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Government of the  
People's Republic of  
Bangladesh

## Building Knowledge-base and Promoting Rights of the Bangladeshi Workers on the Move

A Consultation Workshop, 16 Jan 2013, Dhaka



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Promoting Decent Work through  
Improved Migration Policy and its  
Application in Bangladesh

### Tripartite Consultation Workshop:

## "Building Knowledge-base and Promoting Rights of the Bangladesh Workers on the Move"

A Workshop on "Building Knowledge-base and Promoting Rights of the Bangladesh Workers on the Move" co-organized by the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Dhaka on Wednesday 06 Feb 2013. The workshop included a wide range of stakeholders representing private and public sector banks, civil society organizations, migrant workers associations, international organizations, media and the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) in order to gather information and exchange experience to inform five comprehensive studies on international labour migration from Bangladesh.

**06 February 2013, Dhaka:** Following the inception of the five studies commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to the Human Development Research Centre (HDRC), a Tripartite Consultation workshop entitled "Building Knowledge-base and Promoting Rights of the Bangladesh Workers on the Move" was co-organized by both at the BIAM Foundation in Dhaka, in order to accumulate relevant information from a cross section of stakeholders as well as have a comprehensive understanding of issues related to the research studies. The five studies include: (1) Skills acquisition, recognition and certification for Bangladeshi migrant workers; (2) Causes of and redress related to high recruitment and migration costs; (3) Priorities for and method of mainstreaming migration into the national development plans from a gender perspective; (4) Remittance contribution by Bangladeshi migrant workers, especially women migrant workers; and (5) Increased contribution from Bangladeshi Diaspora.



Participants during the Inaugural Session



L-R: Mr. Hazrat Ali (MEWOE), Mr. Zafar Ahmed Khan (MEWOE), H.E. Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain (MEWOE), Prof. Abul Barkat (HDRC), Begum Shamsun Nahar (BMET) at the Inaugural Session of the consultation.

The workshop was inaugurated by H.E. Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, Minister, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Mr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and Begum Shamsun Nahar, Director General, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training. The workshop was attended by a wide range of stakeholders which included banks officials, civil society organizations, migrant associations, international organizations, media and Government officials. Following a presentation made by Prof. Abul Barkat, the Study Team Leader and Chief Advisor (Hon.) of HDRC on the research background and objectives, the participants were organized into different groups to discuss the relevant issues related to the research topics.



### Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh The Labour Migration project

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The group discussions on Skill Acquisition and Certification acknowledged the need to develop a concrete certification system based on International standards that would best prepare Bangladeshi workers to take up employment in the destination at par with their counterparts from other countries of origin. The quality of training programmes, both provided by the government as well as the private sector, were also highlighted as an important area that needs to be strengthened in order to maximize the benefit of the skills acquisition



*Presentation from Group 1*

The second group on Costs of Migration reiterated the high cost of migration to be one of the major concerns for migrant workers. The actual costs incurred by the migrant workers are always much higher than the costs determined by the Government. The need for complete transparency in the process was highlighted as essential to curbing the exuberant costs that are taken from migrant workers by unscrupulous recruitment agents and middlemen.



*Presentation from Group 4*



*Participants of Group 3*

The discussions on Remittances highlighted the importance of remittances to the national economy and development of communities and households, as its multiplier effects. The participants reiterated the role of banks, both public and private, in facilitating the sending of remittances through formal channels. The participants also urged the government and the private sector to introduce mechanisms and products to facilitate the productive utilization of remittances for migrant households as well as the returning migrants.

The last group discussions on Diaspora raised the issues of engaging the Bangladeshi Diaspora in development initiatives of the country. The participants acknowledged the interest of the Diaspora, however, highlighted the lack of conducive investment environment for them. The need to properly disseminate information on available investment, saving and other development opportunities through websites and newsletters for the Diaspora and NRBs was also raised.



*Participants of Group 4*

The issue of gendered mainstreaming of labour migration into the national development planning was discussed by all the groups.

ILO being a tripartite organization, representing governments, workers and employers organizations, would like to ensure that view of the social partners and the workers themselves inform studies, policies and programmes to best govern labour migration. The Labour Migration Project, "Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh" is an initiative in that direction. The project has several partners, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment being the principle partner and IOM and UN Women being the other two key partners from the UN. The trade unions are engaged in the project through the NCCWE and the employers and recruiters through their respective federation and association, namely, BAIRA and BEF. The project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. ILO's perspective on the above-mentioned issues were presented by Disha Sonata Faruque, Project Officer and Nisha, Chief Technical Advisor.

Mr. Hazrat Ali, Additional Secretary and National Project Coordinator, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment closed the workshop with a vote of thanks to express satisfaction over the strong interest demonstrated by the participants and encouraged the dialogue to continue in a coordinated manner.



*L-R: Mr. Hazrat Ali (MEWOE), Prof. Abul Barkat (HDRC), Nisha (ILO) at the Closing Session of the consultation.*



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