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Event Report

Towards IMRF 2026

3rd National Consultation for Shadow Report on GCM Implementation

Date: 12th January 2026 (Monday) || **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Venue: Nascent Gardenia Hotel, 27 Park Road, Baridhara Diplomatic Zone, Dhaka

Background

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a global, non-binding agreement adopted by 163 Member States of the United Nations in 2018 to make migration safer, more orderly, and more rights-based. Anchored in ten guiding principles and twenty-three objectives, the Compact provides a comprehensive framework to support States in preventing unsafe migration, enhancing access to information, promoting fair and ethical recruitment, strengthening protection systems, and improving service delivery for migrants across the entire migration cycle.



Following the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), the United Nations Network on Migration was established, with the IOM serving as the Secretariat and coordinator at the global level. Subsequently, country-level migration networks and thematic

working groups were formed, including in Bangladesh. Member States also agreed to establish regular review mechanisms through the IMRF, held every four years, to assess progress in the implementation of the Compact. The first IMRF was convened in 2022, while the second IMRF is scheduled to take place in 2026. As part of this process, countries submit VNRs, and for the upcoming cycle, States will also report on progress related to the Pledges Initiative. Bangladesh holds particular significance within the global migration architecture, having initiated the proposal for the Global Compact at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Migration in New York in 2016. Since then, Bangladesh has been recognized as



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one of the Champion Countries for GCM implementation. As a Champion Country, Bangladesh is expected to demonstrate leadership through inclusive, rights-based, and evidence-informed approaches to migration governance and reporting.

In preparation for IMRF 2026, Bangladesh will submit its national VNR. To complement the official review process, WARBE Development Foundation, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and with support from the European Union (EU), initiated a series of national consultations to prepare a Multi-stakeholder Shadow Report. The Shadow Report follows the same reporting framework and guidelines as the government VNR, while providing an independent, experience-based, and people-centred assessment of GCM implementation.

This national consultation brought together migrant networks like BCSM, technical working group members, civil society organizations focusing on migration, human rights organizations, faith-based organizations, print and electronic media, and youth organizations. These actors play a crucial role in their own sectors such as—rights protection, climate migration intersections, community vulnerabilities, humanitarian support systems, youth-led accountability, labour governance, fair recruitment, skills development, ethical employment pathways, worker protection, awareness and migration service delivery. The consultation aimed to identify on-the-ground challenges, emerging risks, systemic and institutional gaps, sector-specific priorities, and opportunities for collaborative action to strengthen inclusive and accountable migration governance in line with GCM principles, objectives, and indicators.

Objectives

- Facilitate structured and meaningful dialogue among migrant networks, technical working group members, CSOs focusing on migration, Human Rights Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Print & Electronic Media and Youth Organizations in the context of framework of GCM monitoring and accountability.
- Gather evidence and stakeholder perspectives on rights protection, labour migration governance, fair and ethical recruitment, reintegration, skills-based recruitment, migrant protection, climate-induced mobility, community vulnerabilities, humanitarian support, and youth engagement.
- Identify progress, challenges, and gaps in the implementation of the GCM and Bangladesh's national commitments, particularly regarding migration processes, service delivery, access to information, safety, transparency, and accountability at the grassroots level.
- Collect sector-wise inputs across clusters of the 23 GCM objectives in alignment with Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting requirements.



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- Contribute to inclusive, rights-based, and evidence-informed migration governance through policy dialogue and strategic engagement.

Welcome Remarks and Opening Session

The consultation commenced with welcome remarks by **Ms. Jasiya Khatoon**, Director, WARBE Development Foundation, who welcomed participants and highlighted Bangladesh's



role as a Champion Country of the GCM. She emphasized that this role carries a responsibility to ensure that national and global review processes genuinely reflect migrants' lived realities, noting that *"while government reports are important, meaningful GCM implementation can only be assessed when the experiences, gaps, and challenges faced by migrants at the grassroots level are brought into the review process."*

She further reflected on the series of national and divisional consultations conducted as part of the Shadow Report process and stressed the importance of engaging private sector actors, recruiting agencies, business communities, and migrant-led organizations in assessing GCM implementation. She also underscored that the initiation of the VNR for IMRF 2026 presents a critical opportunity to integrate diverse sectoral perspectives and real-time experiences into national reporting.

A short documentary and video presentation on the GCM was screened to set the context for the discussion. The film briefly outlined the journey from the UN New York Declaration to the adoption of the GCM. It highlighted the diverse social, cultural, and religious dimensions of migration, the relevance of the 23 GCM objectives, and the increasing importance of addressing climate-induced migration. The documentary emphasized that



migration should be a choice, not a necessity, and called for changing the narrative around migration rather than migration itself.

Mr. Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman, WARBE Development Foundation, delivered the opening remarks and outlined the objectives of the consultation. He recalled Bangladesh's leadership role in initiating the GCM and explained that the consultation was designed to generate evidence-based



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recommendations from grassroots stakeholders through structured and participatory discussions. Emphasizing the need for collective responsibility, he noted that “**effective implementation of the GCM requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.**” He further highlighted Bangladesh’s commitments under its seventeen national pledges and its ongoing engagement with institutions such as the IOM and the Parliamentary Caucus on Migration.

Key Inputs

Mr. AKM Masud Ali, Executive Director of INCIDIN Bangladesh and Lead of the Core Working Committee of the Shadow Report, explained that the Shadow VNR would consolidate migrant demands, civil society findings, and an assessment of progress since



the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in 2022. While acknowledging that government initiatives on safe migration and return have shown progress, he noted that significant gaps remain in implementation and accountability. He emphasized that the Shadow Report would be experience-based and analytical, offering a comparative perspective alongside the government’s VNR. “**This Shadow Report is meant to complement official reporting by reflecting lived experiences, identifying implementation gaps, and offering grounded policy insights,**” he said.

He further outlined three analytical frameworks guiding the report: citizens’ expectations and the collective outcomes delivered by social institutions; the accountability of government institutions and their relationship with citizens; and evidence-based policy proposals grounded in national interest within a globalized migration context. He also stressed the importance of strengthening returnee migrant inclusion, safety, and rights protection, reviewing policy initiatives critically, and addressing irregular migration channels and informal brokerage systems, while reaffirming that migration should be recognized as a fundamental right.

Mr. Asif Munier, Migration Expert and National Consultant, showed a





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presentation on the report development plan and progress to date, as he's the penholder of the report. He emphasized the complementary role of civil society in strengthening Bangladesh's reporting through neutrality, evidence-based analysis, and non-politicized engagement. He highlighted that migration governance is a multifaceted challenge that cannot be addressed by government institutions alone and requires a whole-of-society approach. Mr. Munier stressed the need to incorporate both good practices and critical gaps, including issues related to climate induced migration, weak access to embassies and grievance mechanisms, trafficking, border governance, and reintegration challenges.

Reflections were shared by **Mr. Anisur Rahman Khan**, Executive Director, IMA Research Foundation, who emphasized that migration governance must be centred on migrant workers and their rights. He noted that migrants often do not receive adequate space to raise their voices regarding their concerns, both at home and abroad.

Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, Member, the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), highlighted Bangladesh's advisory role in the IMRF process and noted that constructive and coordinated



engagement has remained a priority throughout the process. She pointed out that migrant and grassroots voices often remain excluded from international platforms due to structural barriers, including language constraints and the disconnect between regional realities and global policy frameworks. Stressing the importance of inclusivity, she remarked, *"If these voices are not reflected, global commitments risk overlooking the realities on the ground."* She further emphasized that the Shadow Report must explicitly reflect gendered experiences, climate-induced displacement, trafficking survivors' perspectives, and challenges in accessing justice.

Participants further raised concerns regarding high migration costs, weak consular services, delays in migrant death procedures, limited access to legal aid abroad, climate induced displacement, trafficking and smuggling, complex remittance systems, and inadequate reintegration support.

Group Work Sessions

Facilitated by **Mr. Asif Munier**, participants were divided into thematic groups to identify key challenges, gaps, and recommendations.



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Group One focused on climate-induced migration and discussed the growing challenges faced by communities in climate-vulnerable regions such as Khulna and Satkhira. The group



noted that recurring cyclones, salinity intrusion, and loss of livelihoods are pushing people to migrate without adequate preparation or support. Participants emphasized the need for coordinated and cross-ministerial action involving the ministries responsible for agriculture, social welfare, fisheries, environment, and disaster management. Key recommendations included

strengthening local infrastructure and climate-resilient livelihoods, expanding Technical Training Centre (TTC) facilities in affected districts, improving financial literacy among aspiring migrants, conducting regular audits of migration-related costs, and developing digital platforms—such as overseas employment applications or dashboards—to improve transparency, access to information, and monitoring.

Group Two emphasized the importance of establishing a comprehensive, rights-based migration governance framework that ensures transparency, accountability, and clearly



defined institutional responsibilities across the entire migration cycle. The group identified human trafficking as a serious transnational crime and highlighted the legal and procedural barriers faced by irregular migrants in accessing justice and protection. Participants stressed that prevention must begin at the community level. Recommendations included mandatory government verification of overseas job offers, incorporation of

migration-related information and safe migration content into school and vocational education curricula, and targeted awareness-raising initiatives to inform potential migrants about the risks associated with irregular migration pathways.

Group Three highlighted significant gaps in consular services, including limited migrant-friendly approaches and inadequate staffing at Bangladeshi overseas missions. Participants noted that many migrants struggle to access timely support during emergencies. Recommendations included increasing manpower at missions, introducing language



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training from the secondary education level, and implementing targeted interventions in

migration-prone areas. Additional proposals focused on improving migrants' health and safety through instant insurance mechanisms, psychosocial counselling services, and stronger social safety nets. The group also called for more inclusive diaspora engagement policies, formal recognition of migrant contributions, the introduction of postal voting, digital banking support for low-cost remittance transfers, mandatory salary

payments through banking channels, capacity development of institutions such as BMET, establishment of migrant welfare desks, regular reporting by consulates, and the digitization of service delivery systems.

Group Four reviewed Bangladesh's 17 national pledges and the 10 guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration. The group observed that awareness of these pledges remains



low among migrants and their families. Participants also pointed to weak follow-up mechanisms for initiatives related to deceased migrant workers, limited migrant participation in policy processes, insufficient gender-sensitive approaches, coordination gaps among labour stakeholders, challenges in reintegration support, and persistently high remittance costs. Additional recommendations

included conducting district-level assessments of trafficking-prone areas, formally engaging migrant organizations at the local level, introducing protective screening mechanisms at airports, standardizing support measures for women migrant workers, expanding psychosocial support services, and incorporating first-aid training into pre-departure orientation programs.

Summarizing Remarks

During the discussion, **Mr. Nafiz Imtiaz**, Migration Expert, emphasized that trafficking and smuggling must be addressed through the effective application of the rule of law and stronger accountability mechanisms.



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Mr. Mainul Alam, Senior Journalist, observed that while Bangladesh remains highly visible in global migration forums, weak governance and slow implementation continue to limit real improvements in the lives of migrant workers. He pointed to low awareness about irregular migration pathways, poor follow-up on global commitments, neglected health concerns, systemic gaps, and weak case management. Emphasizing the need for stronger accountability, he noted that ***“without institutional responsibility and a service delivery-oriented approach, global commitments will not translate into meaningful change for migrants.”***

Mr. AKM Masud Ali further emphasized the need to shift the analytical lens used in assessing migration governance so that it better reflects the lived realities of migrants. While acknowledging Bangladesh's notable policy achievements, he pointed out that weak implementation continues to undermine their impact. He stressed the importance of rights-based recruitment practices, stronger international engagement on monitoring progress, and a more holistic approach that recognizes Bangladesh as both a country of origin and destination. He also drew attention to the risks of unregulated migration dynamics, noting that ***“ignoring these realities—including the Rohingya context, creates blind spots in policy that directly affect protection, accountability, and long-term governance outcomes.”***

Mr. Mahedy Hasan, Project Assistant (Migration Policy and Sustainable Development), IOM



highlighted that the government Voluntary National Review (VNR) and the Shadow Report should be seen as complementary processes that strengthen each other. He shared that the draft government VNR would be circulated soon and encouraged stakeholders to provide honest, evidence-based feedback to improve its quality. He welcomed recent initiatives, including the inclusion of migrants under the national pension scheme, and acknowledged the continued support of development partners such as the European Union. Referring to the upcoming review process, he noted that ***“IMRF 2026 in New York will be a key moment***



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to reflect both progress and ground realities,” underscoring the importance of coordinated preparation ahead of the May session.

a. Rights Protection and Migrant-Centred Governance

- Strengthen rights-based migration frameworks so all migrants—including women, climate-affected migrants, and those in irregular situations—can access information, participate in decisions, and seek remedies.
- Institutionalize accessible, gender-responsive, survivor-centred grievance and legal aid mechanisms at origin, transit, and destination.
- Ensure government and service provider accountability through transparent monitoring, complaints handling, and follow-up systems.
- Integrate gender equality, non-discrimination, and protection of vulnerable migrants into all policies, aligned with international human rights standards.

b. Labour Migration Governance and Anti-Trafficking

- Improve regulation and monitoring of recruitment to reduce costs, prevent deception, and eliminate informal brokers.
- Establish government-led verification for overseas job offers, contracts, and recruitment channels.
- Treat trafficking as a serious transnational crime and strengthen cross-border cooperation, victim support, and protection mechanisms.
- Integrate safe migration awareness, trafficking risks, and workers’ rights into education, pre-departure orientation, and community outreach.

c. Gender-Responsive Skills Development and Employment

- Expand access to quality, gender-responsive pre-departure training, including language, occupational safety, financial literacy, and rights awareness.
- Upgrade Technical Training Centres in high-migration and climate-vulnerable districts with better infrastructure, skilled trainers, and relevant curricula.
- Recognize prior learning to formally certify migrants’ existing skills, including for returnees and climate-affected communities.



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- Provide safe, residential, gender-responsive training for women migrant workers to support decent work and reduce exploitation risks.

d. Climate-Induced Mobility and Community Vulnerabilities

- Include climate-induced mobility in national migration frameworks, GCM strategies, and disaster risk policies.
- Promote coordinated, multi-sectoral responses to displacement, livelihood loss, and migration pressures.
- Strengthen community resilience, skills diversification, and local employment to reduce distress-driven migration.

e. Migrant Protection, Consular Services, and Welfare

- Improve accessibility, quality, and responsiveness of consular services, with attention to women migrants and trafficking survivors.
- Establish help desks, multilingual hotlines, and digital complaint channels at embassies and consulates.
- Ensure timely, dignified, cost-free procedures for deceased migrants and support for their families.
- Expand access to health services, insurance, psychosocial support, and emergency assistance.

f. Reintegration, Return, and Social Protection

- Develop a government-led national reintegration framework including employment, skills use, entrepreneurship, counselling, and gender-responsive services.
- Maintain a centralized database of returnees, including trafficking survivors and climate-affected migrants, to inform support and policy.
- Expand social protection, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion for returnees, prioritizing women-headed households and survivors.

g. Youth Engagement, Awareness, and Accountability

- Strengthen youth-led and community-based awareness programs on safe migration, trafficking, and climate mobility.



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- Promote participation of migrants, youth, and migrant-led organizations in consultation, monitoring, and reporting.
- Enhance local and national accountability so migrant feedback informs policies and services.

h. Data, Technology, and Evidence for Policy Making

- Improve data collection, analysis, and disaggregation on migration, trafficking, climate mobility, gender, and justice access for evidence-based policymaking.
- Expand digital tools for information, documentation, grievance reporting, and service delivery, especially for remote or vulnerable migrants.
- Ensure all data systems and technology uphold human rights, data protection, and migrant privacy.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks and vote of thanks, Syed Saiful Haque emphasized the need for shared responsibility and ongoing collaboration to promote fair, safe, and rights-based labour migration in Bangladesh. He noted, “**Migrant workers are among the highest contributors to our national income, yet the attention and resources dedicated to their welfare remain far too limited.**”

He stressed that implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration effectively requires “**meaningful engagement from government institutions, trade unions, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and migrant communities.**”

Concluding, he reaffirmed WARBE Development Foundation’s commitment, stating, “**We will ensure that the outcomes of this national consultation are systematically reflected in the Shadow Report for IMRF 2026.**” He also called for continued support and partnership to make Bangladesh’s reporting process “**inclusive, transparent, and grounded in the real experiences of migrant workers across the migration cycle.**”





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The consultation, therefore, critically underscored that there is no dedicated public welfare budget for migrant workers beyond the security-related contributions paid by migrants themselves, highlighting a significant gap between migrant contributions to the national economy and public investment in their protection and welfare.

