials, we have political responsibilities towards our citizens to ensure them that what we do is in the interest of all citizens, and that we will work to guarantee social cohesion in our communities.”

About the Mayors Mechanism

Established in 2018, the **Mayors Mechanism** – co-steered by [United Cities and Local Governments \(UCLG\)](#), [The Mayors Migration Council \(MMC\)](#) and [The International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) – aims at including local and regional authorities within the GFMD process, bringing their voices and expertise into state-led deliberations, and intensifying the dialogue between different levels of government and different stakeholder groups.

For additional information, please contact: GFMD Mayors Mechanism:
mayorsmechanism@gmail.com