

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**  
**Committee on Social Development**  
**Bangladesh Experience on**  
**“Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and Pacific”**

This country paper highlights the strategies, initiatives, and legal and policy framework of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in building a healthy, protected and productive Bangladeshi migrant workforce. Currently, 120 million Bangladeshi migrant workers are employed in 170 countries around the world. Over the past five years including the pandemic period, on average, close to 700,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers went for overseas every year. The Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) plays the key role in ensuring the welfare of Bangladeshi migrant workforce and protecting their rights. The MoEWOE contributes to the socio-economic development of the country through expanding overseas employment opportunities, ensuring safe migration, protecting the rights of migrant workers and enhancing welfare for migrant workers and their families. The vision of the ministry is to develop skilled workforce in line with the demands of global markets to enhance opportunities for overseas employment; protect and promote the welfare of migrant workers and their families. Bangladesh has always integrated migration in its national development planning process, policies and sectoral strategies as an instrument of national development. Decent employment and social protection of the migrant workers have been the policy priority of the GoB. Accordingly, Bangladesh has adhered to international principles and covenants related to migration governance.

**A. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030**

In order to build a healthy, protected and productive workforce, the MoEWOE has developed its institutional, legal and policy frameworks in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030. In line with the SDG:8, for ensuring decent employment and economic growth of the migrant workforce, following institutions, laws, rules and policies have been developed in Bangladesh.

**Institutional Framework**

- **Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training:** Its vision is to ensure safe and regular migration by providing skill development training and welfare support to the migrant workers.
- **Wage Earners’ Welfare Board (WEWB):** WEWB has been working to promote and protect the rights and interests of the migrant workers and their families by providing with monetary, legal and technological supports. WEWB is providing Bangladeshi Taka 300,000 to family members of each of the deceased migrant workers as compensation. WEWB also provides BDT 100,000 financial assistance to each of the returnee, severely injured and sick migrant workers for treatment.
- **Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL):** This is the only government owned manpower recruitment service organization. BOESL ensures fair and ethical recruitment (FER) and employer pay model in sending migrant workers. For example, BOESL is sending technical intern and care giver to Japan without recruitment

costs. This organization has also sent migrant workers to Jordan and South Korea maintaining FER.

- **Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB):** This is a state-owned specialized bank for expatriates through which investment loan, reintegration loan and other financial services are being provided to the migrant workers and their family members. For instance, PKB has provided collateral free soft loan at 4% interest rate to the COVID-19 affected returnee migrant workers and their family members.
- **Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE):** Major objective of the project is to ensure economic, social and psycho-social reintegration of returnee migrant workers who returned.

### **Legal and Policy Framework**

- **8th Five Year Plan (2020-2025) of the Government of Bangladesh:** The Eighth Five Year Plan (FY2020-2025) has laid out a 10-point agenda named ‘Paradigm Shift Agenda for Overseas Employment and Well-being of Migrant Workers including, institutional and legal reform and capacity enhancement; market expansion and economic contribution; skills development; access to service; access to finance; protection, rights and well-being; digitization; private sector and stakeholders engagement; cost of migration and reintegration. A draft Action Plan has been formulated in order to implement the agenda.
- **Overseas Employment and Migrants Act, 2013 (Under Amendment):** This Act has been formulated in order to create employment opportunity, introduce safe and orderly migration management, ensure rights and welfare of all migrant workers and their family members. Under this Act, thirty Labour Wings in twenty-six countries have been set to oversee the protection and welfare of the migrant workers at countries of destination.
- **Wage Earners’ Welfare Board Act, 2018:** This Act mainly focuses on the formation, duties and responsibilities and services of the Wage Earners’ Welfare Board (WEWB) of the MoEWOE.
- **Overseas Employment and Migrant (Recruiting Agent License and Conduct) Rules, 2019:** This rule has brought the recruiting agents under legal framework by making it compulsory for them to obtain license from the government in order to recruit migrant workers.
- **Overseas Employment and Migrant (Recruiting Agent Classification) Rules, 2020:** Under this rule, the appraisal of performance of the recruiting agents has been brought into legal binding.
- **Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy, 2016:** Under this policy, a ‘Steering Committee on Overseas Employment’ and a ‘National Labour Migration Forum’ have been formed in order to ensure the highest level of protection of migrant workers and strengthen representation, participation and social dialogues in migration management. An Action Plan has also been formulated to implement this policy.

- **National Reintegration Policy for Migrants, 2022 (Draft):** The main objective of this policy is to provide a national guideline for the coordinated reintegration services, programmes, referral mechanism and advices for the returnee migrants. Economic, social and psycho-social services will be provided to the returnee migrant workers under the guideline of this policy.
- **Guideline on Health Examination of Aspiring Migrant Workers (Revised), 2022:** The MoEWOE has formulated this guideline in order to ensure correct, standard and acceptable health examination of the migrant workers by enlisting the medical centers.

**SDG Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries:** Under this Goal, **Target 10.7** which is about orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and **Indicator 10.7.1** which is about reducing recruitment cost are the major directives for the MoEWOE. In order to achieve this goal, the ministry has taken a number of initiatives.

- **Fixation of Recruitment Cost:** Recruitment costs and service charge of 16 countries of destinations including Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia have been fixed.
- **Employer Pay Model:** The GoB is negotiating with the countries of destinations to shift from employee pay model to employer pay model. As a Member State, the MoEWOE is actively involved with the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.
- **Fair and Ethical Recruitment:** Fair Recruitment Initiative (FRI) was launched in 2014 as part of the ILO Director General’s call for a fair Migration Agenda. Bangladesh is a Member of the FRI Advisory Committee. International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) has also been developed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Bangladesh is engaged in IRIS.

**B. ILO Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990 (ICRMW):** Bangladesh ratified this convention in 2011. Since then, the GoB is formulating and enforcing its laws and regulations in line with the ICRMW.

**C. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM):** Government of Bangladesh is committed to implement the relevant objective of the GCM. Following initiatives have been taken by the GoB for attaining the objectives of GCM:

- To facilitate fair and ethical recruitment, and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work (GCM Objective-6), a number of acts and rules have been enacted.
- Bangladesh was promoted to TIER-2 according to the Trafficking in Persons Report published in 2020 for the formulation and enforcement of laws and regulations regarding migration governance.
- In August 2020, Bangladesh was selected by the global UN Network on Migration, and formally agreed on being a “Champion” country for GCM. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to be the GCM Champion.

- To ensure coordinated, effective and timely UN Country Team wide support to the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in implementing the GCM, the Bangladesh United Nations Network on Migration (BDUNNM) was launched in 2019.
- To strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral (GCM Objective-12), Bilateral negotiations and Joint Committee Meetings on regular migration were held.
- To ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation (GCM Objective-4), smart cards have been introduced for all migrant workers.
- Bangladesh Government together with its development partners
- has launched a number of projects in line with the fostering ethical recruitment practices. For example, “Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work of Migrant Workers Project”; “Promoting Recruitment Industry Reform to Achieve Ethical Recruitment (Prosper) in Bangladesh and Nepal” and “Fair Recruitment and Decent Work for Women Migrant Workers in South Asia and the Middle East Phase II Project”.
- The GoB has made the following pledges during the first International Migration Forum Review (IMRF) held in the United Nations Headquarter in New York:

***Policy-oriented commitments***

Amendment of the “Overseas Employment and Migrants Act- 2013” by September 2022; Adoption of “Bangladesh Migration Governance Framework” (MiGOF) by June 2023; Formulation of the “National Reintegration Policy for Migrants, 2022” by December 2022; Formulation of “Diaspora Policy” by December 2023 and Finalization of GCM National Action Plan 2022-2024 by December 2022.

***Process-oriented commitments***

Signing of Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with different countries and regional blocs by June 2025; Raising awareness and publicity regarding migration by December 2022 and Mainstreaming migration in climate action, with focus on adaptation and in alignment with GCM objectives December 2023.

***Human resource contributions***

Launching and operationalization of Bangladesh Migration Compact Taskforce by June 2022.

Financial contributions

Bangladesh has pledged to provide funding for GCM implementation to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) by April 2022.