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„Inside-Outside“ or „Outsiders by choice“?

Civil society strategies towards the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Manila

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Summary

„Global governance“ and the „migration and development nexus“ are among the latest buzzwords in academia and policy discourses alike. The 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), held in October 2008 in Manila, provided an ample litmus test for these concepts. In a way, the GFMD – a new, non-binding forum which was deliberately established outside the realm of the UN – is testimony itself to the hitherto failed attempts at establishing a „global governance“ of migration. Still, it provides a perspective, albeit a vague one, for a possible way out of the gridlock between the sending and receiving states of migrants. Civil society organizations (CSOs), on the other hand, have succeeded in using – and significantly expanding – the political space provided by the GFMD for advocacy, networking and various forms of protest. Even though Manila became the site of an impressive display of the organizational power and global scope of migrant CSOs for almost two weeks, the severe divisions in the migrant movement became apparent as well: the cleavages run between those actors employing an „inside-outside“ strategy towards GFMD and those positioning themselves as „outsiders by choice“ in total opposition to the process. Thus, Philippine domestic politics and cleavages were intertwined with the global issues of migration and development.

Keywords: Migration; Development; Global Governance; GFMD; civil society organizations; grassroots movements.

1 Introduction: The Philippine background

When the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was established with its first meeting in Brussels, Belgium in July 2007, the Philippine government came quickly forward with an offer to host the follow-up meeting. The offer was accepted, and more than 1130 delegates participated in the 2nd GFMD held in Manila from October 27 to October 30 2008, representing some 163 Member States and Observers of the United Nations, 33 international organizations as well as 220

participants in the Civil Society meeting¹ (GFMD 2009: 1). In many regards, the Philippines provided an almost ideal environment for discussing the wide array of challenges, opportunities, development issues and policy implications associated with migration, especially contract labor migration: The Philippines can be seen as „perhaps the prototype of a labor-exporting country“ (Semyonov/Gorodzeisky 2004: 6). The state actively positions itself as a „labor broker“ (Rodriguez 1999), at least since the start of large-scale temporary outmigration that was initiated under the rule of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s, with previous waves of labor migration reaching back to the early 20th century.

Over the years, several government institutions and legal provisions solely dealing with migration such as the 1995 „Magna Carta of Overseas Filipinos“ – have been established, leading some observers to praise the approach of the Philippines as a role model of „best practices“ with „unrivaled sophistication“ (Agunias 2008: 1). Considering that the remittances sent home by the approximately eight million Filipinos that live permanently or temporarily outside the country contribute continuously to appr. 10 percent of the national GDP, it is definitely not a far-fetched idea to discuss the potential correlation between migration and development – coined the „new development mantra“ (Kapur 2003) – in this country.

But there is also another side to this debate, as brought forward by various representatives of the civil society of the Philippines which is exceptionally lively and outspoken: There are widespread reports of abuse and exploitation taking place in many destination countries. The level of protection that the Philippine state can offer its citizens working abroad is limited. The more radical critics of the Philippine state attribute this to a conscious decision of subordinating the rights of the migrants to the guaranteed flow of remittances. But one also has to keep in mind the clearly limited bargaining power of the Philippines when dealing with the destination countries „in the shadow of economic disparities“ (Rother 2009a: 237). Furthermore, CSOs criticize the Philippine state of a policy that could be summarized as „migration *instead of* development“: By even exceeding the declared goal of an annual deployment of one million „OFWs“ (Overseas Filipino Workers), pressure is taken from the domestic labor market while the remittances can help ease the shortcomings of the Philippine state in areas like the economy, land reform and social security. Thus, celebrating the Philippines as a role model for „good migration governance“ is contested on the grounds that *bad domestic governance* is the main reason why Filipinos have to migrate in the first place, often leaving spouses and children back home, with an ensuing profound impact on the social structure of the country.

¹ This article is based on my ongoing PH.D. research, specifically on a field trip in October 2008 where I observed the government meeting and civil society days of the GFMD as an accredited journalist, participated in the parallel events and conducted several interviews.

When writing about „civil society“ and „migrants“, one has to avoid the common pitfall to treat these groups as homogeneous entities possessing something akin to a common objective. On the contrary, the example of the Philippines provides clear evidence for the opposite conclusion; in my ongoing Ph.D. research, I aim to demonstrate how two distinctive clusters consisting of migrant NGOs, grassroots organizations, political parties and trade unions have formed and become active in a „transnational political space“ connecting and reaching beyond the Philippines and Hong Kong (see also Rother 2009c forthcoming). These apparent cleavages have far-reaching as well as GFMD-specific roots: Far-reaching in the sense that they can be traced back to a long-lasting division among migrant organizations and the split of the Philippine left, as I will argue in my thesis; GFMD-specific, as I will discuss here, in the resulting differing strategic approaches towards the GFMD.

The two clusters opted for two very distinctive responses to the GFMD held in Manila, with the consequence that both organized separate events parallel to the main proceedings. Thus, the Peoples' Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (PGA)² alliance chose a multi-stakeholder, „inside-outside“ strategy by being part of the official proceedings while at the same time organizing nine days of parallel events and demonstrations (MFA 2009). The International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR), on the other hand, opted for what I would describe based on Carrapatoso (2007) as an „outsiders by choice“ stance by condemning the GFMD altogether and organizing its own conference and demonstrations separate from the PGA. Meanwhile, the Philippine state struggled to find a balance between its desire to present itself as a genuine advocate of migrants' rights and a role model in the management of migration, while at the same time restricting CSO involvement and protests, probably with the motivation not to „lose face“ in front of an international audience, including the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

In order to provide a first overview of this truly complex alignment, I will divide my research note in three parts: First, I will summarize the obstacles that exist for global migration governance and the concept of the recently established GFMD; secondly, I will provide an assessment of the Manila proceedings with a special focus on the involvement of CSOs; and in the conclusion I will discuss the implications for the future of the GFMD and the global governance of migration.

2 The GFMD: a mere talk shop or the new arena for the global governance of migration?

Global Governance is a frequently cited term which lacks a clear definition: it is mostly used to come to terms with new ways of dealing with global challenges in

² This alliance is not to be confused with the PGA against "Free" Trade and the World Trade Organization, formed in 1998.

the international system that are not exclusively state-centric but also aim to include civil society participation; it might also include the local, national and regional level (Behrens/Reichwein 2007: 311-12; Zürn 2005: 127-128). Green and Thouez have argued that, unlike environmental governance, „Global Migration Governance (GMG) is, at best, uncalculated in its organization, with major outstanding Governance issues, including a clear cut role for the United Nations (UN) needing to be addressed“ (Green/Thouez 2005: 2).

Furthermore, while there is increasing talk on the *management* of migration, advocates of a rights-based approach towards migration are in a difficult position. Two of the main factors standing in the way of global migration governance are the core concepts of *sovereignty* and *power*. While particularly the states in Europe are increasingly willing to transfer parts of their sovereignty to supranational bodies, there is still enormous reluctance when it comes to one of the most fundamental aspects of sovereignty: setting the entry- and exit rules for ones' territory and the conditions for staying. This holds also true for the institution that comes closest to what can be considered a migration regime, the European Union. The ease with which nationals of member states can nowadays move within the Schengen zone stands in marked contrast to the tough stance taken towards migration from the outside. Migrant activists therefore define the EU rather as an *anti-immigration regime*, and measures like the recently introduced „EU Return Directive“ were widely criticized during the GFMD even in the official summary of the Governments Meeting that sees the directive in „conflict with basic human rights of migrants and their children, particularly with respect to periods of detention, deportation and other repressive measures.“ (GFMD 2009: 45)

The second factor besides sovereignty is the obvious disequilibrium of power between sending and receiving states in the economic and political arena. To keep the balance uneven in their favor, governments of receiving states prefer to negotiate bilateral agreements or rather vague Memoranda of Understandings (MoU) with sending states of migrants if they are willing to sign any document at all. „Migrants Workers are Human Beings, Not Commodities“ was the main slogan of the PGA agenda in Manila, but unfortunately this holds only true with regard to the observation that the trade in other „goods“ is quite often better regulated and protected. On the other hand, the rules of supply and demand apply very much to labor migration: If the government of a sending state issues a ban on the contract labor migration to certain destinations because the safety of their citizens is threatened there – as the Philippines have occasionally done –, the destination country can usually resort to another source for the supply of migrants instead of giving in to any demands it considers intrusive. (Hollifield 1992)

The division between sending and receiving countries is not a mere matter of „South vs. North“ but can also be observed within Southeast Asia; there is little in terms of ASEAN solidarity when the issue is, say, irregular Indonesian migration to

Malaysia. The region possesses some regional consultative processes like the „Manila process“, and at the 2007 ASEAN summit a „Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers“ was issued; but it still has to be seen if this will prove to be an effective measure. (Rother 2008)

With such lack of cooperation at the regional and even bilateral level, it comes hardly as a surprise that the global governance of migration is a process that moves at a painfully slow speed if at all. That does not mean that the issue has not been tackled; there are several conventions like the „Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant“ by the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the „International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families“, adopted in 1990 by the UN General Assembly. But it is quite telling that it took the latter convention 15 years before it finally obtained the required 20 ratifications to enter into force; as of April 2009, still no Western receiving country has signed this comprehensive document of protection³. These setbacks notwithstanding, the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made several efforts to put the issue on the agenda of the organization. In December 2003, the 19-member strong independent Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) was launched to some effect: It organized several regional consultation meetings, initiated a significant number of reports from leading international migration experts and published and presented its final report to Annan in October 2005 (GCIM 2006).⁴ Considering the challenging international environment, the report is not overly „watered down“ and contains some sound assessments and recommendations. (Crawley 2006; Rother 2009a)

In January 2006, Annan appointed the businessman and former Attorney General of Ireland Peter Sutherland as his Special Representative for Migration. In the September of the same year, the UN General Assembly held its first-ever plenary session on migration as part of the UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. 140 UN member states attended. Here, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was promoted by Sutherland and acclaimed by the UN member states, or, as the Brussels' GFMD website phrases it: „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

³ The Migrant Forum in Asia has a permanent counter tracking the number of signatories/ratifications on the starting page of its website: <http://www.mfasia.org/>

⁴ The website of the GCIM is a good source for material on a wide range of migration issues, since it offers not only the proper report for download but also several thematic papers, papers on regional migration issues and reports of all its consultations: <http://www.gcim.org/en/>

organize the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), to be held in Brussels on 9-11 July 2007.⁵

The terms „informal“, „voluntary“ and „state-led“ make it quite apparent that any attempts at providing this forum with a binding character were expected to be met with severe opposition. Still, as Sutherland and Annans' successor Ban Ki Moon made it clear during their respective press conferences in Manila (October 29 and 30 2009), moving the issue outside of the UN framework was the only way to keep migration on the agenda and secure widespread participation; both also hinted diplomatically that this arrangement was unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Still, the presence of Moon in Manila just as before in Brussels also emphasized the desire of the UN administration to establish the GFMD as a permanent institution. At least in this regard the chances are quite good: Greece will host the 3rd GFMD in November 2009, followed by Argentina in 2010.

Considering the long and winding road leading to the creation of the GFMD, it comes as little surprise that the result is a strange creature indeed. With the GFMD being such a new process, it can be expected and hoped for that its structure will undergo significant modifications over the years. So far it has been in a remarkable state of flux: „Amazingly when compared to other global governance initiatives, the operating modalities for the GFMD process were not formalized at its inception but had to be progressively defined throughout the preparation of its first meeting.“ (Matsas 2008: 5). There is very little formal institutionalization, with the host country organizing the upcoming GFMD playing a central role as Chair-In-Office; support structures include the Friends of the Forum (FoF) and the Steering Group that hold regular meetings between the GFMDs. At the core of the actual forum is a two-day government meeting divided into plenary sessions with the usual formal speeches and more ambitious Roundtable sessions bringing together mostly high-level senior practitioners. These are held under the Chatham House Rule⁶ (Matsas 2008: 8) with the objective to enable informal and thus more open discussions. The topics selected for the Brussels' - meeting labor mobility and remittances - were met with strong opposition from migrant organizations, which saw their suspicions confirmed that the GFMD was most of all a „marketplace for migrants“⁷. To counter these fears, the Philippine government chose „Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development“ as the flagship theme for the second meeting.

⁵ <http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/en/foruminfo/forum-info> last accessed April 7, 2009.

⁶ "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed" <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/> last accessed April 26, 2009.

⁷ In fact, there was a marketplace feature offered at the GFMD in Brussels, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Its declared aim was to enable transactions for International Migration and Development Services: <http://www.gfmd-fmmd.org/en/marketplace/marketplace>

A more unusual feature of the GFMD is the inclusion of a section dedicated to civil society participation: the Civil Society Day(s) held before the government meeting. While there was only one day provided for migrant representatives to meet in Brussels, this part was expanded to two days in Manila, including an „interface“ session with the representatives of the government. Here, the topics of the Roundtable sessions mirrored the ones from the government meeting, i.e. „Roundtable 2.2.“ dealt in both cases with „Managing Migration and Minimizing the Negative Impacts of Irregular Migration“ and so forth. Apart from the „interface“, a delegation of civil society representatives was given a short timeframe during the government meeting to present its recommendations. While the government of the host country organizes the government meeting, the civil society days are the responsibility of a private foundation: in the Manila case the Ayala Foundation, in Athens it will be the Onassis foundation etc.

3 The Manila GFMD and the responses of migrant organizations

The civil society component of the GFMD can be traced back to the 2006 UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (MFA 2007). At this stage already, the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), a “regional network of migrants' organizations, NGOs, advocates, grassroots organizations and trade unions working to promote the rights and well being of migrant workers and members of their families”, was involved. The MFA was part of the global steering committee that coordinated the civil society component of the UN Dialogue and co-organized a parallel event in cooperation with Migrants Rights International (MRI)⁸, called the Global Community Dialogue on Migration, Development and Human Rights. Since then, MFA and its partners have adopted a critical-constructive strategy towards the GFMD by trying to improve the process through involvement from within, while making migrants' voices more clearly heard by providing them with a platform on the outside. (MFA 2008; 2009; Interview with Williams Gois, Regional coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia, August 5, 2008)

With the MFA headquarters located in Metro Manila, it was to be expected that the 2nd GFMD would see an especially wide scope of parallel events; in fact, the impressive level of activities taking place over nine days from October 22 until October 30 amounted to a more comprehensive, more inclusive and one might even say: more relevant event than the GFMD proper. Already in the months leading up to Manila, numerous meetings and conferences were organized. The events in Manila, organized in cooperation with MRI as the „Peoples' Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights“, were divided into three parts: the self-organized days, global convergence days and mobilization days.

⁸ MRI is a non-governmental association of over 500 groups and in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. <http://www.migrantwatch.org/>

The MFA report explains the rationale behind this structure: „During the self-organized days from 23 to 25 October, space was created for groups to organize their own activities and refine their positions. From 25 to 26 October there were global convergence days where international and local groups came together to begin their joint work towards developing common positions on the GFMD’s migration and development discourse as well as on the GFMD itself. Meanwhile, 27 to 30 October were days of vibrant mobilizations.“ (MFA 2009: 81) This resulted in an effective dramaturgy with a continuous flow of participants arriving, the scope of the activities growing larger from a session titled „Filipino Time: A Forum on Philippine situation“ to the two-day 11th Regional Conference on Migration and all participants joining for the first time on October 26 with a candle march to the Global Opening Plenary.

But it became also apparent that the “inside-outside” strategy did not prevent the PGA from clashing with the Philippine authorities. While the Manila City government had granted the permit to hold the PGA activities in the Rajah Sulayman Park – a park close to the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), the official venue of the GFMD – this permit was revoked on short notice. The official reason given was the potential „infiltration of the PGA by the leftists“- a rather strange argument, since the more left-leaning groups had decided to hold their own activities in the Bayview Hotel nearby. The PGA refused to accept an alternative venue further away from the GFMD and resorted to the grounds of the Malate church. Still, peaceful marches were held by the participants under the eyes of a great many policemen, partially in riot gear - a rather bizarre sight. While several organizers were involved in the official civil society days of the GFMD, major protest marches were held outside the forum by the PGA. Apparently being upset by the sight of foreign participants joining in the protests, government officials warned those that had arrived on a tourist visa not „to abuse the hospitality“ of the country and mentioned the possibility of arrest and deportation. (Onaga 2008)

According to several observers and participants, the Philippine state also attempted to prevent the expression of dissenting voices during the official GFMD proceedings. MRI criticized that civil society groups were not allowed to attend the government proceedings, even as observers, except for a small group of civil society organizations (17 representatives) who were allowed to enter for 30 minutes in order to present the report of the civil society days: „There was much frustration expressed about this process. First, there was no transparency about how these representatives were selected, even to many of the individuals that had been selected.“ Furthermore, the timeframe given to these representatives was apparently reduced a number of times: „This appears to be related at least in part to active efforts by the Philippine government to exclude two Filipino civil society representatives, that had been selected to be part of the 17 delegates, because they had been identified as organizers in the PGA mobilizations.“ (Onaga 2008) This was confirmed in an email communication (April 28 2009) with Ellene Sana from the Philippine Center for

Migrant Advocacy (CMA): „Yes, there were attempts, silent and informal at that, to exclude me from the CSO days and also from attending the NGO delegation that submitted the NGO report to the government delegation.“ Alas, these attempts „from the security groups and later an unknown source“ were not successful as Sana was able to give a one minute speech on behalf of the Asian region.

The preceding Civil Society Days had been a mixed bag as well. While they surely provided the selected representatives⁹ with an opportunity to meet and network, time was a major constraint on the formulation of common demands and statements. Several workshops were opened with presentations by experts, predominantly with academic background, that mostly provided valuable input but further reduced the space for discussion among the migrants' representatives. A well-received new format was introduced with three workshops entitled „voices from the regions“: in the workshop in „Asia/Middle East“ (which the author attended), participants had the opportunity to freely voice their concerns and agendas, while the chairperson Ellene Sana continuously presented summary suggestions for her abovementioned presentation at the government meeting. Still, time was an issue as well, since naturally not all participants got the chance to speak up. Furthermore, the translators which were provided by the organizers seemed to have left their booths strictly on time; it was agreed to extend the session and members came forward to take up the job of translating between contributions made in English, French and Spanish.

While these events brought some spirit of solidarity into the proceedings, the interface between civil society and government turned out to be a major disappointment. Here, Sharan Burrow, president of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and chairperson of the civil society days, who had been a fairly outspoken advocate during the preceding events including the PGA, chose to give a seemingly toned down statement. Also, a significant amount of the two and a half hours set aside for the meeting were taken up by presentations of questionable relevance, leading to some participants characterizing the event as a „show“. Even among the participating government delegates it was heard that they would have been prepared for and willing to join in a more open and meaningful interaction.

⁹ The MFA report specifies the selection criteria (MFA 2009: 20) „CSO delegates were selected in two ways – island consultations for 30 Philippine CSOs and online application for 200 international delegates. The Ayala Foundation set up two committees for the selection of participants. These committees were the Philippine Organizing Committee (POC) for the Philippine based participants and an International Advisory Committee (IAC) for the global CSOs. The POC was composed of NGOs, faith-based organizations and the private sector. Participants were selected through island consultations in Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and the National Capital Region. The POC had a subcommittee that spearheaded the island consultations. The IAC formulated the criteria for the selection of CSOs outside the Philippines and deliberated on the applications. The IAC was composed of representatives from trade union groups, employers, faith-based organizations, Diaspora organizations, United Nations line agencies, migrant organizations, micro-finance, academe, development NGOs, human rights community and 2007 CS Day Organizer.“

The Roundtable sessions of the government meeting were not open to press representatives and observers. But in the final plenary session summaries were presented and it became apparent that some countries such as the Northern European states were very open for involvement and pushing the proceedings forward, while others seemed to be content with presenting pre-formulated statements. Still, as Peter Sutherland phrased it, it can be seen as an advancement when sending, receiving and transit countries of migration sit around the same table „instead of yelling at each other“. Indeed, the fact that e.g. the Saudi Arabian government showed willingness to speak about migrants rights' at all should be seen as an, albeit small, progress.

These kinds of achievements proved to be too small for the organizers of the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR), gathering in the Bayview Hotel in Manila from October 28-30. Main organizer of the proceedings was the International Migrants' Alliance (IMA), recently founded in June 2008 in Hong Kong. 80 of its 112 member organizations consider themselves as „grassroots movements“ and the founding slogan of the alliance has been „For a long time, others spoke on our behalf. Now we speak for ourselves.“ Thus distancing itself from the pitfalls of „NGOism“, under which they subsume the reliance on government funding etc. (Hsiao 2009) it comes as little surprise that the organizers refused to participate in the official GFMD proceedings. They also chose to use their own network to organize parallel events, although it was not uncommon among international participants to visit both the IAMR and PGA proceedings.

Eni Lestari is an Indonesian domestic worker in Hong Kong and chair of the IAM as well as the Hong Kong Asians Migrants' Coordinating Body (AMCB) that brings together migrants of several nationalities for joint advocacy. (Rother 2009b) In Manila she became the often-cited and photographed voice and face of the more radical/progressive migrant movement. There had been activities beforehand as well: In an internationally coordinated protest week titled „Ten-day Countdown to the GFMD“, several activities were launched, among them a demonstration by AMCB members in front of a number of consulates in Hong Kong. A major campaign against the GFMD had already started in August 2008, focusing on the violation of migrants rights and denouncing the crackdown and criminalization of undocumented migrants. The IMA aimed „to expose the sham that is the GFMD“ and declared „that specific sending and receiving governments/states that are now pursuing the neoliberal agenda on migration as espoused by the OECD sponsored GFMD are the principal violators of migrants' rights.“ (APMM 2008: 1-2)

The more militant rhetoric notwithstanding - one T-Shirt sold denounced the GFMD as „Global Forum on Modern Slavery“ – the IAMR demonstrated the high level of expertise of its members in terms of organization and mobilization. Workshops like „Women Migration: The Empowerment Myth“ provided a comprehensive overview ranging from a primer on the situation of Mongolian Women Workers, to the plights

of victims of trafficking and the experiences of foreign brides with one speaker being a Vietnamese immigrant bride in Taiwan. Opening addresses were given by Jorge Bustamante, the UN Special Rapporteur On Human Rights of Migrant and Ufuk Berdan from the communist Alliance of Turkish Migrants in Europe. The IAMR also managed to mobilize notable crowds for their own demonstration marches against the GFMD. While it apparently positioned itself as an „outsider by choice“, it is debatable whether the involved groups of the IAMR would actually have been accepted to participate in the official proceedings, especially considering the above mentioned experiences of the civil society delegation during the government meeting and the rationale behind the threat of deporting of foreign protesters. This raises the question of inclusion and exclusion within the process. But according to several interview partners from the PGA, they would have been open for cooperation in the organization of parallel events. The IAMR organizers apparently showed no interest in such cooperation, because of ideological differences and their rejection of the „inside-outside“ strategy, which might well be two sides of the same coin.

4 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to highlight several research themes in the field of migration that merit further research. It should have become apparent that the Global Governance of Migration is a process severely lagging behind other areas of cooperation. While „migration and development“ has been set up as a new Mantra, the political debate has hardly moved beyond stressing the importance of remittances, with CSOs often rightfully suspecting that the talk is in fact about „migration *for* development“ (MFA 2009: 23) or even worse „migration instead of development“.

While the GFMD has received critical evaluation in this article, it has to be acknowledged that it is a rather recent development and amendments have already been made after the first meeting. Furthermore, considering the poor state of migration governance, bringing states having highly diverse positions on migration to the table can at least be considered a starting point. Hopefully, the „spirit of shared responsibility and partnership“ praised in the official final report of the proceedings (GFMD 2009: 2) will lead to more specific outcomes in further meetings - after all the GFMD defines itself as an „action-orientated“ process. The GFMD in Athens (November 2-5 2009) aims to address topics ranging from migration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to migrant integration and policy and institutional coherence and partnership.¹⁰

Being aware of the pitfalls in using a celebratory tone when discussing civil society, the level of agency, organization and networking of the migrant CSOs displayed

¹⁰ A website has been set up at <http://www.gfmdathens2009.org/>

during the GFMD in Manila still has to be described as highly impressive. The scope of the workshop topics and of the organizations involved – ranging from issue-specific advocacy at the local level to challenges to the global causes for migration – highlighted the broad range and diversity of the actors involved. The fact that this diversity is also mirrored in clusters of migrant organizations choosing separate approaches can be lamented as a lack of unity in the migrant movement, but it can also be seen as an inevitable sign of plurality. It will be worth observing and researching which of the approaches – „inside-outside“ or „outsiders by choice“ – will turn out to be the more effective strategy in the long term.

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