



## National Consultation *on* **Global Compact** for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Voice of the Civil Society

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At the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in December 2018, 152 UN member states, including Bangladesh, voted to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Marrakech, Morocco. Though non-legally binding, drawing on best practice and international law, the compact provides a strong intergovernmental platform for cooperation on migration. The GCM defines 23 objectives and 187 actions covering all aspects of migration with each comprising a general goal and a catalogue of possible actions.

Whether the compact is successful will depend on its implementation at the national level. As a result, to jump into action on implementation, IOM Bangladesh and WARBE Development Foundation jointly organized a National Consultation on 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration-Voice of the Civil Society' on 28th March 2019, at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in Dhaka.

The daylong consultation was essentially guided by 4 key questions:

- Why GCM implementation is crucial? – To understand the importance of GCM implementation at the national level.
- What are the challenges to GCM implementation? – To identify the limitations within the compact itself and comprehend different national factors that might impede the implementation.
- Who are the stakeholders in GCM implementation? – To explore the role of different stakeholders in terms of review of the progress of the GCM implementation plan.
- What steps can be taken towards GCM implementation? – To collaboratively develop follow up implementation strategies by prioritizing GCM objectives in line with the national context.



## Why GCM implementation is crucial?

IOM Bangladesh Deputy Chief of Mission Sharon Dimanche in the opening speech gave a brief overview of GCM and highlighted why its urgent implementation is necessary for Bangladesh. She asserted that the 23 objectives laid out by the compact are very comprehensive to address all the challenges confronted in migration management around the world. As Bangladesh is a country that experiences different categories of migration and frequently encounters numerous difficulties, she stressed that the GCM is now more relevant to Bangladesh than ever. To bring positive changes in the country's migration sector, Dimanche urged all the stakeholders to move forward and take advantage of all the benefits of how comprehensive GCM is. Additional Secretary of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Dr Ahmed Munir Saleheen, while presiding over the consultation, said that given the significance of the sector in the country's economy, GCM deserves more attention as far as migration regime is concerned.



## What are the challenges to GCM implementation?

Speakers at the consultation highlighted a number of factors that might impede the implementation at the national level. It was lauded by the speakers that the relevant stakeholders of the country have already started to realize the importance of GCM. But, speakers also expressed their concerns regarding the implementation and follow up of the compact.

Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA),

Nazrul Islam asserted that as long as implementation is concerned, according to the Government of Bangladesh 4 major challenges could be identified:

- 1 Coordination:** Ensuring the coordination between all the relevant stakeholders and organizations.
- 2 Operationalization:** Due to the non-binding nature of the compact and the fact that it does not specify a timeline, it will be difficult to measure the implementation of the 23 objectives.
- 3 Monitoring:** As the outcomes are non-binding and GCM proposes to review the progress of the implementation at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) every four years, monitoring will be difficult.
- 4 Funding:** The source of funding is another challenge for implementing the compact, as the compact does not address the issue.

Speakers also criticised that the compact does not distinguish well between legal and illegal migrants and ignores key issues for diasporas, including investment and property rights for dual citizens. In addition, the rights of low skilled migrant workers are overlooked in favour of more mobility for highly skilled labour.



## Who are the stakeholders in GCM implementation?

Speakers stressed that endeavour as extensive as GCM implementation cannot be undertaken by any single stakeholder. It was emphasized that to implement the compact at the national level, all the stakeholders must play their due role and work together. The 3 key stakeholders and their roles for



GCM implementation were demonstrated at the consultation:

- 1 **States:** Although sovereign, the states are primarily responsible for the implementation.
- 2 **United Nations (UN):** IOM, through the UN network for migration, is appointed to coordinate the implementation of GCM.
- 3 **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** The CSOs also have an important role to play for accountability, monitoring and implementation.

Government officials at the consultation reaffirmed that the cooperation from the CSOs would help the state immensely in their task of implementation. To enhance coordination, Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman of WARBE Development Foundation recommended that the CSOs and NGOs who are working closely with migration issues should be officially enlisted by MoEWOW and MOFA.

## What steps can be taken towards GCM implementation?

Representatives from different organizations mentioned their ongoing approaches and plans for GCM implementation at the national level. The consultation also helped bring out a number of recommendations which can be mutually beneficial for all the relevant stakeholders. Nazrul Islam stated that the government has already gone ahead and finalized a draft national strategy on migration governance in consultation with all stakeholders and with assistance from IOM. Speakers also highlighted the government's plan for GCM implementation.

5 components of GCM Implementation:

- 1 The plan would take into account the reality on the ground, especially the specific types of migratory pressures and the local political context. Also, engagement with the UN agencies will be increased to develop rigorous but realistic plans and implement them.
- 2 A second component for implementing the GCM is the creation of centres around the world for research, information dissemination, and crisis analysis. The new centres would include the creation of joint databases to share information like population movements, migrant deaths, and smuggling or trafficking networks.
- 3 The third component is the capacity building mechanism aimed at strengthening national migration agencies.
- 4 The fourth component is a new UN network on migration that aims to 'ensure effective and coherent system-wide support to implementation'.
- 5 The final component is the regular review at international and regional forums. The GCM proposes to host the IMRF every four years starting in 2022 and to include migration objectives within other regional forums. Bangladesh and Spain have been appointed as co-facilitators to determine the modalities and organizational aspects of the forum.

Among the others, Member of Parliamentarian Caucus on Migration and Development, Mahjabeen Khaled, Director of BMET, Nurul Islam, Head of BRAC Migration Programme, Shariful Islam, Secretary General of BAIRA, Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman and British Council's PROKAS Team Leader, Gerry Fox, spoke at the consultation.



## 10 Suggestions for the Implementation of GCM

One of the key purposes of the consultation was to bring together representatives from across relevant institutions and sectors to discuss different implementation structure of GCM and bring out ideas by working in groups. The major recommendations that came out from the session are-

- 1 A comprehensive web-based database should be developed by the concerned ministries in cooperation with other stakeholders to ensure the availability of migration-related information for aspirant migrants, migrants, family members and employers.
- 2 Ensuring the availability of existing data and information regarding the process of migration.
- 3 Investing in finding new labour market to reduce the existing complexities.
- 4 Gender aspect should be prioritized at the pre-decision orientation phase.
- 5 Besides MoU, bilateral agreements should be signed with the employers at the country of destinations.
- 6 Proactive roles of the Government of Bangladesh and embassies at the country of destination may promote the rights of migrant workers.
- 7 Promoting migrant forum at the country of destinations can help the migrants to get their rights.
- 8 Ratifying ILO Convention C-189 may contribute to implementing the GCM from national level policy aspect.
- 9 Inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination can ensure safe and regular migration.
- 10 Regional cooperation and bilateral partnership to facilitate the implementation of GCM.

