Seminar on

Migration and Development: Challenges and Perspectives

Organised jointly by

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The seminar on “Migration and Development: Challenges and Perspectives” was organised jointly by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh on Thursday, 21 January 2016 at BIISS Auditorium. Sir Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) on Migration and Development made the keynote presentation. The designated discussants were Eva Akerman Borje, Seventh GFMD Chair, Sweden; and Mr John Bingham, ICMC, Global Civil Society Coordinator. Mr M Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Government of Bangladesh started the seminar with opening remarks and introduction of the speaker. Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad, Chairman, Board of Governors of BIiSS made the concluding remarks.

Opening Remarks

Mr M Shahidul Haque
Foreign Secretary
Government of Bangladesh

As the moderator of the session, Mr Haque started his introductory remark by saying that today the global community live in a much healthier, wealthier and wider society, compare to even a decade beck. He added that economically, technologically and socially countries have made a tremendous progress over couple of years but at the same time the global community also see major disruption in many folds, there are also inequalities, which is creating difficult situations for many people but there is also one more issue that has drawn huge attention is the human mobility. People are much more mobile than ever before.
The recent UN statistics suggests that 244 million people are on the move and which is 3.3 per cent of the total global population. The global community sees for the first time the increase of total mobile population or migrant compare to total global population. He also noted that it seems that the world has become much safer and much more productive for migrants but going back to the reality, there is a different picture. And that’s what is expected from the keynote presenter Sir Peter Sutherland.

He has reminded us that migration is an integral component of our life and the progress of civilisation. In the process here, lot of issues of nationalism, racism and sovereign issue making simple movement as a very complex endeavour. He has also mentioned how the international community takes obligation and responsibility. Very nicely he reminded what is happening in some parts of the world right now. Today he also reminded us that on 19th September there will be case in the UN and countries have to fight for a different world, which is much more sensitive, and little more sympathetic towards people who are on the move. At the end, Mr Haque acknowledged that Bangladesh as a chair of GFMD has developed a concept paper under guidance of Sir Peter Sutherland.

Keynote Speech

Sir Peter Sutherland

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG)
for International Migration

Sir Peter Sutherland thanked Mr M Shahidul Haque for the generous introduction and expressed his deepest gratitude for giving him the opportunity for addressing the audience. He expressed his joy for visiting to Bangladesh. Above all, he thanked Bangladesh for its international role in taking over the leadership of the global forum and the time of considerable effort to arrange this event.

He expressed his gratitude to be announced as Special Representative of the Secretary General at this time. He shared his experience when he became the Director General of GATT in the very early 90s, following the collapse of the iron curtain, it was obvious that the world entering into a precious moment in the history of global economics and the integration called globalisation. The creation of the WTO was a moment which created an infrastructure which enabled the integration for example China was able to enter into the global trading system. Over time, Russia
recovered from what it was behind the iron curtain. He recalled the demonstration against globalisation that time. He recalled the event when Kofi Anan, as Secretary General, contacted him in 2005 to share the thoughts on that European’s involvement in the commercial aspects of the integration – movement of services, goods and people across borders. Mr. Kofi Anan was concerned about the movement of people. This is the missing part of the process of institutionalisation of globalisation. And that sort of making this up now has a memory which is distorted. Sir Peter shared the time during the intervening period, there was a gradual unfolding of this issue driven by prospective of change and realities of change – some featured terrors like war, devastating situation. He mentioned that the world had many wars. It had many periods of refugee movement, many movements of migrants. In his country, there was terrible condition in the nineteen century. That situation resulted 40% of the United States’ population that got Irish blood. His country- the whole island has only five and half million – tiny in comparison to USA. Regarding this, he raised the question that has been urged about the lives in different ways in different parts of the universe. There was a ban issued by IOM which was to restrict the movement of people to West. He mentioned himself as a migrant. He lives and lived in various countries.

He mentioned that there is a problem over nationalism which is resulted in violence. And that problem was rooted not really in nationalism but in religion which became a tribal badge – two different signs of religion – Christianity which claims to advocate the dignity of person and the equality of man. But nationalism in his opinion is a contradiction of the principle of dignity of man and the equality of man. Over the century, nationalism became the part and parcel of life whether it is the football match or so. It becomes a part of human psyche. So he personally would like to see the end of nationalism. Today with the increase of information and the public display of huge disparities of wealth in the world which we live, people want to move. Transport and availability of transport have provided the means of movement. It exposes them to recruiters who make the route or to traffickers who misguide them. He quoted George Orwell’s note on Nationalism that nationalism can not only cause havoc between groups of people, but instigate the ignorance within such groups. Sectarianism and racism are aggravation and developed out of it. The world has to fight against these. What he expressed about nationalism he confirmed that this is his own fundamental belief.
He mentioned strongly that this year is a crucial year in the migration agenda. It is very much important for those who are trying to identify trends and construct new paths. Migration has got universal focus, largely because of various events took place in the past. But the focus has been largely on the rich part of the world such as in the Europe, North America etc. The reality says that a large number of people are moving between developing countries rather than between developing and developed. But the focus is still much on the movement from developing to developed countries. The issue of nationalism and developing integration by sharing sovereignty is become a crisis situation in the migration agenda. Now it risks as a result of migration crisis. So the opportunity is driven by the local political events. Thus the local politicians should focus constructively on migration issue. The humanitarian challenge in this regard is strictly important to take into consideration. This is a challenge to ensure the dignity and equality of a man.

Mr Sutherland pointed out that we are making progress gradually. Bangladesh has played an important role in this issue. Bangladesh has made an important role in the sustainable development agenda and in the inclusion of migration issue as an important goal to deal with in the development agenda. The overall activities of the member states are handful and these allow us to advance the progress in this particular issue. He hoped that the sustainable development goals agenda will not go into history. We have to put meat on the bones. We have to identify the challenges in terms of specific goals by the identification of those who deliver the goals and those who do not. Bangladesh, Sweden and Switzerland deserve particular gratitude for that particular development.

He further mentioned that we have an agenda and promises for not to leave migrants behind, including refugees and displaced person. Refugees are such a large proportion that displaced within countries. The agenda ratifies the benefits of what migration can bring. He showed an example from IMF which recently gave a report saying that Migration is everywhere adds to growth. It is positive as an economic force. It does not overall displaced jobs. It creates job and opportunities, it does not create unemployment. It creates employment. He mentioned about the last year’s Addis Ababa Action Agenda. He argued that people make promises but they sometimes fail to deliver. The commitment of that agenda is about recruitment. The culture of recruitment includes plenty of recruiters. It is a huge industry involves in
recruitment. There should be some commitments that the recruitment will be absolutely fair, honorable and in the interest of the migrants as well as the recruiters. There should be obligations in the countries of destination in the support of recruitments of the migrants. He also raised the issue of trafficking. Trafficking, in the migration process is a curse. Trafficking of women and children are so terrible to us all. It requires massive international effort, states recognition to stop trafficking. He also mentioned about the pension right of migrants. It is an important support for people who retire from their jobs. He argued about the issue of remittance from the migrants. He said that remittance is a vital element in the economic growth. Remittance is important for the countries like Bangladesh. Remittance which has the evidence in Bangladesh growth is surely a crucial element for development.

He focused on the issue of developing national policy on migration issue. There are minimal number of dialogues happened between countries on the migration issue. He showed that now there is the focus and series of international dialogues to address the issue. A series of international meetings will take place in the coming days to address the issue. These engagements will try to find out some sort of road or some sort of policies to culminate the challenges of migration. The failures of the past cannot be replicated and logical development should be managed to settle the challenges. He said that this time is crucial and Bangladesh is in the chair of the GFMD which is one of the achievements of multilateral initiative of the last ten years. He hoped that Bangladesh will lead the role of the least developed countries. During Bangladesh’s Chairmanship, it will give a leverage position to the LDCs which is very important. This is a moment in which Bangladesh is stepping up to the international forum as a leader. It is demonstrating its capability to take responsibilities. He also expressed his stand against violence. He mentioned the recent violence took place in Paris, in Colombo, in Beirut, in Istanbul – a massive violence which created and generated notion of xenophobia and racism. These are evidence where parties of the extreme are going powerful.

He also mentioned about the role of IOM – which is working with migration and refugees, which teaching that we must respond not by closing our doors but by stretching our arms. Another important issue is on
the situation of refugees. Under the convention of 1951, states should ratify the refugees. But it is seen that the recognitions are not given properly. It should be understood that some people are not escaping because of persecution but can also be fleeing because of more dangerous situation like environmental disaster. This is an important point to make. The focus on refugees is a vital element in the world which we live. It should not of the state. He focused on our obligations to migrants, who are vulnerable and are running from disaster, should be on center.

He focused on the time that has come to argue the case. There will be conferences and dialogues in the coming days for Syrians. Because Syrians ‘crisis has become a problem for Lebanon, Turkey and Georgia. He also warned that in these worst situations, traffickers become the winner and migrants become the looser. Thus, it is important to recognise who flee.

He also mentioned the need of expanding legal pathways to save migrants and encourage development. He hoped to the highest degree that Bangladesh during its Chairmanship, will initiate the discussion with the over-arching theme motivated by sustainable development agenda to incorporate and advance a range of migration specific issues, and ideas that have already been discussed in the previous GFMDs and in other global consultative process. He thanked and congratulated Bangladesh for taking the leadership and expressed his desire that Bangladesh will rightfully deal with this for factoring migration within wider implementations matrix of sustainable development.

Designated Discussion

Ms Eva Akerman Borje
The Seventh GFMD Chair, Sweden

At first she congratulated Bangladesh for taking the chair in GFMD and playing a very important role in Migration and development. Moreover she wished that Bangladesh will do an excellent job in future as chair and take the Global project forward in a flawless manner. She added that being the Chair of a Global forum needs a lot of hard work, dedication, enormous experiences, a lot of new knowledge and new friends from the world with great time and review.

She stated that Sweden has remained the main advocate of the Global forum of the Migration and development since its establishment in 2006. Sweden chaired the forum in 2013-2014 as seventh chairmanship. The both countries were strongly engaged in the progress. And it is great important that countries can hold open and constructed exchanged views on Global Migration agenda. The GFMD dialogue has resulted in greater trust between countries, destination class and origin. These needs to be continue for development as well. Sweden believes that this informal structure of Global forum is very important.
She noted that Sweden and Bangladesh have a trusted partnership with in the Global forum in many ways. The countries have achieved a lot together in the field. She mentioned that she is very proud that Sweden and Bangladesh were two of main advocates including Migration of 2030 UN Development Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). The countries together have created a framework that can achieve a landmark in Migration and Development. The country is going to deliver the commitment that it has made. She emphasized on learning appropriately about migrants, improve migrants working conditions, and facilitate orderly, safe, regular, legal and responsible migration. Then the development of migration will be stronger than ever before and will secure the global goal. She pointed out that the Swedish government is taking the responsibility very seriously of UN 2030 Agenda. The first importance goes on Labor Migration which offers a great opportunity for economic development, increment of knowledge and competences. Providing equal treatment to the migrants, fair privileges and payment needs to be paved.

Ms Akerman informed that Sweden intends to maintain its open labour migration system, the principles and norms. Secondly on migrant empowerment in a legal framework which will safeguard migration rights. She emphasized on protecting and safeguarding migrant opportunities, positive development outcomes. Moreover she pointed that wage gap needs to be reduced between migrants and the nationals. The recruitment process of the migrant workers needs to recheck with corrupt and unethical recruitment including expertise in the global area. She said that private and public partnership can play a tremendous role in this sector with financial help for development in international recruitment system. The IOM, a leading organisation working globally for the development of migrants, the recruitment agencies must give importance on rational recruitment and code of conduct given by IOM. She mentioned that the Swedish Prime minister intends to secure global view, promote labour and as well as social rights of the migrants. In this matter, the government of Bangladesh is with Swedish Government. To drive the initiative Sweden aims to promote and step up the global view for the migrants.

She added that the current migration flow is over discussed and reflection of global governance of migration including the multilateral depression between different relevant stakeholders. These things for example the UN system of the global migration approve the IOM in the global forum as well as other
partner of global civil society. She mentioned that Sweden welcomes Bangladesh as the chair of GFMD and further focused discussions on this topic. The migration related commitments in 2030 UN Agenda and the Addis Ababa Agreement reaches a collaboration between the multilateral actors in the beginning it clears that the global forum dialogues have resulted in creating trusts between countries and destination transits. She declares that Sweden believes the GFMD can play an important role on migration related substantial development goals and find ways to improve governance on international migration as well.

**Mr. John Bingham**  
**ICMC, Global Civil Society Coordinator**

Designated discussant Mr Bingham started his remarks by thanking Foreign Secretary Mr M Shahidul Haque, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Sir Peter Sutherland, Ambassador Eva Akraman Boje and Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad, Chairman of Board of Governors of BIJSS. He noted that he worked as an NGO practitioner on the ground with refugee, migrants and internally displaced people in several countries including Pakistan, Malaysia and Philippines and very actively engaged in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Greece on responding the situation of migrants and refugees. As part of his current work in Bangladesh, he mentioned that he has been conducting meeting with NGOs, and government. He described the year 2015 as an exciting and important year for international migration.

Mr Bingham praised the leadership of Bangladesh for its efforts in adopting the global sustainable development goals, as well as praised the leadership of Bangladesh on protection of migrant workers’ right with the ramification of the 1990 UN migrant workers’ convention and the involvement of the foreign secretary himself on the international UN committee that compliance with that convention. He overwhelmingly praised Bangladesh as it is successfully chairing the global forum this year.

The Global Civil Society Coordinator shed light on the activities of the global civil society and global forum. He noted the global forum is working extensively on protection of the rights of the migrants worldwide. The key player is the international steering committee which helps civil society organise itself globally. The international steering committee brings together 30 leaders and organisations; the networks of NGOs of trade unions, migrant Diaspora association, academics and the private sector to try and plan how civil societies is part of this problem. ICMC as a part of global forum has been working since the very beginning of the global initiative on the issue of migration.

He mentioned some of the importance of global forum. According to him, the global forum is important for bringing several changes in previous years. He expected that under the leadership of the Bangladeshi Chair, connectivity will be placed in central framing of the government agenda for its global forum. To that end, civil society have to be connected with each other first and then with governments and will connect migrants, refugees and other people on move. He reiterated that the global forum has to answer the questions regarding its successes and achievements. He mentioned few achievements of the global
He noted that the cost of transferring remittances globally before the global forum started about 7 to 9 years ago was about 12 to 15 percent on average now it stands about 7 percent on an average although in some places the amount is still high(10 to 12 percent). The global forum has talked about bringing those costs down from the beginning and became successful. However, he opined that still the global forum still needs to work on the issue. Another success of the global forum is responding to migrants trapped in countries in crisis. Bangladesh is also working cordially to do better for migrants trapped in countries and places. The issue comes largely out of the experience of Libya in 2011 when one million or more migrants were trapped in the conflict. By that time there were trapped thousands of Bangladeshi workers.

He noted in 2013, the UN General Assembly had its second high level dialogue on migration and development while migration has been happening since the beginning of the world and the UN has been working for 70 years but this is only the second time in 2013 a high level dialogue held on migration and development. He also noted the efforts of the special representative, global forum, leadership from governments like Bangladesh, international organisations and civil society resulted in inclusion of seven targets in the SDGs endorsed by 193 countries. One of them is goal 8 of target 8 which talks specifically about protecting the rights of migrant workers. Another one is goal 10 of target 7 which talks specifically about the orderly, safe and regular migration which was top priority to civil society. In the last Cop 21 Agreement on Climate Change and Environment for the first time ever an international agreement considered the issue of climate migration and climate migrants.

Mr. Bingham thinks that the year 2015 is also important for changing the mindset; the international community started recognising migration should be voluntary and protective as well as shift of mindset from economic development to human development is also significant. The year is also important that the civil society adopted its own agenda and started to work with various stakeholders. Civil society is working on inside and outside process. And the unified and connected civil society now broadly works from the similar mindset. In Bangladesh, many civil society organisations are working actively on the issue of migration. He ended by expressing the expectation that under the leadership of Bangladeshi Chair, the global forum will work with commitment and responsibility considering the principles of governance and connectivity as well.
Open Discussion

Questions and Comments

Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, opined that Sutherland very correctly raised the issue of xenophobia and extreme nationalism in response to some of the challenges that global community is currently facing on subject to migration and development. He noted that he had privilege of serving on two international commissions on migration and development, years back. He added that they were able to look at things rather differently because the climate was quite different. Then he raised the question: (i) how Bangladesh is now facing new challenges in this regard? (ii) How does it respond in particular to the challenges in Europe? (iii) What can be the role of global forum in responding to these challenges?

Ambassador Muhammad Zamir, former Chief Information Commissioner of Bangladesh, opined that in the context of migration, it is a fantastic observation of Sutherland that “don’t close the door, open your heart”. Later he noted that according to a media report, in Iraq, over the last ten months of last year, 3.2 million people have been made internally displaced and more than eighteen thousands have actually died because of violence. Then he asked the question: What about internal migration and resettlement? Whether the global forum redirecting its attention more carefully in this regard?

Ambassador M Afsarul Qader opined that the discussion is is going on about migration and development, development is related to globalisation. Globalisation is always there. Till recent age, it was politically accepted, but in recent times with the arrival of development, various known and unknown, visible and invisible variations coming on. In the light of fundamental change, in the components/elements of globalization, how developments can really help migration?

Mr Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Executive Director of Coastal Association for Social Transformation (COAST) Trust commented that the people of Bangladesh are at high risk of Climate change. In next hundred years there will be many climate related problems. He wanted to know that whether there is a need of a new protocol for safeguarding the people considering the situation of Bangladesh.
Ms Benuka Ferdousi, Research Fellow, BIJS wanted to know that how does migration create employment in a destination country, based on the comment of Sir Peter Sutherland that that ‘Migration does not create unemployment, it creates employment’.

Mr A Q M Mahbub, Professor, Department of Geography & Environment, University of Dhaka, raised a question that how development of the climate refugees could be possible.

Three questions are raised in this section by Mr Kazi Anwarul Masud, Former Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh and Ambassador; Mr Mathais Maurice Keller, Third Secretary, Political affairs and press, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dhaka and Ms Jasiya Khatoon, Director of WAREB.

• The first question was asked about the possibility for developing countries to resolve the ISIS related migrant crisis.
• There are 244 million migrants will put together three populous countries even the political development against the migrants of developing countries. A question was asked that whether it is possible to focus on the diversity and integration in the destination country.
• Another question was raised about UN conventions’ subjectivity to debate in some cases of migrant related issues.

Response by Sir Peter Sutherland

While answering the question on European refugee problem, Sir Peter Sutherland opined the problem is overwhelmingly a European problem and the countries of Europe need to resolve the problem. Being a believer of European integration he noted a common European policy regard to migration based upon a liberal interpretation rather than a nationalist one, can only be brought together by a common European policy. Cooperative Europe is necessary to resolve the problem. Although United States, Canada and Brazil already opened their borders, more openness is necessary. European countries need to act together. Some countries like Sweden and Germany are doing well in this regard.

About internal displacement he mentioned that Internally Displaced is a huge problem in international migration issue. He noted although his role and focus is related to international aspects of migration, he recognised some of the examples and exercises of global forum can be applied to internally displaced people. He noted that the internally displaced people also deserve proper attention.
Regarding the issue of globalisation he noted there are inter-linkages between development and globalisation. He also noted that cooperation among the countries or multilateral system instead of bilateral initiatives will foster trade liberalisation. He opined as globalisation is beneficial, countries should not oppose it.

Mr Sutherland noted today there are many countries who are increasingly engaged in the issue of migration. The members of the Security Council need to play an important role on this issue. The US for example is playing a very active role and is extending support to the refugees. Other countries like Russia or China also need to take constructive role to protect the refugees. Bangladesh can take initiative to convince China about the issue as the country has good relations with China.

Responding the question of climate migration Climate change is a big issue and the countries need to address the issue. He recognizes that refugees as defined need to be protected. Although the definition of refugee limits the scope only to the persecuted people, equal treatment is necessary for the people who are escaping from environment challenges. According to him, the only way of dealing with this is first of all open up a discussion on the other. It is also the moral responsibility of the countries to protect those people. He also opined that the countries also need to pay more attention to the vulnerable migrants.

Answering the question how migration fosters economic growth, Mr. Sutherland noted migrants add a dynamism to the society and foster economic growth of the host country. The population growth is also a part of the development paradigm. Some European countries are facing demographic problem which is creating brain drain. And it is proved without immigrants it is not possible to create a multicultural society. For these reasons, international migration is important.

Answering the question on the integration of migrants in the host country, Sir Peter Sutherland noted the problem of the countries of destination is that there has been an inadequacy of policy development in internal politics-internal integration process that is necessary to avoid crisis. The result is in some communities and this is also the responsibility of the migrants-categorisation, the creation of distinct
Answering another question he noted conventions can become subject to debate in some cases. However, it is important to adopt important conventions which are related to protection of the peoples like women and domestic workers. Domestic workers and women are abused therefore adoption of conventions related to them is important. Act of inclusion in every society is important to stop the attack against humanity. However the migrants also need to evaluate the values of host country.

Concluding Remarks

Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad
Chairman, Board of Governors, BIISS

Ambassador Ahmad stated that Migration is a natural human activity almost as old as human history. It has always played a very important role in production and development. However, the link between migration and development separately from other discourses has outlined recently. One of the reasons is the various negatives linked with migration like socio-economic imbalance and instabilities, crime, law and order and environmental issues as well as trafficking and illegal immigration issues becoming more prominent, giving rise to questions of governance. He noted that people are moving at a large numbers across borders in search of security and better life; these vulnerable people are being exploited in various ways; some of these people on the move, in their vulnerability and uncertainty, giving rise to various other socio economic and legal challenges. All these are happening in Africa, Middle East and Europe as well as in South and South East Asia with innumerable stories of sufferings and tragedies unfolding.

He elaborated that the Foreign Secretary Mr M Shahidul Haque, Ambassador Eva Akerman Borje and Mr John Bingham have ably complemented the SRSG in focusing on the rights of the migrants both in the country of origin and the country of destination. They also emphasised the need to have an appropriate governance regime to ensure the rights of the migrants on the one hand and the need for orderly and properly recorded movement, sheltering, rehabilitation and resettlement as well as the process of smooth integration in the destination country, causing least disturbance to the host society, its socio-economic stability, law and order and environment, on the other hand. He pointed out that Bangladesh is the current chair of GFMD intends to steer the migration and development debate around three basic aspects of Economics, Sociology and Governance of Migration and Development. Particularly, in recent years the GFMD and countries like Bangladesh have worked hard and have succeeded in including and mainstreaming the issues of migration and development into various national and international policy discourses and documents like the...
universal and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) as well as national five year and perspective plans.

He said that he is not an expert on the issue. But as a citizen of a country and at the same times a source country as well as a destination country of large number of migrants, he is deeply concerned about various aspects of migration and development. For this regard he highlighted few points:

- Migration is a natural phenomenon, as old as human civilization.
- Migration has always been closely connected with production and development and will continue to do so.
- Apart from the countries of origin and destination often countries of transit get involved as well in the process.
- More often than not the destination countries benefit more from migration. Therefore, they should bear greater responsibility in ensuring the rights of the migrants.
- Including and mainstreaming migration and development issues into various national and international policy documents and discourses is not enough. The issue deserves special and separate attention from all concerned.
- Serious efforts should therefore be made to put in place appropriate migrant friendly universal international norms and procedures for governing migration and development.
- It is time to universally accept migration as a fundamental human right. In other words, the right to migration should be seen in the same level as rights to life, property and abode. Any attempt to curb people’s right to choose where they want to live and work is thus a violation of a fundamental human right.
- Governance in the context of migration and development should, thus, focus mainly on facilitating migration and lifting barriers, while putting in place arrangements and procedures to ensure that migration is orderly and well documented.