

Statement by H. E. Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh at the General Debate of the First International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) at the United Nations, New York on Thursday, 19 May 2022

Mr. President,

I thank you for convening the first International Migration Review Forum.

In 2016, Bangladesh first mooted the idea of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This year, with the convening of the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), our vision and engagements seem to have completed a full circle.

It was a natural choice for Bangladesh to serve as a GCM champion country. We are pleased that our Permanent Representative and the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg were assigned to co-facilitate the IMRF Progress Declaration.

Mr. President,

The rights and protection of migrants suffered the most during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many had to return home on short notice without due compensation. Again, many were left in an uncertain situation without employment, social protection or access to vaccines. We must make sure that we manage such situations much better during future emergencies.

It is also imperative to foster global solidarity to combat rising racism, xenophobia, misinformation, stigmatization, and intolerance against migrants.

Mr. President,

The contribution of migrants to the socio-economic development of their countries of origin and destination is well-recognized. Ethical recruitment of migrants and recognition of their skills and certificates can be mutually beneficial for both origin and destination countries.

Remittances are the lifeline for many families around the world. We subscribe to the call for bringing down the average remittance cost nearly by half.

The incidents of abuse and wage theft appear to disproportionately affect female migrant workers. Back home, we are planning to set up dedicated protection facilities for returnee female migrants subjected to violence and trauma.

Despite our sustained efforts, human smuggling and trafficking continue to thrive through trans-national networks. Enhanced opportunities for regular pathways can help stem such criminal activities.

We need to strengthen our collaboration on all fronts for prevention, protection and prosecution efforts to address these problems.

Mr. President,

We call on all countries to live up to their obligation for search and rescue of distressed migrants at sea. On multiple occasions, our own naval forces have rescued Myanmar's forcibly displaced Rohingyas adrift at sea along our coasts.

We must also enhance global efforts to save lives and reduce risks and vulnerabilities of migrants during their migratory journey, including those caught up in situations of crisis. We urge transit and destination countries not to forcibly return migrants under any circumstances.

The phenomenon of climate induced migration is only too real to be treated as an after-thought. The plight of millions displaced due to sea level rise, river erosion or droughts must be placed at the centre of both migration and climate change discourses.

Mr. President,

While recognizing the primary responsibility of member States to find solutions to pressing migration problems and issues through effective collaboration and partnership, we believe that the UN Network on Migration also has a pivotal role to play in the implementation of the GCM. To support the Network's efforts, Bangladesh has decided to make a contribution to the Multi-Purpose Trust Fund.

Bangladesh will continue to promote a ‘whole-of-society’ approach to do justice to GCM’s 360-degree vision on migration. We are setting up a dedicated taskforce to coordinate GCM implementation.

We remain committed to harnessing the benefits of international migration for the sustainable development of our peoples and the planet.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.