



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية المرسلات والمستقبلات للعمالة  
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor-Sending and Receiving Countries

# **Strengthening Member State Engagement in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Processes**

Background, Results of Questionnaire, and Recommendations

# BACKGROUND

- ❖ The Abu Dhabi Dialogue now has over 11 years experience of fostering Member State engagement aimed at improving the governance of human mobility in the Asia-GCC corridors
- ❖ In the intervening period, there have been **significant changes in the regional and global governance landscape**
- ❖ At the 2019 Senior Officials' Meeting, the question arose **of what lessons have been learned** from the past decade of ADD engagement, and **how the ADD can evolve to meet future challenges**
- ❖ Discussion addressed four areas:
  - **Agenda** (how can the ADD engage Member States in a more participatory manner in the development of thematic agendas?)
  - **Programmes** (how can the ADD enable Member States to put forward initiatives for consideration and discussion?)
  - **Chairmanship** (how can the ADD ensure that the Chairmanship rotates every two years?)
  - **Funding** (how can ADD better plan financially for participation by Member States?)
- ❖ In the 2019 SOM Joint Communique, the Secretariat was tasked with enquiring in greater detail with Member States and reporting back on its findings
- ❖ **A questionnaire was circulated to Member States**; its results, and consequent recommendations, are presented here

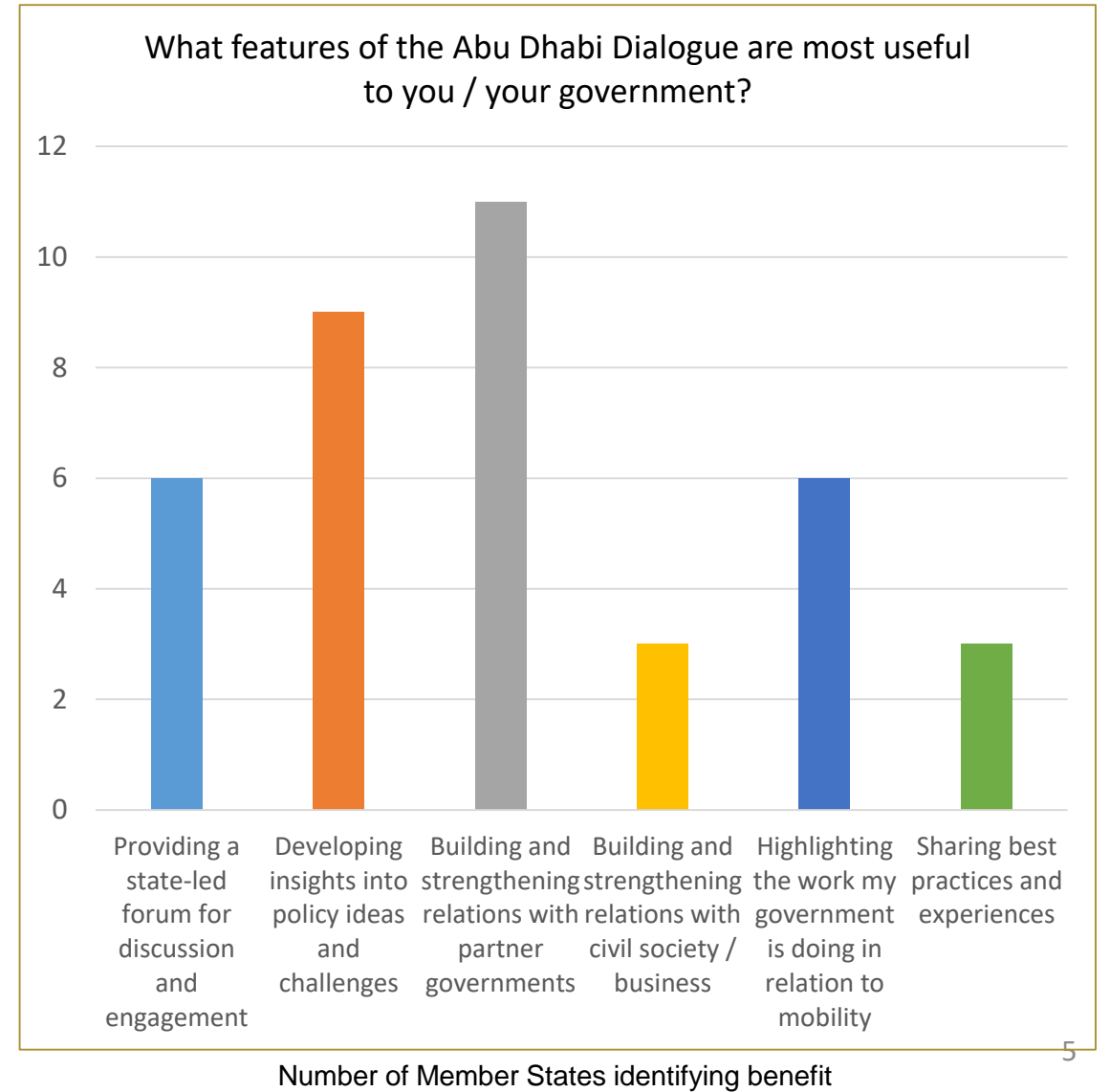
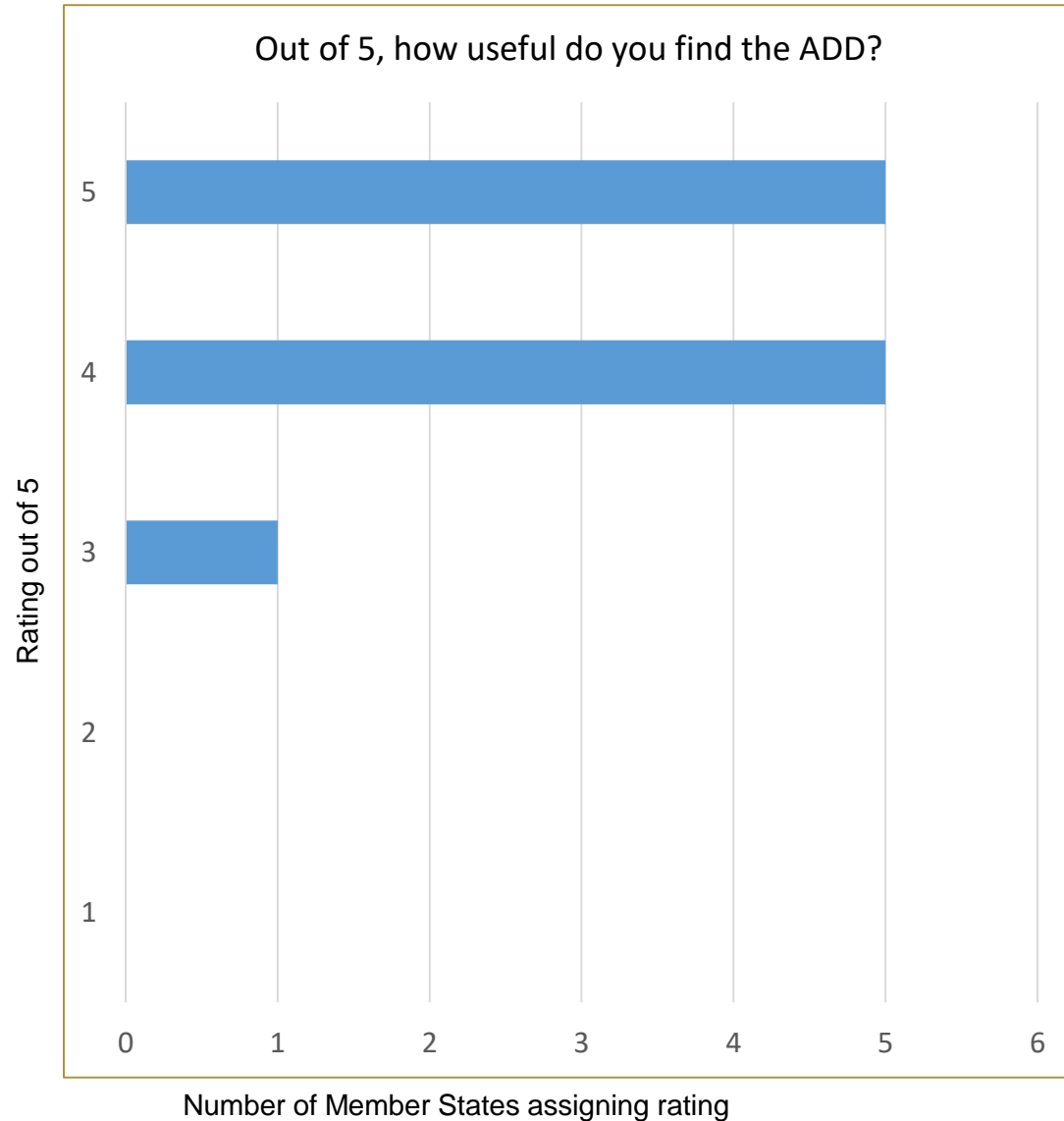
# QUESTIONNAIRE

- ❖ A Questionnaire was circulated to all Member States in June 2019
- ❖ The objective was to **identify for implementation ideas and recommendations** for measures aimed at **increasing participation and engagement** of ADD Member States in the planning, development, and execution of ADD activities
- ❖ The Questionnaire was divided into two sections:
  - **Section 1** sought to better understand current perceptions of ADD, including:
    - how valuable Member States find ADD
    - its key value proposition to Member States
    - the relevance of current programmes to Member State priorities
  - **Section 2** sought to engage Member States on how the ADD can be improved, including:
    - how to encourage higher levels of engagement in the development of ADD agendas
    - how to encourage higher levels of engagement in the formulation and implementation of ADD programmes
    - what would encourage Member States to come forward to Chair of ADD
- ❖ Responses were received from 11 out of 17 Member States (65%), with a representative balance of COO and COD countries responding

## CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF ADD

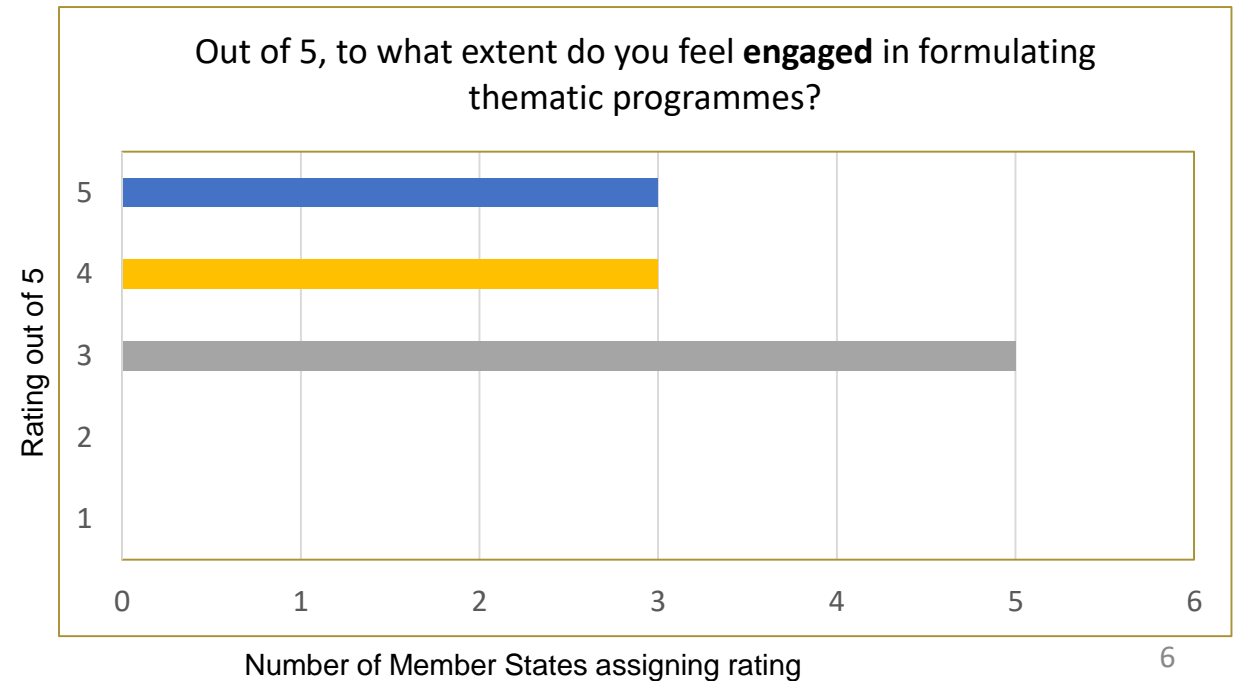
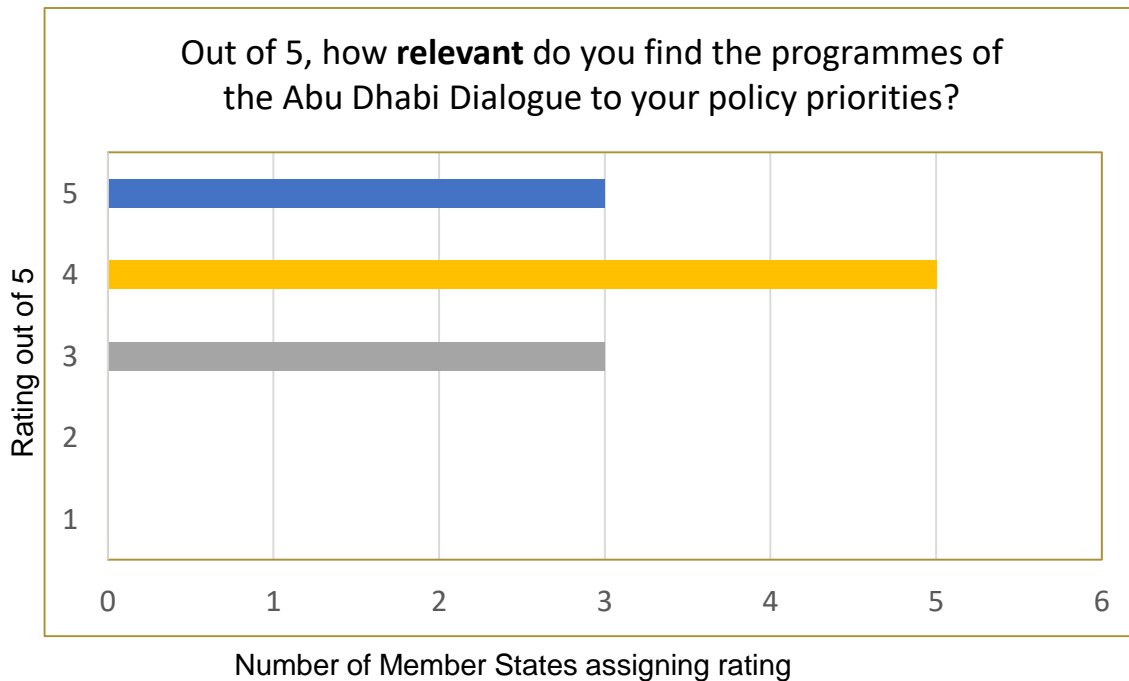
- ❖ Member States place significant value on the Abu Dhabi Dialogue:
  - Asked to rate the ‘**usefulness**’ of ADD out of 5, of eleven Member States, five rated it 5, five rated it 4; only one rated it as 3
- In terms of the benefits that Member States derive from participation in the ADD, the opportunity to “***build and strengthen relations with partner governments***” was identified by all eleven Member States as a core benefit
- ❖ This was closely followed by “***developing insights into policy challenges***”, identified by nine Member States
- ❖ Over half of Member States (six in both cases) viewed the Abu Dhabi Dialogue as providing value as “***a state-led forum for discussion and engagement***” and “***highlighting the work my country is doing in relation to migration and development***”
- ❖ The opportunity to strengthen relations with business and civil society was viewed as less important, but was still rated by over a quarter of Member States
- ❖ A number of Member States also wrote in to identify “***sharing best practices and experiences***” as a benefit not captured by the questionnaire

# VALUE & KEY BENEFITS OF ADD TO MEMBER STATES



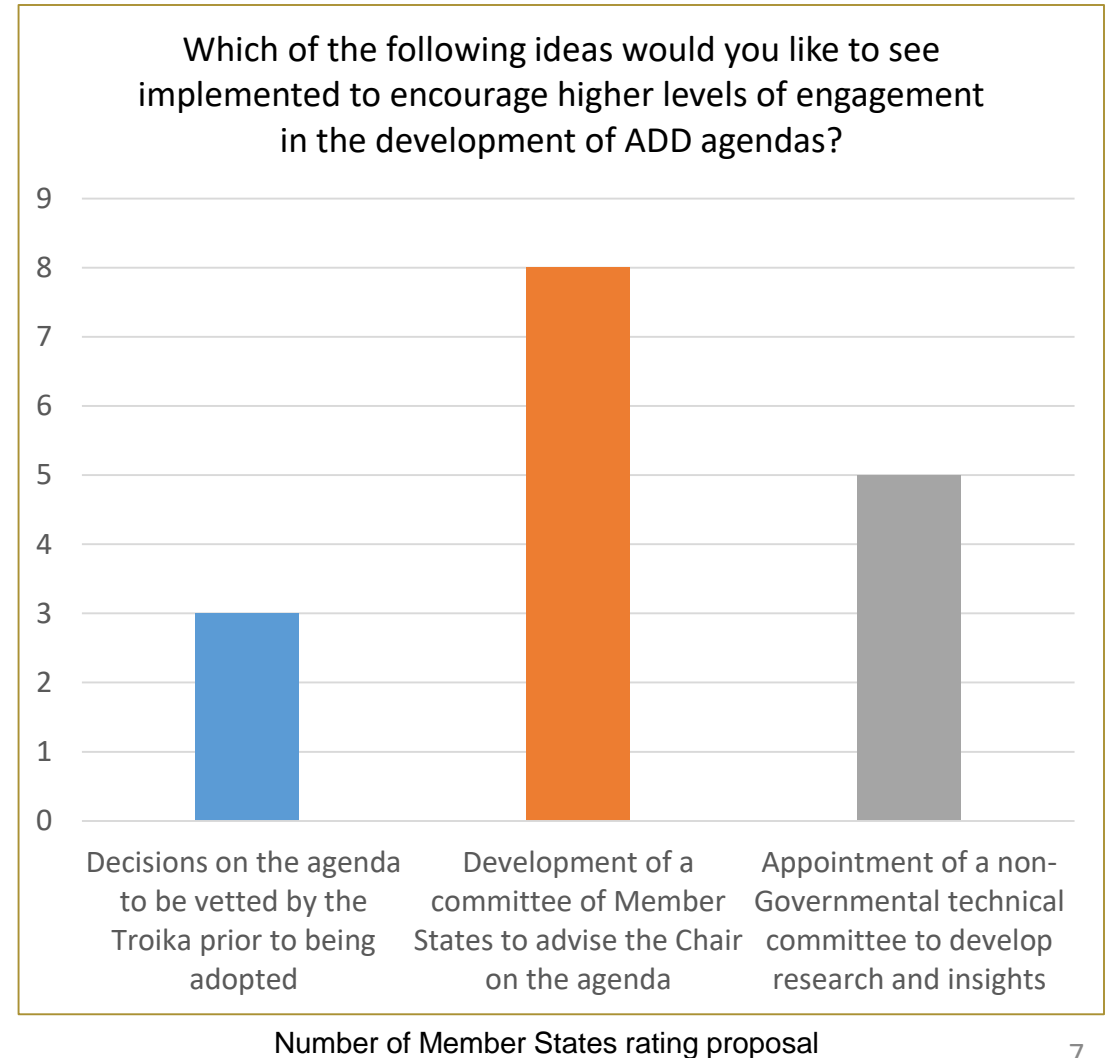
# RELEVANCE OF - AND ENGAGEMENT IN - ADD THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

- ❖ Member States were also asked to rate the **relevance of ADD programmes to their own policy agendas**, and the extent to which they feel **engaged in formulating the ADD's thematic programmes**
- ❖ Broadly speaking, Member States find ADD programmes relevant to their own policy priorities, but feel less engaged in formulating thematic programmes, which may be a barrier to deeper engagement in policy implementation



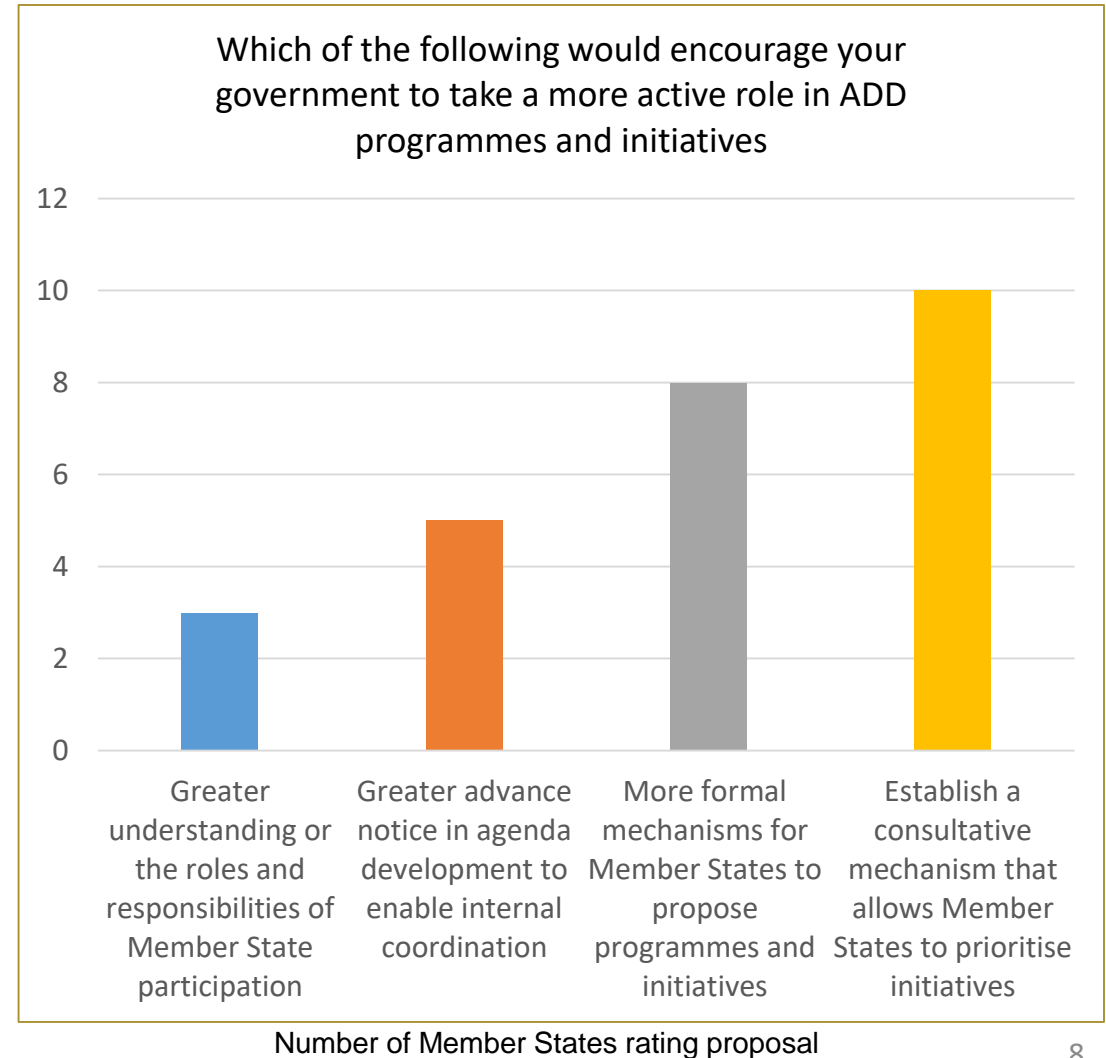
# ENCOURAGING ENGAGEMENT IN AGENDA DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ The Questionnaire proposed a number of ideas to encourage greater Member State engagement in the development of ADD agendas
- ❖ The idea of developing a **committee of Member States to advise the Chair on the agenda** received the highest endorsement, with 8 Member States backing it
- ❖ This was followed by endorsement for the idea of appointing a **technical committee to develop research and insights**
- ❖ Member States were less enthusiastic about the idea of the vetting of the agenda by the Troika – this may possibly be because it continues to limit engagement



# ENCOURAGING GREATER PARTICIPATION IN THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

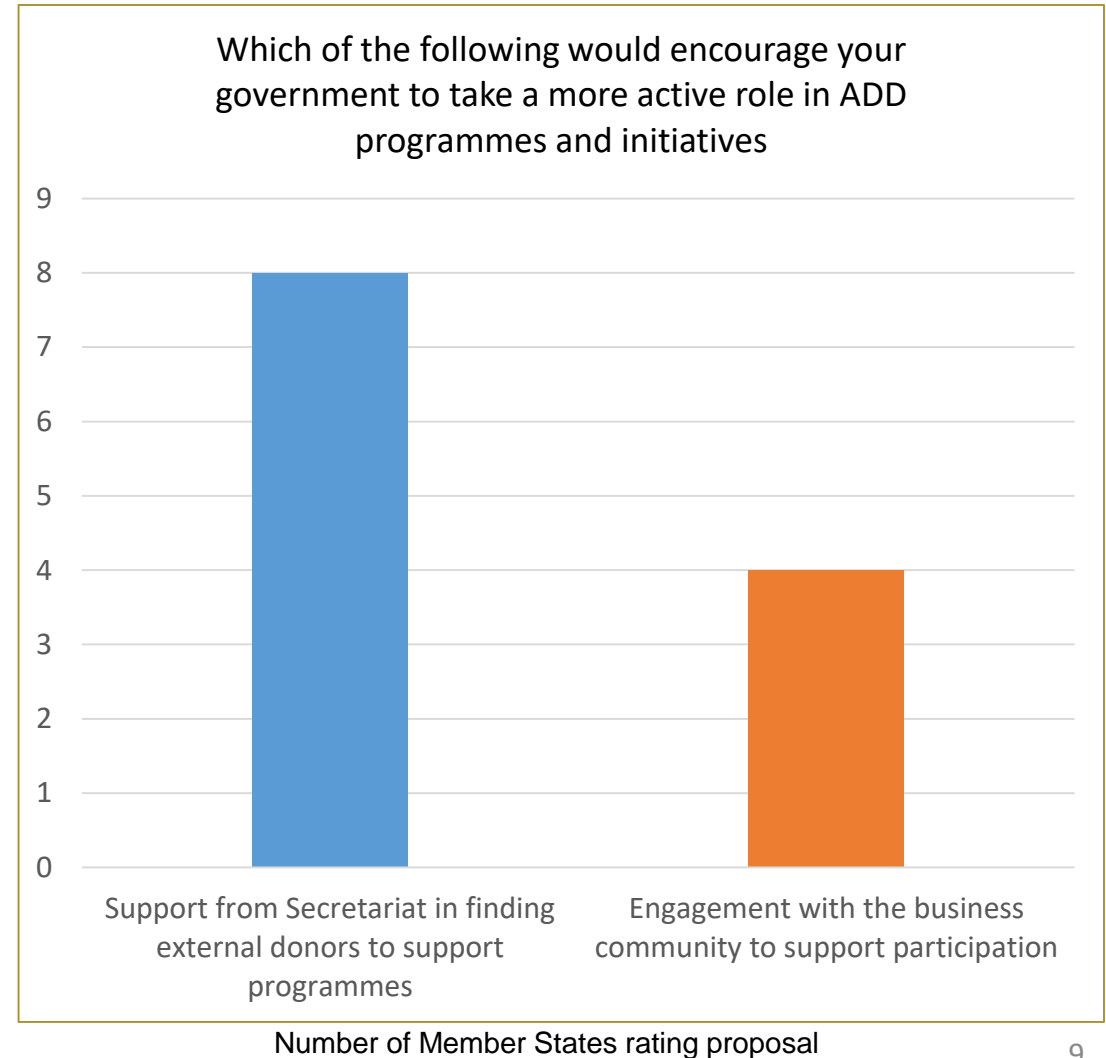
- ❖ The Questionnaire sought to understand what would incentivise more Member States to volunteer to participate in ADD thematic programmes
- ❖ Corresponding with the desire of Member States to be engaged in developing the agenda, ten out of eleven Member States identified establishing a **consultative mechanism to voice what initiatives are important...** prior to finalising the programme agenda
- ❖ There was similar endorsement for a **formal mechanism for Member States to propose new programmes**
- ❖ Greater **advance notice on agenda development** to enable internal coordination was also identified as important in encouraging greater participation





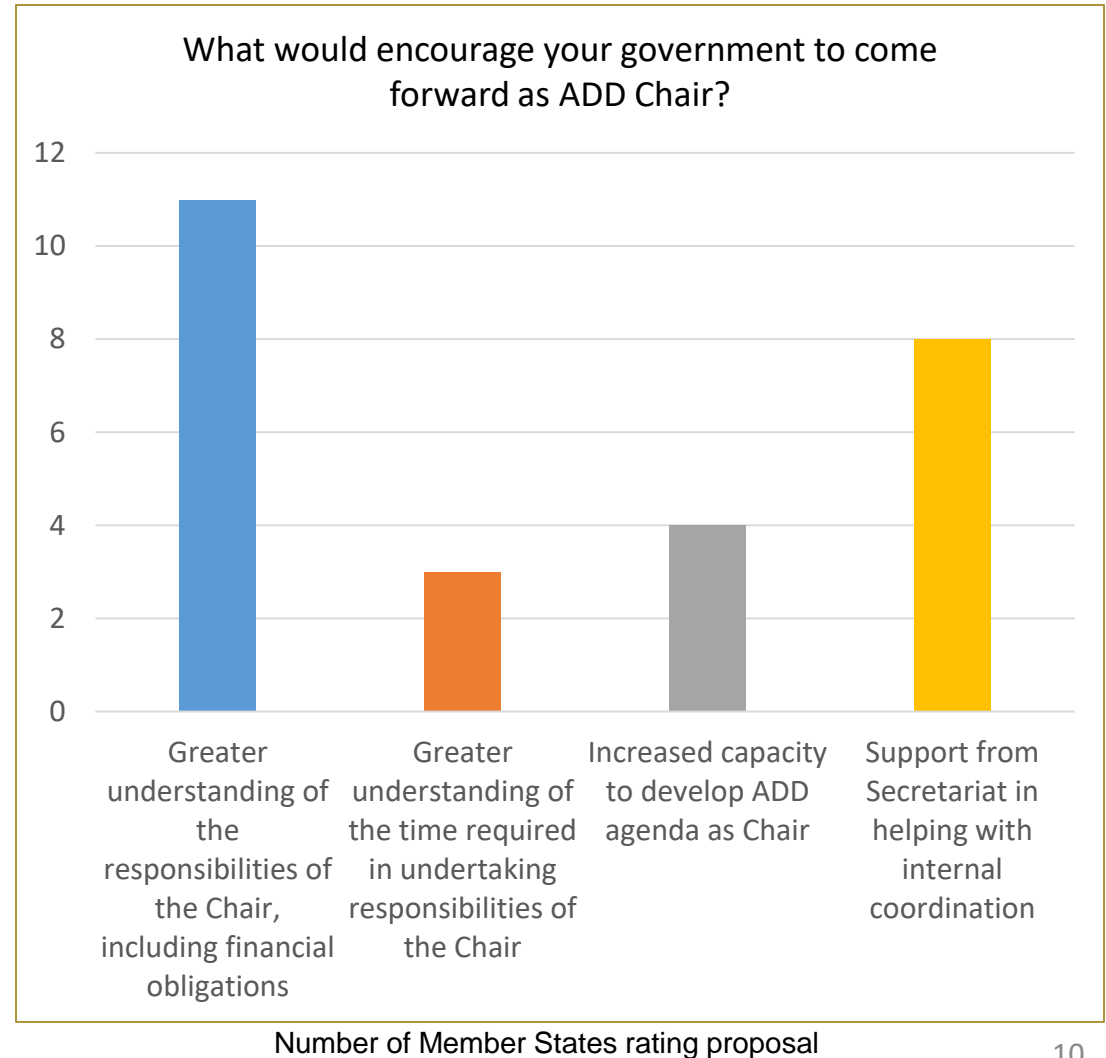
# FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

- ❖ Member States were asked what remedies would be useful in dealing with financial barriers to participation in ADD thematic programmes
- ❖ Eight Member States identified support from the Secretariat in **finding external donors to support programmes**
- ❖ Four Member States identified **engagement with the business community** to support participation
- ❖ There was a **geographic split on this question**, with COOs looking for external donors, while CODs were looking for increased engagement with the business community



# ENCOURAGING MEMBER STATES TO CHAIR ADD

- ❖ Ensuring continuity in terms of identifying an incoming Chair is a key priority of Chairs-in-Office and the Secretariat
- ❖ Member States were asked what would encourage them to come forward and volunteer as Chair
- ❖ All eleven Member States identified **greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Chair, including financial contributions** – clearly concerns over the associated costs are a barrier for many Member States
- ❖ This was followed by the proposal of support from the Secretariat in helping with internal coordination



# CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Member States have **a clear conception of the benefits** that they gain from the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, in particular as a forum for building and strengthening relations with partner governments and working collaboratively to identify and tackle regionally relevant issues relating to human mobility
- ❖ There is also, clearly, an appetite among Member States for the ADD to continue its **evolution towards being an on-going process**, rather than simply a forum for regular meetings and discussions
- ❖ Member States want to be more involved in thematic programmes and initiatives, but a lack of engagement at the agenda development stage means that many miss the window to become involved, due to the need for internal coordination and forward planning
- ❖ Concerns over financial commitments also remains a barrier for some Member States to become more engaged in ADD thematic programmes and initiatives
- ❖ A series of recommendations may go a long way to ensuring the continued sustainability of the ADD

# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL

- ❖ Based on the above conclusions, the following are proposed:
  - ❖ The formation of an Advisory Committee, composed of a certain number of Member States, including the Troika, geographically balanced. The Advisory Committee to meet (via video conference calls) on a regular to discuss the elaboration of agendas for SOMs and Ministerial Consultations
  - ❖ The ADD Secretariat, using this mechanism, to endeavour to invite active participation in thematic initiatives and programmes in advance of SOMs and Ministerial Meetings, which can then formalise participation by Member States
  - ❖ The formation of a Technical Committee, consisting of academics and researchers, to assist with developing targeted research in support of ADD thematic initiatives and programmes
  - ❖ The organisation of a side event on the margin of the first SOM meeting in 2020, to be attended by interested Member States, which lays out the role and responsibilities of a Chair, and a dedicated training / orientation session for candidate(s) that come(s) forward before the end of 2020
  - ❖ The Secretariat to explore how it can support Member States through the identification of external donors to underwrite participation in thematic initiatives and programmes, and report back at the next SOM
  - ❖ The Secretariat to prepare and circulate to Member States a note on the value add of engaging business and civil society, in time for the first SOM, and plan a networking session on the margin of the next SOM