

# Multi-Stakeholder Shadow Report on the Progress of GCM Implementation in Bangladesh: Towards IMRF 2026 Review

## 1. Methodology and Process of Review

Civil Society and other stakeholders of Bangladesh initiated the development of a multi-stakeholder shadow report, parallel to the government's Voluntary National Report (VNR), as suggested in the Roadmap to 2<sup>nd</sup> IMRF. A set of key questions was identified based on a review of previous VNR, progress of Country Pledges, report for the Asia Pacific Review 2025, and the Declaration of the 1st IMRF. A core working group and an advisory group provided guidance, including representatives of the three working groups of the Bangladesh UN Network on Migration (BDUNNM). Migrant-led non-profit organization WARBE Development Foundation led the process with a migration expert as a consultant, with the support of IOM, which coordinated with the government on the VNR process. The experience of WARBE's participation in the 1st IMRF and regional pre-consultations for the 2nd IMRF was maneuvered throughout the process.

Feedback from migrant networks and migrant workers was reinforced through a series of five consultations and two webinars. These accumulated views from the representatives of migrants' families, CSOs, think tanks, recruiting agencies, employers' federations, trade unions, faith based organizations, youth forums, media, development partners and financial service providers so on.

The participants provided feedback on the questions according to the cluster of objectives, guiding principles, and list of pledges. Core indicators for the objectives that Bangladesh prioritized were also provided in the local context and language. Adequate and disaggregated data for the migration cycle and relevant to GCM are not fully available as yet, so was not reviewed.

## 2. Policy and Enabling Environment

Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act 2013, amended in 2023, added a clause to regulate intermediary agents and another to include accountability of migrant workers for irregular migration. Overseas Employment Policy 2016 and Wage Earners Welfare Board Act 2018 have been reviewed for amendments. The new ordinance of 2026 includes a provision to counter human smuggling for the first time since the law of Counter Trafficking 2012. The Reintegration Policy 2025 has been adopted, and the Diaspora Policy has been drafted. Rules regulating recruiting and travel agencies have been amended. National Strategy for Internal Displacement Management and National Adaptation Plan 2023-2050 have been adopted. Further policy reforms have been proposed in 2025 through the labour reform commission report and a migration

task force. Migration Governance Framework, the Bangladesh Migration Compact Taskforce and GCM action plan have been formulated but not rolled out. GCM objectives continue to be reflected in the national development plan and the SDG implementation plan. The three technical working groups under the BDUNNM on labour migration, counter trafficking, and climate change with the UN, CSOs, and activists are vibrant in adding value to policy development, implementation, and monitoring. Key issue remains that with a strong policy framework and reform, implementation is slow, monitoring is not transparent or systematic, and the majority of migrants are unaware of the official migration process and how the government is ensuring their rights.

### **3. Summary of Progress and Evaluation of Measures**

#### *Progress on the guiding principles*

##### Rule of Law and Human Rights

The government has updated the rules and process of decentralizing the migrant complaint and arbitration mechanism, assisted by NGOs-CSOs-CBOs. One intervention is using the local government structure and the network of local community leaders to resolve complaints from migrant workers through the formation of grievance management committees. Another intervention is making steady progress in the use of the justice system and the institutions in protecting the rights of migrant workers. The National Human Rights Commission also has a mechanism for migrant grievance redress, which is less known. At the missions, migrants are not fully aware regarding the access to justice system. Rights Based Approach is practiced in some non-government interventions, while the Right to Information for migrant workers is partially ensured in migrant prone areas through CSOs, NGOs, and migrant networks. The Pre-departure briefing and awareness messages by the government can be made more effective so that migrants are more responsive.

##### Gender Responsiveness and Child Sensitivity

Gender responsiveness is yet to be fully institutionalized and mainstreamed. Gender stereotypes and social stigma about women's migration remains a challenge. Consultation participants perceive forging documents and migration of adolescents has decreased, but not officially authenticated. The government provides education allowances for the children of migrants and for disabled children.

##### Whole of Government, Whole of Society Approach

The inter-ministerial Bangladesh Migration Compact Taskforce had been formed and can be made vibrant. Alternatively, the three technical working groups under BDUNNM, with representation of CSOs and relevant stakeholders, interact regularly, improving collaboration and coordination with the government and different stakeholders through implementing interventions. Inter and intra-departmental and inter-ministerial coordination is relatively low, even though it had improved during the COVID-19

response. Referral for reintegration services through different government agencies at the district level is gradually expanding, yet to be fully functional.

Views of migrants are growing at grassroot and CSO exchange, but limited at national policy dialogue. Though government-led committees have provisions for migrant representation, those have not been taken forward yet. Government health checkups and clearance certifications improved during the COVID-19 response, but regular health clearance through medical centers is often manipulated. Cause of death for migrants abroad is often recorded as heart failure in the countries of destination. The government has no standard system to ensure post-mortem of the dead bodies, as the return of the bodies is often delayed.

However, the government has made some progress in reducing transaction costs for remittance. But use of official channels has not risen significantly with time, as the existing channels remain cumbersome.

Priority actions - ensure migrant participation in policy response, improve inter-governmental coordination, institutionalize good practice pilot interventions, a fully digitized recruitment process and migration management, improve skill development and ensure mutual recognition certification, make access to justice more equitable both at home and abroad and make the recruitment mechanism transparent and ethical.

#### **4. Conclusion and Next Steps**

In Bangladesh's migration scenario, good policies are in place, but they have not been implemented proportionately. They are required to be expanded and speed up, free from any politicization. Meaningful participation of migrants in policy reform and response is essential to ensure comprehensive rights, protection, and welfare. In this regard, referral support and information on services at the local level and missions abroad need to be efficiently institutionalized. Missions should ensure their services are more migrant friendly and migrants need to be more aware of the requirements regarding migration services. One major finding that arose throughout the consultation series was that skill development programs are unrealistic and underdeveloped according to the global market demand. Therefore, market-driven skill development based on regular market research and decentralization of services are important. The Bangladesh Compact Taskforce, National Labour Migration Forum, and the national steering committee on migration need to be activated and fully functional to ensure policy implementation, thorough monitoring of the progress, and evidence-based reporting. Action plans need to be realistic, and progress needs to be visible. Reports and data should be publicized, alongside being shared with stakeholders, on a regular basis for accountability and transparency. Following the consultation series and shadow report, a policy brief based on this report will be used to advocate for further positive changes and also to follow up on the outcome declaration of the second IMRF.

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