

International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) 2021

*“The Road to COP 26: Accelerating action to address migration and displacement in the context of climate and environmental change”*

Statement by

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Mr. Antonio Vitorino, Director General of IOM  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentleman,

A very good morning to you all.

I thank the IOM for organising the session of the “International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)-2021” to discuss the emerging nexus between migration, environment and climate change at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented socio-economic crises across the world.

Excellencies,

Climate change is a major contributor to environmental degradation, affecting global food, energy, health and economic security. Moreover, these phenomena directly or indirectly jeopardise the lives and livelihood specially of climate vulnerable communities causing widespread displacement and migration, within countries and across borders.

According to the report of Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 17.2 million people were displaced as a result of climate-related disasters in 2018, and 9.3 million of them, which is more than half, were from the Asia-Pacific region.

Distinguished guests,

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and ranked seventh on the 2020 Global Climate Risk Index. Due to its unique geographic location, every year, Bangladesh experiences extreme weather events that result in loss of lives, lands, homes and livelihoods and eventually forced displacement of people across the country causing slums in cities and towns. Sea level rise, increasing salinity and river erosion force people in Bangladesh to become climate migrants inside the country. The 42 million people living in 19 coastal districts of Bangladesh are under severe threat for climate change. One-fifth of Bangladesh could be inundated by a one-meter rise in sea level. We are forced to create shelters and housing for our climate migrants although these people are being uprooted from their sweet homes due to global erratic climate changes.

Moreover, the 1.1 million forcefully displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar had sheltered in the environmentally important Cox's Bazar District that has caused a significant impact on the ecology of the country.

Excellencies,

Despite these constraints, Bangladesh has emerged as a global leader in climate change adaptation. Bangladesh is spending nearly 5 billion dollars each year for adaptation and mitigation. We have set up nearly 14,500 cyclone shelters. We are the first LDC to set up the Climate Change Trust Fund from our own resources. As of now, 415 million dollars have been disbursed from the Fund to support more than 800 adaptation and resilience building related projects. The regional office of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) for South Asia has also been established in Dhaka, Bangladesh to promote and disseminate the collective regional efforts for accelerating locally based climate adaptation mechanisms.

Bangladesh is the current Chair of the 48-Member Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). Since Bangladesh has taken over the Presidency of CVF, it has been raising the issue of displacement of climate vulnerable communities which is a form of 'loss and damage' in different regional and international forums. Bangladesh believes that the international community should commence discussion on the creation of an appropriate framework to address the needs of climate migrants.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need to remember that there is a limit of adaptive capacities, in particular by the vulnerable countries. Mass displacement due to climate change has severe impacts on the vulnerable communities. Moreover, climate financing remains severely under resourced. In such a scenario, I would like to flag the following suggestions:

First, there is no alternative of taking immediate mitigation efforts to reduce emission of Green House Gases by the major emitters, and they must aggressively meet their NDCs;

Second, Bangladesh is of the view that climate change and related disasters is a development and economic issue and must be addressed in the context of international development cooperation;

Third, major economies, especially G7, G20 and other major economies need to come forward to provide adequate resources and technology support to the most vulnerable countries to address the climate challenges. At least they should come up with the 100 billion dollars as promised in Paris Agreement;

Fourth, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework must be implemented in their true spirit;

Fifth, as we are approaching the COP 26, we need to create momentum to accelerate action plan to address migration and displacement in the context of climate change and environmental degradation;

Sixth, Bangladesh needs to raise and broaden its embankments in the Southern districts in order to improve both mitigation and adaptation measures. In addition, it must protect and preserve its mangrove forest Sundarbans, a global carbon sink for the benefit of the world. Therefore, it needs additional funds.

Finally, Bangladesh strongly supports strict adherence to UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). As a GCM Champion country, Bangladesh emphasises on the importance of international support for climate migrants.

I thank you all.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu

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