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Event Report

Towards IMRF 2026
4th National Consultation for Shadow Report on GCM Implementation

Date: 15 January 2026 || **Time:** 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Venue: BIISS Auditorium, West of Probashi Kallyan Bhaban, Eskaton, Dhaka

Background

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a non-binding cooperative framework adopted by United Nations Member States in 2018 to strengthen international cooperation on migration governance. Guided by ten principles and 23 objectives, the Compact seeks to enhance migrant protection, promote safe and regular migration pathways, reduce vulnerabilities, and ensure rights based and people centred migration governance.

Bangladesh holds a distinctive global position as the initiator of the GCM proposal at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Migration in 2016 and continues to serve as one of the Champion Countries for GCM implementation. As part of the review mechanism, Member States participate in the International Migration Review Forum every four years. Following the first IMRF in 2022, the second IMRF will be convened in 2026, for which Bangladesh will submit a Voluntary National Review outlining progress, challenges, and implementation of national pledges.

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To complement the official VNR, WARBE Development Foundation in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and with support from the European Union (EU), has initiated a series of consultations to prepare a multi-stakeholder Shadow Report on GCM implementation in Bangladesh. This national consultation focused on engaging high-level policy makers, government officials, migration experts, Academia, Development Partners, National Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Lawyers, and institutional stakeholders to ensure that policy gaps, less heard migration realities, and grassroots perspectives are systematically reflected in the Shadow Report for IMRF 2026.

Objectives of the Consultation

The consultation aimed to–

- Facilitate structured policy-level dialogue with high-level policy, governance, and human-rights actors, including Government Officials from different relevant ministries, migration experts, development partners, National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, officials from relevant banking institutions and private sector in the context of GCM monitoring and accountability.
- Gather institutional perspectives on labour migration governance, climate-related mobility, human trafficking, social protection, reintegration, and rights-based migration management.
- Identify progress, challenges, and implementation gaps in relation to the 23 GCM objectives and national pledges.
- Capture less heard and underrepresented migration experiences, including those of climate induced migrants, trafficking survivors, women migrant workers, and undocumented migrants.
- Generate evidence-informed and actionable recommendations aligned with the GCM framework for inclusion in the Shadow Report for IMRF 2026.

Opening Session and Welcome Remarks

The consultation commenced with welcome remarks by **Ms. Jasiya Khatoon, Director, WARBE Development Foundation**, who introduced the objectives and significance of the consultation within the broader IMRF 2026 process. She highlighted Bangladesh's commitments under sixteen labour migration–related pledges and its continued collaboration with IOM within the UN migration architecture. She noted that ***"the Shadow Report is intended to complement the government-led VNR by bringing forward stakeholder***

perspectives that may not be fully captured in official reporting," including the experiences of climate change–affected migrants and marginalized groups.

A video documentary on the Global Compact for Migration was screened, presenting an overview of the evolution of the GCM, its whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, and Bangladesh's leadership role at the IMRF 2022. The documentary reinforced the importance of rights-based migration governance and collective responsibility across stakeholders.

Mr. Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman, WARBE Development Foundation, delivered the opening remarks, describing the broad consultation process undertaken for the Shadow Report. He noted that it included ***"two online consultations, one divisional consultation, and three national consultations"*** engaging migrant communities, grassroots organizations, civil society, private sector actors, banking institutions, migration experts, and local government representatives. He added that this consultation marked ***"the final phase of engagement with government officials."*** Reaffirming Bangladesh's role as a GCM Champion Country, he highlighted that the Shadow Report process includes labour migrants, trafficking-affected persons, and climate-induced migrants, supported by regional and international migration networks with technical assistance from IOM.

Setting the Context and Key Presentations

Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Acting Executive Director of RMMRU, and Lead of the Advisory Panel for the Shadow Report, outlined the key focus areas for the consultation. She emphasized the need for ***"migrant-centred and Compact-driven discussions,"*** alongside the inclusion of proposed initiatives from government stakeholders and greater attention to less-discussed drivers of migration. She stressed that ***"the Shadow Report should complement the government VNR by presenting evidence-based recommendations grounded in lived experiences and policy realities."***

Mr. Asif Munier, Migration Expert and National Consultant, presented an overview of the IMRF process, the VNR reporting framework, and the methodology of the Shadow Report.

He emphasized that ***"migrant voices and lived experiences are the foundation of the Shadow Report,"*** noting that migration networks such as BNSK, OKUP, and WARBE are conducting ground-level research and data collection. Sharing insights from the Asia-Pacific regional consultation, he highlighted common challenges including limited access to information, barriers to reintegration, family-related constraints, lack of gender-responsive solutions, and insufficient platforms for migrant voices. He further noted that Bangladesh's pledges for the 2022–2026 period are aligned with key international instruments, including the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Sustainable Development Goals. He emphasized that **"climate-induced migration remains inadequately addressed"** and pointed to bilateral agreements and stakeholder memoranda of understanding as important tools to strengthen migrant protection and reintegration outcomes. He also referenced the approval of the National Reintegration Policy in September 2025 and highlighted the relevance of IOM's Migration Governance Framework in guiding implementation efforts.

Reflections by the Panel Discussants

The panel discussion brought together senior government officials, policy advisors, civil society leaders, and development partners to reflect on Bangladesh's progress, challenges, and priorities in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The reflections highlighted structural drivers of migration, operational gaps, emerging good practices, and the need for strengthened coordination, accountability, and rights based approaches in preparation for IMRF 2026.

Mr. Md. Saiful Haque Chowdhury, Additional Secretary (Administration and Finance Wing) of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, reflected on the historical and structural factors driving irregular migration from

Bangladesh. He noted that inherited administrative systems have limited effective information sharing and timely responses, continuing to push people toward unsafe migration pathways. He emphasized that ***"the lack of updated and accessible information at the community level remains a major gap."*** He informed participants that the government has formed a task force working under five thematic clusters to address policy and operational challenges in labour migration governance. These efforts include amendments to recruitment rules, reforms in sub-agent recruitment procedures, and measures to counter exploitative middleman systems. While acknowledging implementation challenges, he stressed that ***"the reform agenda is concrete and ongoing."***

Highlighting progress, he referred to the bilateral manpower recruitment agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a major milestone and noted that the National Reintegration Policy reflects the government's recognition of migrant workers' long-term needs. He also mentioned ongoing initiatives, including the RAISE Project, as part of the government's broader reintegration action plan. He lastly stated, ***"Implementation is always the most difficult part, but the steps we are taking are concrete, and the reintegration policy reflects our recognition of migrant workers' long-term needs."***

Mr. Zia Hassan, Policy Advisor, MoEWOE, highlighted the extreme vulnerability of irregular migrants, noting that they are ***"effectively excluded from government and embassy support,"*** including health services, legal aid, and consular protection. He stressed that this exclusion leaves migrants helpless in cases of abuse, exploitation, or crisis. Emphasizing the need to move from policy to practice, he called for identifying and scaling up effective migration practices through what he described as ***"positive isomorphic mimicry,"*** ensuring that proven operational mechanisms are sustained. He proposed establishing a dedicated diaspora support centre, including a call centre and telemedicine services, to strengthen overseas protection and welfare. He also noted that ***"the UN alone cannot implement GCM commitments,"*** stressing that meaningful progress depends on active engagement by government institutions and national stakeholders. Referring to good practice, he cited the ILO-supported **Overseas Employment Platform** as a positive operational example.

He noted, ***"Irregular migrants are completely excluded from support systems, and this exclusion increases their vulnerability. Operational strength, not only policy intent, must drive implementation."***

Mr. Toufiq-ur-Rahman, Director General, Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the importance of shared initiatives and multilateral cooperation in advancing GCM implementation. He recalled the joint initiative by Mexico and Switzerland in July 2018 that helped elevate migration from a domestic issue to an international policy priority. Highlighting platforms such as the GFMD, he stressed the need to move **"beyond documentation and commitments toward tangible implementation outcomes."** While acknowledging domestic political constraints and the criminalization of migration as challenges, he emphasized that sustained leadership and stakeholder engagement can address these barriers. He also highlighted the strong linkages between the GCM and the SDG, noting that while the GCM framework is robust, its global implementation has been slower than expected.

Dr. ATM Mahbub-ul Karim, Project Director- RAISE, Wage Earners' Welfare Board, emphasized that effective reintegration begins with access to information and the establishment of a comprehensive and reliable migrant database. He stressed that district-level institutions such as WEWB offices, TTCs, and DEMO must be adequately equipped with technical tools and digital infrastructure to deliver services effectively. ***"Without a proper database and technically equipped district institutions, reintegration efforts will remain fragmented and ineffective."*** Pre-departure training programmes require greater focus, enhanced budget allocation, and critical evaluation to ensure quality and relevance. He underscored that reintegration efforts cannot succeed without strong institutional capacity at the local level.

Mr. Salim Reza, Former Secretary, MoEWOE, shared comparative experiences and examples of good practices from destination countries. He highlighted Japan's technical intern

programme, implemented through BMET, which provides training and airfare support free of cost. He noted that the BOESL functions as a government recruiting agency with no reported casualties and cited Korea as a destination with labour-friendly laws and strong worker protection mechanisms. He emphasized that migrant protection must encompass job security, occupational safety, adequate living conditions, proper wage systems, and comprehensive support services throughout employment abroad. He also identified the bilateral agreement with Saudi Arabia as a positive example of ethical recruitment. He added, ***"Good practices already exist. The challenge is to ensure that job safety, wages, and dignity are guaranteed for every migrant worker."***

Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, Member, Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), reflected on the expanding role of public–private collaboration in migration governance. She noted that stronger engagement between government institutions, private sector actors, and embassies has created wider opportunities for coordinated action, observing that ***"public–private connections are opening new spaces, and embassy-level engagement with stakeholders is creating visible positive change."*** She emphasized that the inclusion of diverse stakeholders in embassy-led initiatives has contributed to more effective outcomes and strengthened trust among migrant communities.

Mr. AKM Masud Ali, Executive Director, INCIDIN Bangladesh and Lead of the Core Working Committee for the Shadow Report, emphasized the importance of including concrete inputs on human trafficking, irregular migration networks, and middleman-driven recruitment practices in the Shadow Report. He stressed the critical role of trade unions in documenting grassroots realities, noting that ***"human trafficking and irregular migration networks cannot***

be addressed without bringing grassroots realities and trade union voices into the reporting process." He further highlighted that tackling these issues requires systematic engagement with workers' organizations and community-level actors.

Open Discussion

The open discussion session provided an opportunity for speakers to raise objective specific issues, share operational insights, and propose practical solutions grounded in field level experience.

Ms. Rahnuma Salam Khan, National Programme Manager, ILO, emphasized that safe migration remains the core objective of the GCM. She observed that achievements in social protection for migrant workers since 2018 have been limited in Bangladesh and noted that reintegration support is ***"largely project-based rather than institutionalized,"*** stressing that ***"reintegration cannot remain project-based. It must be institutional, adequately financed, and aligned with labour market realities."*** She further highlighted the need for skills development to be continuously updated in line with global labour market demand and underscored that adequate budget allocation is essential for sustainable implementation. She concluded that a whole-of-society approach is necessary to effectively address irregular migration.

Mr. Fazley Elahi Mahmud, Consultant Migration focused on GCM Objectives Seven and Eight related to regular migration pathways, repatriation, and regularization. He emphasized that a comprehensive migrant database and effective outreach mechanisms are critical tools for addressing irregular migration and ensuring reintegration.

Mr. Abdullah Al Muyid, National Programme Coordinator, ILO, emphasized the need to incorporate political economy considerations into migration governance discussions, noting shrinking labour markets and persistent labour rights challenges. The representative stressed the importance of examining implementation processes rather than focusing solely on policy commitments.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of incorporating diaspora voices into national consultations. It was noted that structured engagement with diaspora communities could generate valuable insights into lived experiences, working conditions, remittance systems, and service gaps. They emphasized the need to view migration as an integrated ecosystem encompassing migration for development and migration management.

Discussions on GCM Objective 22 highlighted that social protection measures such as life insurance introduced in 2019 and existing pension schemes, provide an important foundation. Discussion stressed that these mechanisms should be expanded and made more accessible to migrant workers and their families.

Mr. Shakil Akter Chowdhury, General Secretary, Bangladesh Labour Federation (BLF) and Convener, Trade Union-CSO Action Alliance (TUCSAA) emphasized that ministries and government institutions must actively listen to grassroots voices during policy formulation and implementation. He cited the Trade Union and Civil Society Action Alliance (TUCSAA) as a good practice platform for inclusive engagement.

Mr. Ataur Rahman, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism, emphasized the importance of precise and timely execution of GCM objectives. He noted that detailed digital and printed information booklets are already available and stressed the need to strengthen Objective Eight on employment contracts. He proposed a 24-hour support system, including hotlines, FAQs, and feedback and complaint boxes at missions. He highlighted that ***"legal support should never be treated as a luxury for irregular migrants,"*** calling for the digitization and strengthening of legal processes to ensure access and protection for all.

Mr. Abu Rafsan Md Arif, Joint Secretary, Local Government Division emphasized that persistent information gaps remain a major driver of unsafe migration and must be

addressed through systematic outreach and awareness initiatives.

Ms. Anwara Begum, Research Director, BIDS, underscored the importance of centering individual migrant experiences within migration policy. She emphasized the need for labour market analysis that incorporates individual skills, aspirations, and destination specific demand.

Ms. Shahreen MUNIR, Head – Secretariat, Bangladesh UN Network on Migration (BDUNNM), IOM emphasized the need for a three-hundred-sixty-degree migration approach grounded in development principles and aligned with the SDG. She noted that the 2026 to 2030 labour action plan is yet to be finalized and emphasized the importance of continuous mentoring and activation of people centred objectives.

Mr. Alam Hossain, BOESL, highlighted the widespread lack of awareness among prospective migrants and stressed the importance of incorporating ground level voices. He emphasized the need to raise awareness against fraudulent channels and fake recruitment websites.

Mr. Asif Ayub, Joint Secretatry General, Bangladesh Employers Federation, focused on GCM Objectives One and Eight and proposed that consular services organize open house days at missions every three to four months to listen directly to migrant workers' concerns. He emphasized the need to update migration data regularly and to strengthen budget allocation and implementation monitoring.

Dr. Syeda Rozana Rashid, Professor at the Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, presented the perspective of migrant workers, highlighting three critical gaps. She noted the absence of labour market analysis in recruitment processes, weak accountability mechanisms within multilateral forums and destination countries, and inadequate social protection systems.

Mr. Lutfor Rahman, Principal, TTC Dhaka, emphasized the importance of accessible information for migrants, digitalized training systems, and certification. He highlighted the importance of pre decision making initiatives, language training, and the development of a skilled workforce aligned with international standards.

Ms. Tasneem Binte Karim, UNODC, emphasized the need to address GCM Objectives Nine and Ten, highlighting regulatory challenges and the importance of addressing online exposure and exploitation risks.

Remarks by Special Guest

Ms. Catherine Northing, Deputy Chief of Mission, IOM Bangladesh, commended the national consultation as a timely and inclusive initiative that brought together a broad spectrum of migration stakeholders under one platform. She highlighted that Bangladesh has shown consistent leadership as a Champion Country of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, upholding its international commitments through rights-based and people-centred migration governance. She noted that ***"the Shadow Report captures parallel and, at times, competing narratives from migrant communities, civil society, and grassroots stakeholders, which are essential***

for credible, transparent, and balanced national reporting." She further emphasized the importance of partnership and coordination in developing a rigorous, evidence-informed Shadow Report and reaffirmed IOM's continued support to Bangladesh in advancing inclusive GCM implementation toward IMRF 2026.

Key Recommendations from the Consultation

1. GCM Implementation, Reporting, and Accountability

- Align the Voluntary National Review and the Shadow Report while keeping the Shadow Report's independent role in capturing less-heard voices and gaps.
- Document progress, challenges, and actions across all 23 GCM objectives, focusing on Bangladesh's pledges toward IMRF 2026.
- Strengthen monitoring and accountability to move beyond policy commitments to real implementation.

2. Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society Coordination

- Enhance inter-ministerial coordination, including engagement of overseas missions and local governments.
- Institutionalize structured collaboration with civil society, migrant networks, trade unions, academia, private sector, and development partners.
- Promote regular multi-stakeholder dialogues to review progress, share good practices, and resolve bottlenecks.

3. Access to Information and Prevention of Irregular Migration

- Close grassroots information gaps through district-level outreach and community platforms.
- Strengthen pre-decision and pre-departure orientation to enable informed migration choices and reduce unsafe pathways.
- Counter misinformation, fraudulent recruitment, and informal broker networks.

4. Fair Recruitment and Ethical Labour Migration

- Implement fair recruitment reforms, regulate sub-agents and middlemen, and enforce recruitment standards.
- Ensure transparency in costs, contracts, and job information through verification and monitoring.
- Strengthen bilateral agreements and cooperation with destination countries to protect workers.

5. Protection of Migrant Rights and Consular Support

- Strengthen rights-based governance to ensure access to justice, grievance redress, and protection throughout the migration cycle.
- Build capacity of diplomatic missions and consulates for timely, migrant-centred support in disputes, abuse, detention, health emergencies, and repatriation.
- Introduce standardized protocols, multilingual hotlines, digital complaint systems, and regular outreach.
- Develop humanitarian responses for undocumented and irregular migrants in crises.

6. Climate-Induced Migration and Emerging Vulnerabilities

- Recognize climate-induced migration in national policies, frameworks, and reporting.
- Strengthen data collection and mapping of climate-affected areas to inform protection and adaptive measures.
- Integrate climate mobility into GCM implementation and reporting on national pledges.

7. Reintegration and Sustainable Return

- Implement the National Reintegration Policy with coordinated plans, budgets, and monitoring.
- Institutionalize reintegration as a core part of migration governance, not just a project.
- Enhance access to information, skills use, social protection, and livelihood support for returnees and their families.

8. Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Migration Governance

- Strengthen gender-responsive policies and programs, protecting women migrants, especially domestic workers.
- Increase oversight of recruiting agencies to prevent gender-based exploitation.
- Ensure skills training and certification, including National Skills Development Authority credentials, are credible and internationally recognized.

Conclusion

In the concluding remarks, **Dr Tasneem Siddiqui** consultation marked ***"an important milestone in preparing the Shadow Report"*** and reflected the collective commitment of stakeholders to strengthening migration governance in Bangladesh. She reiterated that the Shadow Report is intended to ***"complement, not compete with, the government's Voluntary***

National Review" by highlighting progress, identifying implementation gaps, and bringing forward underrepresented migration realities. She stressed that migrant-centred, rights-based, and evidence-informed approaches must remain at the core of reporting and that sustained collaboration among government institutions, civil society, trade unions, private sector actors, and development partners is essential to address systemic, political, and operational challenges. She further highlighted the importance of tackling emerging and cross-cutting issues—such as climate-induced migration, gender-specific vulnerabilities, trafficking, reintegration, and access to justice—through coordinated and innovative action.

The consultation reaffirmed the need for inclusive dialogue, shared responsibility, and sustained engagement to advance the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Bangladesh. speakers stressed that the consultation outcomes would be systematically incorporated into the Shadow Report, aligned with the 23 GCM objectives and national pledges, and presented in line with the Voluntary National Review. The discussion emphasized that meaningful progress toward IMRF 2026 requires moving beyond policy commitments to effective implementation, accountability, and monitoring, keeping the voices and lived experiences of migrants at the center of migration governance and reporting.

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AGENDA

Towards IMRF 2026
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Date: 15th January 2026 (Thursday) || **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Venue: BIISS Auditorium, (West of Probashi Kallyan Bhaban), Eskaton, Dhaka

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD/PRESENTER
10.00am - 10.30am	Registration and Refreshment	**Ms. Tasmia Sarwar,** Project Manager, WARBE DF
10.30am - 10.45am	Welcome Remarks and Introduction of the Participants	**Ms. Jasiya Khatoon**, Director, WARBE DF
10.45am - 11.00am	Objectives and Expected Outcomes	**Mr. Syed Saiful Haque**, Chairman, WARBE DF and Co-chair, Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM)
11.00am - 11.15am	Opening Remarks by Chair	**Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui,** Executive Director (Acting)**,** RMMRU; Chair BCSM and Lead of Advisory Panel, Shadow Report on GCM
11.15am - 11.45am	Presentation on IMRF, VNR and Shadow Report	**Mr. Asif Munier**, Migration Expert and National Consultant
11.45am - 12.30pm	Reflection on the Presentation by Panel Discussants	▪ **Mr. Zia Hassan,** Policy Advisor, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment ▪ **Mr. Md. Saiful Haque Chowdhury,** Additional Secretary (Administration and Finance Wing), Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment ▪ **Dr. ATM Mahbub-ul Karim,** Project Director-RAISE, Wage Earners' Welfare Board ▪ **Mr. Md. Toufiq-ur-Rahman,** Director General (Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing), Ministry of Foreign Affairs ▪ **Mr. Salim Reza,** Former Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment ▪ **Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled,** Member, the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) ▪ **Mr. AKM Masud Ali**, Executive Director, INCIDIN Bangladesh and Lead of Core Working Committee, Shadow Report on GCM
12.30pm - 1.40pm	Open Discussion for the Respected Participants	**Moderated by Mr. Asif Munier,** Migration Expert and National Consultant
1.40pm - 1.50pm	Remarks by	**Ms. Catherine Northing,** Deputy Chief of Mission, IOM Bangladesh
1.50pm - 2.00pm	Way Forward and Closing Remarks by Chair	**Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui,** Executive Director (Acting)**,** RMMRU
2.00pm	Lunch	

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56	Bayem	VJ	Ekhon TV	01671639304	
57	Maenul Alam	Senior Journalist		01713066166	
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60	S.N. ALAUDDIN		ILO	01730321150	

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Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Organization	Mobile & Email	Signature
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62	Catherine Norting	Deputy Chief	IOM	"	For
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64	Abdul Mannan	o/a.	WARBE DF	01731300494	
65	Md. Nazes Hossain	-	WARBE DF	01758930549	
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