

**Global Expert Meeting on Migration in the Post-2015  
Development Agenda  
Inaugural Session**

Statement by

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and Very Good Morning to you all.

I am most pleased to welcome you all in Dhaka, at this important Global Meeting. Bangladesh is co-hosting this Meeting with Switzerland to secure a rightful place for migration within the emerging architecture of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

I shared my perspectives on impacts of migration on development at the Global Leadership Meeting on Population Dynamics in Dhaka in March last year. I also outlined how the developed and developing countries together can, and must, beneficially address the challenges of global demographics, its dividends as well as harness the benefits of migration and mobility.

As the world population continues to grow, societies and economies face various challenges. Today, we witness unprecedented mobility in human history, within and beyond borders. Technological advances, production management and demand for basic services are rising. These are shaping global human mobility patterns. So is the growing need for social protection for migrants and members of their families. A climate-vulnerable, less developed economy like Bangladesh is increasingly facing some of the challenges, including safeguarding lives and livelihoods of millions of people.

Excellencies,

To meet these challenges robustly, we must place people at the centre of all our developmental pursuits. As the UN Secretary General elaborated, we must ensure dignity and well-being of people. The same holds true for the people who are on the move. It is crucial that we all view every migrant as a human person – not just as an element of economic activity or production. They must enjoy all rights - as every other person.

Bangladesh, like many other countries, is engaged at the national and global levels on articulation of the Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs within Post-2015 Agenda with considerable interest. Over the past decades, Bangladesh accomplished laudable social and economic achievements, particularly in poverty eradication and women empowerment. Our GDP continues to grow at six percent. Our economy has shown appreciable resilience in spite of so many challenges. Against our target of halving population living in absolute poverty to around 29%, we have already reached 31%.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I often meet ordinary Bangladeshi migrants at airports or overseas, I see the need to make migration safe, orderly, beneficial. Rights of migrants should be central in our discussions and dialogues. In both the origin and destination countries, we must portray migration and migrant workers positively. We must de-mystify migration – to tell our people that migration is a 'win-win' for all societies.

I would like to underline a few aspects that you may consider as for possible targets and indicators:

First, close to a quarter billion migrants work, live or travel worldwide. They make immense contribution in their host economies in terms of precious remittances they send back to the origin countries. They also contribute in terms of wealth of work and life experience, skills and ideas that they bring back. I have seen such life experience transforming villages and towns in Bangladesh. Within overall matrix of economic growth and sustainable development, we need to equally facilitate 'social remittance'.

Second, mobility of people is inevitable. It is a matter of choice and is mutually beneficial. Greater mobility of people, especially with changes in demographic profile in many of the developed countries, is increasingly crucial also for sustaining economic activities. A migrant person should be viewed as an agent of development. And, the process must uphold every person's dignity.

Third, migrant persons make significant sacrifice and incur social-emotional-cultural costs as they go overseas. This is particularly true for millions of women and girls. They also face odd questions or, misperceptions within their own societies. They need a much more welcoming and supportive atmosphere.

Fourth, like in Bangladesh, providing employment for an increasing number of young people is a challenge. The world must consider millions of young, trainable persons as resource and help develop them. This is where the developed countries should come forward to support countries across Asia and Africa - to equip our young people with knowledge and skills that are recognized across borders. In Bangladesh, we have taken special programme to (train millions of our youth.

Fifth, 'partnership' and 'collaboration' are key in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In spite of many challenges, Bangladesh has come up with innovative forms of partnership in many fields. We mobilized our resources and capabilities in attaining the MDGs, in spite of our constraints and limitations. The more developed countries must come forward sharing greater quantum of finance-knowledge-technology to support the lesser developed ones.

Finally, in 2012 in Rio, the world agreed to grant all rights to migrants. Yet, in practice, the reality is still different. We must accord practical meaning to 'enjoyment of rights', for every migrant man and women woman.

Dear participants,

As you proceed to the Meeting, I would suggest a few aspects as possible targets or indicators:

- Identify ways that migration can contribute to poverty reduction, augment growth, reduce inequality and empower people, especially women.

- Across the migration chain, creating enabling atmosphere for migrants, especially women and girls.

- Provision for quality basic education and vocational and technical education for migrants and member of their families, matched with changing demand in markets.

- Support the migrants with all forms of preparations to contribute in origin and destination countries.

- Bringing all costs in migration process to a minimum, including the cost of remittances.

These are also cross-cutting, in terms of most linkages with poverty alleviation and sustained, inclusive economic growth. That way, the SDGs can prove to be visionary and transformative for all our countries over the next 15 years. I also believe, these are universal; and would call for solutions based on a country's unique circumstances and needs.

I am certain that you would leave to our expectations. I wish you a most productive deliberation. And, I declare the Global Experts Meeting open.

I thank you, all.

Khoda Hafez  
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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