



BANGLADESH MIGRATION CRISIS OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK



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MESSAGE

Though migration has been an integral component of the history of human development, the twenty-first century, in particular, has witnessed an era of unprecedented human mobility. Different resources and different opportunities are spread unevenly all over the world. To optimize the use of resources and the process of production in different parts of the world, migration is the only method available. Now there are growing recognition and understanding of migration and mobility (both internal and international) as drivers of economic development. However, various challenges like poverty, conflicts, disasters and environmental degradation often lead to a disproportionate effect on migration and affect its scope for positive impact on development.

Due to large volumes of Bangladeshis present in various parts of the world, they often are severely affected by incidents of natural and human-made crisis. Often at times, such situations make them highly vulnerable to various types of abuses, exploitation and subject to violation of human rights. In the past, the country has extended intensive efforts to respond to crisis during Libyan civil war, the war in the Syrian Arab Republic and Andaman and Bay of Bengal migration crisis. Emergency repatriation due to COVID-19 is another big example.

Given the past and present trends of conflict and probability of environmental degradations, a predictable and comprehensive framework for stakeholders was long overdue to better respond to the vulnerable migrants. With this aim in view, the migration crisis operational framework has been developed for Bangladesh encompassing comprehensive preparedness plans and response to address the challenges at all possible stages of crisis regarding migrants.

We appreciate the role of IOM in initiating the development of the *Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework* and the country-specific response plans. The framework will be instrumental in contributing towards national plans and international frameworks like the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to effectively respond to the varied situations that migrants often find themselves in.

We reiterate the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh to help and assist migrants for crisis preparedness, emergency response, and during the post-crisis phases.

Md. Nazrul Islam
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FOREWORD

In today's increasingly interconnected world, more people are on the move than ever before in history. The number of international migrants in 2019 is estimated to be almost 272 million globally, with nearly two thirds being labour migrants. However, the scale and pace of international migration is difficult to predict with precision because it is closely connected to acute events (such as severe instability, crisis or conflict), as well as long-term trends (such as demographic change, economic development and communications technology advances).

Often times, people who have moved from their countries of origin find themselves caught in a crisis that threatens their security and survival. While crises affect both nationals and non-nationals, the ability of migrants to cope with its consequences are often hindered due to conditions of vulnerabilities associated with migrants' legal, economic and social status, as well as practical challenges, such as linguistic differences, geographic displacement and even cultural context. In terms of crisis, migrants often have limited access to timely information, services, resources and protection measures.

Addressing the needs of migrants affected by crisis has become a priority of policy forums at both global and regional levels. Recent initiatives and policy processes include regional dialogues on migration in Africa, the Americas, and Central and South-East Asia; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030; the Paris Agreement; and the World Humanitarian Summit. The situation of migrants in crisis contexts is also acknowledged in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, where it is highlighted as an essential element for the achievement of objective 2 on minimizing the drivers of forced migration, and objective 7 on reducing migrants' vulnerability.

Given the reiterations of the need to address the challenges linked to migration crisis, the Government of Bangladesh, with support from IOM Bangladesh, has initiated the preparation of a national crisis operational framework and country-specific response plans. The national framework and plans consider global tools such as Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) and the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC) Initiative. The Bangladesh crisis framework provides a practical, operational and institution-wide tool to improve and systematize the way to better prepare for and respond to migration crises.

We are very pleased to have supported the Government of Bangladesh for the first-ever comprehensive crisis preparedness and response framework. We are particularly grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for providing their valuable guidance through the development process of the framework. We also appreciate the financial support from the European Union for supporting the development of the Bangladesh MCOF. In addition, we thank those who have already participated in various consultations to provide inputs to the development process.

As the Coordinator of the Bangladesh UN Network on Migration, IOM reiterates our support to continue to effectively coordinate, plan and prepare to save the lives and protect dignity of migrants in crisis.



Giorgi Gigauri
Chief of Mission
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BLA	bilateral labour agreement
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CBO	community-based organization
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
CMT	Crisis Management and Security Committee (Philippines)
CSO	civil society organization
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
ECA	Environment Conservation Act
EWOEP	Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy
FGD	focus group discussion
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HLD	High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development
IAMM	International Agenda for Migration Management
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
I-HDI	Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	key informant interview
MCOF	Migration Crisis Operational Framework
MCOFP	Migration Crisis Operational Framework Pillar
MICIC	Migration in Countries in Crisis
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment

MoU	memorandum of understanding
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
NDMC	National Disaster Management Council
NHRC	Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
OEMA	Overseas Employment and Migrants Act
OSP	Organizational Support Plan
PAM	Public Authority of Manpower (Kuwait)
PKB	Probashi Kallyan Bank
PWD	person with disability
RASCI	responsible, accountable, support, consulted, informed
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOD	Standing Orders on Disaster
ToR	terms of reference
UNCC	United Nations Compensation Commission
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WARBE	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants
WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework was prepared through a consultative process. The process began with collecting data in Bangladesh through key informant interviews (KIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The KIs were mainly held with key stakeholders in government ministries and agencies in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Kuwait. These key stakeholders were selected because they are involved in the process of migration through policy formulation, administrative facilitation, such as securing jobs and travel and providing assistance in countries of destination and upon return to Bangladesh. The discussions were also held with development partners, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and research agencies involved to varying extent in the migration of Bangladesh nationals in the three countries. The FGDs were held with Bangladesh nationals in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Kuwait. The FGDs were conducted in Bengali and recorded then later transcribed from audio files and analysed. These consultative discussions together with secondary data analysis and review of relevant literature including IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF) and Migration in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) guidelines and manuals yielded invaluable insights that are summarized below and elaborated in greater detail in the full report.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

The existing pieces of legislation that are relevant for the migration framework are the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 and the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (EWOEP), which provide for the protection

of the rights and safety of the migrants in countries of destination. Future enactment of specific policy or legislation exclusively aimed at international migration assistance to Bangladesh nationals when crises or emergencies affect them may help further strengthen the mechanisms for providing assistance to them. Bangladesh also ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 2011. It has also taken steps towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.7 whose goal is to facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration through updates on policies and laws, such as EWOEP and partnering with development partners and United Nations agencies such as IOM to implement country-level Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF).

The terms under which Bangladesh nationals migrate for work is stipulated in various memoranda of understanding and bilateral labour agreements signed with receiving countries. These instruments set out the pricing for workers under various skill levels and the broad conditions of admission and terminations of employment. Because they are mainly directed at labour migrants, other migrants such as persons in transit or who hold study permits are not covered. They also do not stipulate responsibilities for parties when crises occur that affect the migrants. Bangladesh is also an active participant in various regional consultative processes, including the Colombo Process. Bangladesh chaired the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2016 and played a key role in the Global Compact for Migration and the New York Declaration. It is an active member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and has signed SAARC's Comprehensive

Framework on Disaster Management that includes risk reduction strategies and the establishment of regional and national response mechanisms.

Bangladesh has ratified the SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disaster, which has provisions for seeking regional assistance under its Article VIII, which makes provision for a member State to request assistance from any other member State directly under intimation to or through the Secretary General of SAARC. Bangladesh is also an active participant in the International Agenda for Migration Management, which is a reference system and non-binding policy framework whose aim is to facilitate cooperation between States to adopt an orderly and humane planning and management of the movement of people. Bangladesh also participated in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015–2030 (Sendai Framework) through frequent reporting on its readiness for responding to disasters.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION CRISES RISKS

Experience from previous crises in countries where Bangladesh nationals were affected have also provided some useful lessons and pointed to areas that need further strengthening. Key informants and Bangladesh nationals who had returned following the Iraq war, Libya war and the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea crises reflected on the assistance provided to them jointly by Bangladesh missions and international partners, such as IOM and International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC) during the consultative discussions with them.

Exposure to higher levels of vulnerability to disasters begins from the stage of recruitment for overseas opportunities when most fall victim to distorted information about jobs and rewards from migration and are defrauded or get into debt in order to finance their journey. The debt is often financed by middlepersons and brokers who inflate the fees and in some cases issue fraudulent visas. Some of the victims were held hostage for months on trawlers by cruel smugglers who then asked for ransom money from their relatives back in Bangladesh in order to secure their safe passage to their intended destination. As was the case in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea

crisis, their handlers abandoned them in the high seas, and they were rescued and placed in detention in Thailand and Malaysia.

The Libya returnees told of finding that the jobs they had been promised did not exist when they arrived in Libya. At the outbreak of the war, they had to find their way to the nearest IOM and ICRC camps for safety, often risking lives having to pay high amounts for transport and abandoning their belongings. Thanks to the cooperation between the Government of Bangladesh, IOM and the World Bank, their safe return was facilitated, and they were provided with temporary shelter, food, health services and transport back to Bangladesh where upon arrival they were also provided with resettlement assistance. A similar effort, albeit without the World Bank's funding, had also been carried out during the Iraq war crisis.

These incidents pointed to the need to improve awareness-raising and education about the risks from crises that may occur in transit and at destination countries. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring that visa fraud is eliminated. The role of Bangladesh missions abroad in ensuring that Bangladesh nationals are assisted requires that regularly updated crisis response plans are prepared and crucial preparedness and evacuation information are shared with them. Bangladesh nationals abroad in turn need to be encouraged to organize their leadership structures that would help in providing timely assistance during crisis. Culturally sensitive assistance and psychosocial support for returnees is important in addition to material assistance during evacuation and upon resettlement.

PROPOSED BANGLADESH MIGRATION CRISIS OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

A robust Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework anchored on key pillars is proposed in this report. Elements in the pillars can be added or removed in response to changes in migration trends and patterns and emerging trends in crises in countries where Bangladesh nationals transit, visit, study, work or live. The first pillar is the foundational policy and legislative statutes that govern international migration of Bangladesh nationals and the required



assistance to them when countries of their transit or destination experience crises. The current laws, policies, international cooperation agreements and processes summarized above provide an essential basis on which to build administrative competencies and capacity within the different government agencies in offering required assistance to Bangladesh nationals abroad when crises occur. That means translating policy and legal requirements into concrete strategic plans that provide detailed priorities and activities for different role players involved in assisting Bangladesh nationals abroad when crises occur.

These national-level policies, laws and strategic plans should then provide guidance to all the agencies involved in preparing their plans on how to respond when migrants abroad are caught up in countries in crisis as the second pillar in the framework. To ensure successful operations in response and assistance, proper coordination and cooperation between the actors in Bangladesh and in the affected countries, availability of enough personnel with the required training, and readiness in terms of supplies is the critical third pillar in the framework.

The fourth pillar is the actual assistance and evacuation during the crisis, which requires that the Bangladesh missions abroad put into motion their response plans by providing life-saving assistance to Bangladesh nationals and assisting those who choose to return to Bangladesh with required consular travel facilitation in cooperation with partners such as IOM. The fifth pillar takes two crucial interventions that take place in Bangladesh: (a) awareness-raising before departure to prepare nationals on the risks they face in transit and destination from crises; and (b) after their return, providing assistance to help them to resettle and rebuild their livelihoods. These pillars are then tied together by cross-cutting elements of inclusive implementation that takes the migrants as partners and adoption of good practices from around the world.

CONCLUSION

Migration of Bangladesh nationals to various destinations around the world is on the rise and will continue growing in the foreseeable future based on projected increase in working age population in Bangladesh and the country's stated strategic plans of increasing skills in order to meet demand for Bangladeshi workers. At the same time, increasing frequency and severity of natural and human-caused disasters in destination countries mean that more Bangladesh nationals at various destinations for work, study, tourism or in transit are likely to be affected.

Through active cooperation with development partners, IOM and other United Nations agencies, the Government of Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to assist its nationals when crises occur at their countries of transit and destination. This commitment is exemplified by its continued participation in regional and international disaster management initiatives including the Colombo Process, the Sendai Framework and the SAARC disaster response initiative. In addition, it has, in partnership with IOM, began implementing MiGOF at the national level and is ensuring – through the preparation of this framework – that it is committed to the implementation of MCOF and MICIC guidelines and recommendations.

The previous incidents when migrants from Bangladesh were affected by crises abroad (summarized above) demonstrated how an approach that involves the Bangladesh missions abroad in cooperation with international partners and agencies in the affected country can help to save lives and properties of Bangladeshis. Areas of improvement include the following: (a) ensure that proper awareness-raising is provided to migrants before departure; (b) consular crisis response plans are prepared and regularly updated; (c) the migrants are encouraged to organize themselves in structures that will enable quick assistance; (d) assistance is provided faster in recognition of varying levels of vulnerability among those affected; and (e) return and resettlement assistance is strengthened further in Bangladesh. The elimination of visa fraud and reduction of high costs of migration are also key in reducing levels of

vulnerability among migrants from Bangladesh who fall into irregular status while trying to earn enough to pay off debts incurred during the migration process.

The lead agencies involved in responding should be coordinated through a re-established central committee dedicated to dealing with coordinating assistance to Bangladesh nationals caught up in

countries experiencing crisis from natural or human-caused disasters. Coordination for the different response activities under the proposed Migration Crisis Response Framework pillars should be done through leadership of key ministries based on their statutory mandates and competencies in order to encourage smooth response and avoid negative competition.



1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Bangladesh Crisis Operational Framework's aim is to strengthen mechanisms for assisting nationals affected by crisis abroad. It will be complemented by five country migration crisis response plans for countries in regions that host the largest number of migrants from Bangladesh. These tools will provide overall guidance for relevant ministries and partner agencies on how to improve the protection of migrants from Bangladesh when the countries in which they live, work, study, transit or travel experience a conflict or natural disaster. The latter plans will focus on two leading regions where migrants from Bangladesh are hosted and five countries in those regions with the highest numbers of migrants. The two regions were selected on the basis of the number of migrants from Bangladesh residing there in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh include the Middle East and South-East Asia.

The Government of Bangladesh is aware of the heightened vulnerability to natural and human-made disasters that Bangladesh migrants are exposed to while in transit and in various destination countries. Recent examples of incidents where Bangladesh migrants were rescued following crises include the crises in Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea in 2015, during the Iraq war in 1991 and during the Libya crisis in 2012 to 2014. These incidents demonstrated the need to strengthen mechanisms for providing adequate emergency assistance, protection and quick post-emergency support for Bangladesh migrants when crises occur in countries where they

transit, work, study, live or visit. With the objective of strengthening the mechanisms for assisting its nationals when countries in which they are experience disasters, the Government of Bangladesh initiated the preparation of the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework and five country migration emergency response plans for countries in regions with the highest numbers of migrants from Bangladesh.

This initiative led by the Government of Bangladesh is being implemented by IOM with funding from the European Union under an initiative titled “Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance” (Prottasha) project. Prottasha seeks to contribute to the sustainable reintegration of returnees and the progressive achievement of SDG 10.7¹ to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed policies. The framework will also help Bangladesh in its efforts to achieve the targets set in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015–2030 (Sendai Framework). The Sendai Framework has seven targets and four priorities for action. Its main aim is specified in the main outcome that it seeks to achieve, which is “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries” (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, n.d.).

¹ Underpins the need to define at country level index for measuring progress in overall migration governance and also specific aspects included of orderliness, safety, levels to which migration and mobility is regular and responsible, and progress and success in implementation.

An initiative from which the Bangladesh Crisis Operational Framework will draw heavily on is the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), which is a practical, operational and institution-wide tool to improve and systematize IOM's supports to its Member States and partners in order to better prepare for and respond to migration crises. Another IOM initiative that will be referenced is the nationals affected by crises abroad (Migration in Countries in Crisis (MICIC)) project initiative and its Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster (MICIC Guidelines), which provided a blueprint set of guidelines and principles on managing and responding to crises in order to account for migrants' specific conditions and needs. The MICIC initiative was carried out between 2014 and 2016 as a State-led initiative consultative process, whose aim was to improve the protection of migrants when the countries in which they transit, live, work, study or travel experience a conflict, or other human-made or natural disaster. The initiative came to an end in June 2016 with the publication of the guidelines, but ever since, IOM – together with both governmental and non-governmental counterparts – has been engaged in implementing the guidelines' recommendations through projects in over 50 countries around the world. The Government of Bangladesh – with technical assistance from IOM – seeks to take the guidance and best practices proposed in these initiatives and apply them to the Bangladesh national context. This is intended to lead to strengthened capacity for assisting Bangladesh migrants caught in crisis that will be operationalized through the resulting Bangladesh Crisis Operational Framework and five regional crisis response plans.

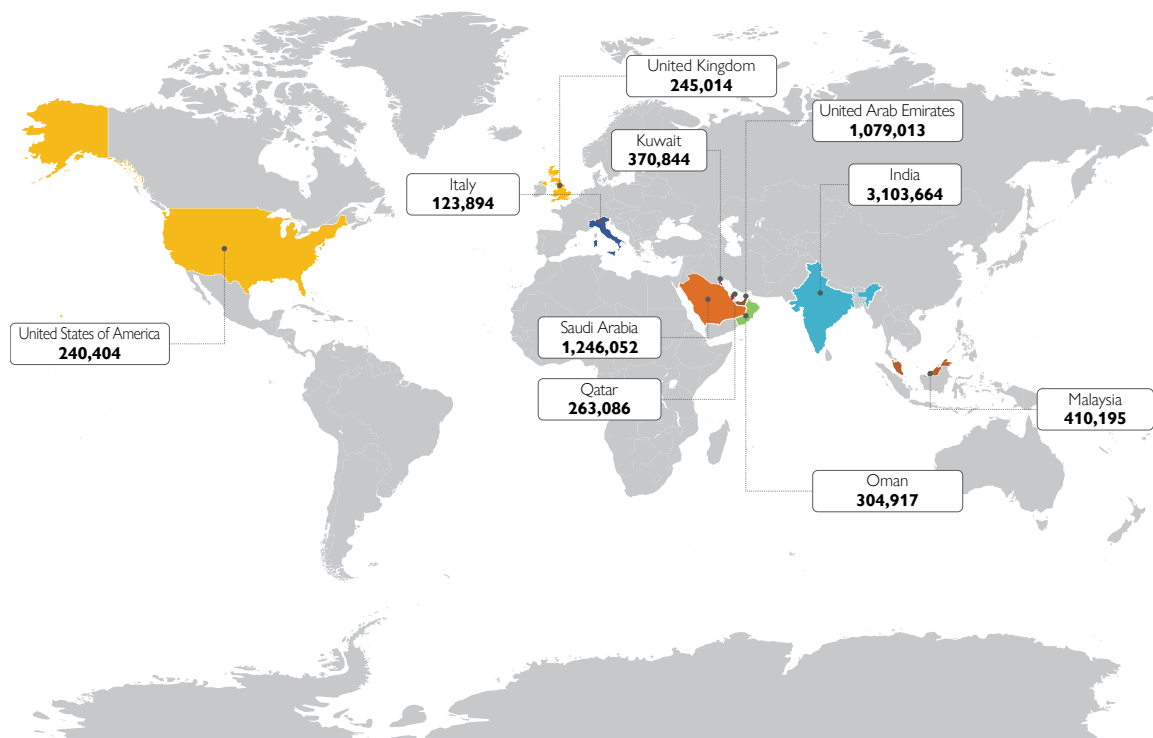
The definition of crises covers all major emergencies in countries where Bangladesh migrants work, stay or may be passing through. The crises include disasters caused by natural hazards, such as earthquakes,

hurricanes and floods, and technological accidents, such as nuclear failures, chemical contamination, biological agents' contamination, epidemics and others. They also include emergencies that are human caused, such as generalized violence, civil unrest, outright civil war, international armed conflict and terrorist attacks. Some of the disasters often do not occur in isolation but lead to occurrence of other disasters related to them such as flooding resulting from hurricanes or epidemic outbreak resulting from flooding.

In its 2019 revision of the international migration stock, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA, 2019a) data show the number of migrants from Bangladesh residing² in various destination countries to be 7,835,152. This data shows that the combined migrants in the 10 leading destination countries for migrants from Bangladesh account for 94.32 per cent of the close to 8 million migrants from Bangladesh with the leading destination being India with 39.61 per cent of the total migrants. This is followed closely by destinations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Saudi Arabia (15.9%) and United Arab Emirates (13.77%). Outside of Asia and the Middle East, other destinations for migrants from Bangladesh are the United Kingdom (3.13%), United States of America (3.07%) and Italy (1.58%). The numbers of migrants represented in these percentages are shown in Figure 1. These dominant destinations all pose the potential for large numbers of migrants from Bangladesh to face varying forms of crises. These destinations also demonstrate that migration from Bangladesh is largely to four main regions of the world namely Asia, the Gulf States, Europe and North America. Labour migration is the dominant reason for migrants from Bangladesh to move, as demonstrated by the large numbers destined to the GCC countries.

² This refers to “stock” of migrants that would include all categories.

Figure 1. Number of migrants from Bangladesh in 10 leading destinations, 2019



Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: Map was created using <https://yourfreetemplates.com/>. This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

With such large numbers of migrants in various destinations, Bangladesh is likely to have a large number of migrants caught in crises and would therefore benefit from well-elaborated response and assistance framework. Migrants from Bangladesh were recorded in 76 countries around the world according to the United Nation's 2019 revision of international migration stock (UN DESA, 2019a). Migrants from Bangladesh have been destined to countries such as Libya before the civil war broke out in 2011, Iraq and other fragile countries in the Middle East. The data from Figure 1 shows that most of the migrants from Bangladesh are in Gulf States and are also increasingly travelling to European destinations mainly the United Kingdom and Italy. The onset of crises in destinations, such as civil wars, human-made and natural disasters, epidemics, terrorist attacks, human-caused disasters, accidents, economic crises and crackdown on immigrants as recently experienced by Bangladesh migrants in

Saudi Arabia can be quite rapid. Irregular migrants from Bangladesh arriving in Italy are also imperiled by dangerous sea crossing at the hands of smugglers, and both regular and irregular migrants who transit through countries such as Turkey and Libya also face potential crises in those countries. Often, countries through which migrants from Bangladesh transit are also at high risk of crises mostly from conflict especially in the GCC countries and North Africa. Situations of conflict also lead to other hazards, such as kidnapping, trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

The compelling economic circumstances leading to high migration from Bangladesh are likely to endure for the foreseeable future even as the country endeavours to achieve economic progress. As the World Bank (2018) notes, there are five countries in the world where half of the people living in extreme poverty can be found. Bangladesh is one of those five countries. The other countries are India, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia

and Nigeria. The high levels of inequality is another underlying factor that compels migration. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2018) in its human development country statistical update for Bangladesh noted that the encouraging improvement on the Human Development Index (HDI) for the country over the years decreases sharply when inequality is factored in its calculation. For the year 2017, the HDI for Bangladesh was estimated to be 0.608, placing the country in the medium human development category and positioned at 136 out of 189 countries. That index drops to 0.462 when Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index is calculated (I-HDI). Against this context, the reality of continued migration of Bangladesh people to countries where they hope to find employment and other opportunities is guaranteed. When combined with the increasing frequency of crises in such countries of transit and destination, it heightens the need for a national crisis operational framework that puts in place mechanisms for assisting Bangladesh nationals who find themselves in countries experiencing crises. As the economy of Bangladesh has continued to grow, and at a time when the world has become increasing “small” due to globalization, many of its citizens have also travelled overseas to study, for tourism, for business, or as expats, and others have claimed refugee and asylum status in various countries. Thus, although labour migrants are the dominant group, there are other Bangladesh nationals who are also exposed to hazards in foreign destinations with the latter category of migrants more likely to seek protection in times of civil unrest that may lead to persecution of non-indigenous groups.

This framework document is structured as follows:

- Detailed background and introduction section;
- Brief description of the purpose of the framework;
- Description of the methodology followed in collecting the data, conducting stakeholder consultations and in analysing all the information used in preparing the framework.

The main section of the framework document lays out the findings. This section is divided into seven main parts including the following:

- Analysis of the main stakeholders involved in responding to assist Bangladesh nationals affected by crises abroad;
- Analysis of the key legislation applicable;
- Review of sources of funding;
- Analysis of gaps in existing forms of assistance offered to Bangladesh nationals caught in crises abroad;
- Discussion on some of the recent crises that have affected migrants from Bangladesh in selected destination countries;
- Proposed Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework in details;
- Key recommendations and conclusions drawn from the analysis.

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The framework provides a documented body of knowledge and set of processes that represent generally agreed-upon practices in the management of assistance and response activities to assist migrants from Bangladesh when they are caught up in countries in crisis. It is focused on the delivery of critical life-saving and protection assistance to Bangladesh citizens in countries where they are in transit, where they live, work or study away from Bangladesh. The target users for this framework include managers in responsible government ministries, Bangladesh officials in destination countries and statutory agencies responsible for assisting migrants in crisis. The framework provides “how to” guidelines for delivering assistance to migrants in crisis assistance delivery and aims to enhance the capacity of responsible officials involved in the assistance process, as well as encourage a uniform and coordinated approach to providing assistance to migrants caught up in countries in crisis. The framework is anchored on national applicable legislative requirements that all ministries involved in assisting migrants ought to comply with. Because it was developed through a consultative and data-gathering approach, which included discussions

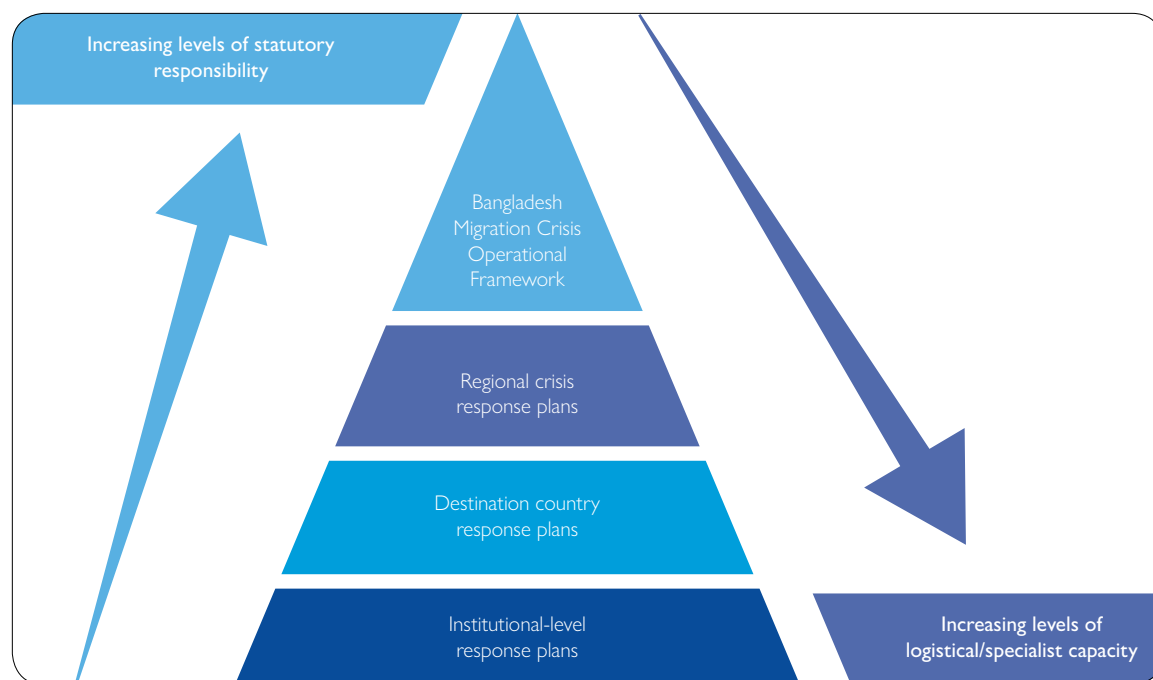
with affected migrants, stakeholders and visits to selected destination countries, it is an evidence-based framework.

The framework and the five country crisis response plans will also be useful tools in identifying areas where international partners, donors, host countries, transit countries and other stakeholders, including migrants themselves, will be involved in guaranteeing its effective implementation. It will therefore also provide a basis for engagement with partners and stakeholders on issues, such as funding for its implementation, capacity strengthening support, partnerships along the migration stages with different institutions according to their mandate and capacity, and focused migrant-centred interventions.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the framework will be an essential tool in clarifying roles of different institutions involved in the process of delivering assistance to nationals affected by crises abroad. Figure 2 shows the expected levels of responsibility at one end vested in ministries and their statutory agencies and the level

of operational and logistical competence expected in institutions that provide direct emergency assistance at the other end. The government ministries, national emergency planning and security institutions all have mandates to draft and implement policies and laws governing how emergency assistance is provided. At the regional level, the provision of emergency response measures is governed through regional agreements and consultative processes. At the national level in destination countries, the assistance provided to Bangladesh nationals would be governed through bilateral agreements and host nation countries' national emergency response mechanisms. At the institutional level, the legal foundation behind specific institutions that define their mandate, together with tools, such as IOM's MCOF, MICIC and national or subnational response plans for consulates help to frame how emergency assistance is provided to Bangladesh nationals in various host countries. Table 4 then summarizes the overall roles and responsibilities of the main government ministries that will lead the implementation of the framework.

Figure 2. Levels of responsibilities from national to institutional level of implementation



Source: Author's illustration.

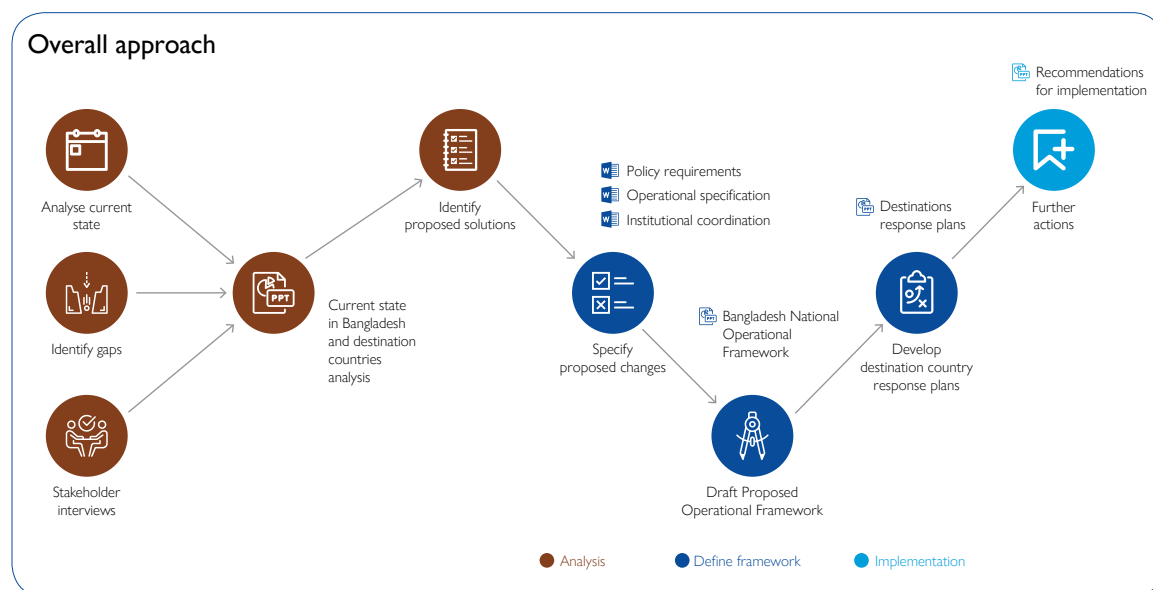
1.2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This section will summarize the overall approach in preparing this report and the methods used to gather data and information regarding migrants from Bangladesh who may be caught in countries affected by crisis while in transit and or in countries of destination. Figure 3 illustrates the steps that were taken in the process of preparing the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework. The initial steps included analysis of current state and practices around assisting Bangladesh migrants who are caught up in countries facing crisis. This was undertaken through several activities. One of the activities was the desktop review of key documents and data sets.

The available secondary data and other literature on migration in Bangladesh is reviewed mainly in the contextual analysis section. Another activity involved collecting information through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group

discussions (FGDs) with migrants in Malaysia and Kuwait. Through this approach to the gathering of information, the key stakeholders in Bangladesh and a section of migrants were consulted. These consultations and interviews led to identification of gaps in existing migration crisis response abroad and description of the current state of practice in assisting migrants from Bangladesh who are caught up in countries in crisis. Based on this analysis and in conjunction with findings from the assessments done in Bangladesh and in Malaysia and Kuwait, proposed changes were drafted reflecting policy recommendation, operational recommendations, institutional coordination mechanisms and proposed actual emergency response approaches. This was captured in a first draft of the operational framework document and the selected five destination countries' response plans. Figure 3 illustrates this journey that has culminated in this document and the set of recommendations for its implementation below.

Figure 3. Overall approach for preparing the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework



Source: Author's illustration.

The first draft operational framework documented was reviewed by IOM and key stakeholders in Bangladesh. A validation workshop was then held in Dhaka where the key stakeholders provided inputs to the first

draft. A final revision of this framework document was then done, reflecting the inputs provided by the stakeholders at the validation workshop and further editorial changes recommended by IOM.



2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1. OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION TRENDS IN BANGLADESH AND RECENT CRISES

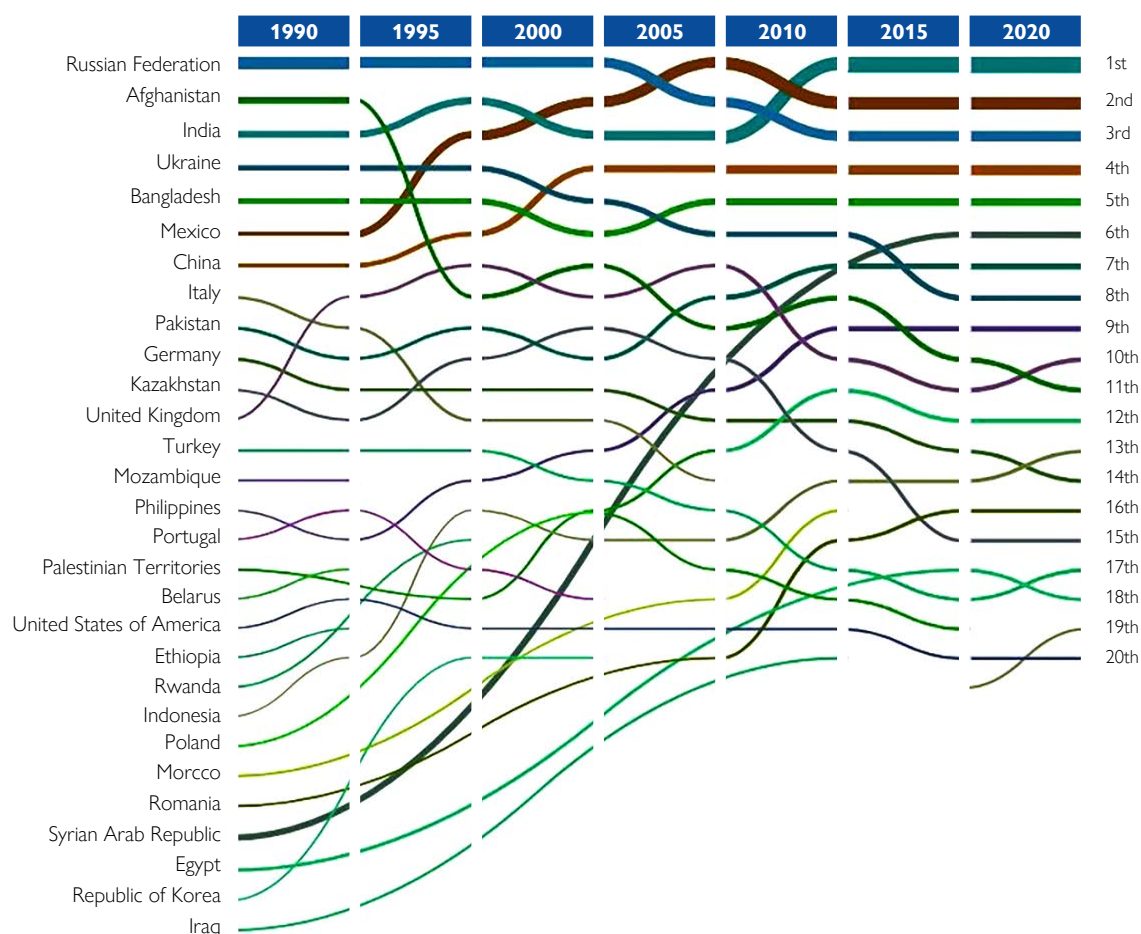
There are distinct geopolitical, demographic, economic and sociocultural circumstances in which migration from Bangladesh to leading destination countries occur. Below is a review of these circumstances and some of the drivers of migration relating to the main areas of origin, as well as the main types of crises that the migrants from Bangladesh face in transit and at the various countries where they transit, visit, work or study. The specific vulnerabilities from risks and hazards confronting migrants during their migration process are highlighted.

The current high economic growth rates being experienced in Bangladesh are anchored on the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010–2021) that is rolled out through the implementation of two successive five-year plans for the periods 2011–2015 (the sixth five-year plan) and 2016–2020 (the seventh five-year plan). During this period covered by both the sixth and seventh five-year plans, Bangladesh has experienced impressive progress that has culminated in the country graduating to the status of a lower middle-income country. Over the same period, remittances flow has risen, peaking at 15 billion US dollars (USD) in 2016, which demonstrates the vital role that migration of workers from Bangladesh is playing in its economic transformation.

As early as the 1920s and 1930s, the Sylheti who were landless peasants in Bangladesh are said to have become the pioneers of migration from Bangladesh (Ministry of Finance (MoF), 2018). They are said to have sailed on British merchant ships and settled in various destinations around the world. Since then, migration from Bangladesh has taken on a more organized form and began to increase rapidly from 1976. The creation of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in 1976, with a part of its mandate being to facilitate the export of manpower, marked the start of rapid rise in the number of migrant workers from Bangladesh leaving for employment mainly in the Middle East (Ali et al., 1981:i).

As Figure 4 shows for the period 1990–2017, between 1990 and 2017, Bangladesh was the fifth leading country of origin for migrants worldwide. Over the same period, only two other countries, Mexico (which rose from sixth to second place) and China (which rose from seventh to fourth place), had risen past Bangladesh as leading countries of origin for migrants between 1990 and 2017. The trends in Figure 4 also reveal a dichotomy in the underlying causes of migration at countries of origin as either rapid population growth and other socioeconomic factors on one hand (as is the case with these three leading sending countries) and conflict or instability (as the other cause in countries such as Pakistan, which experienced both rapid growth and instability, Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq) on the other hand.

Figure 4. Top 20 leading countries of migrants' origin in the world, 1990–2017



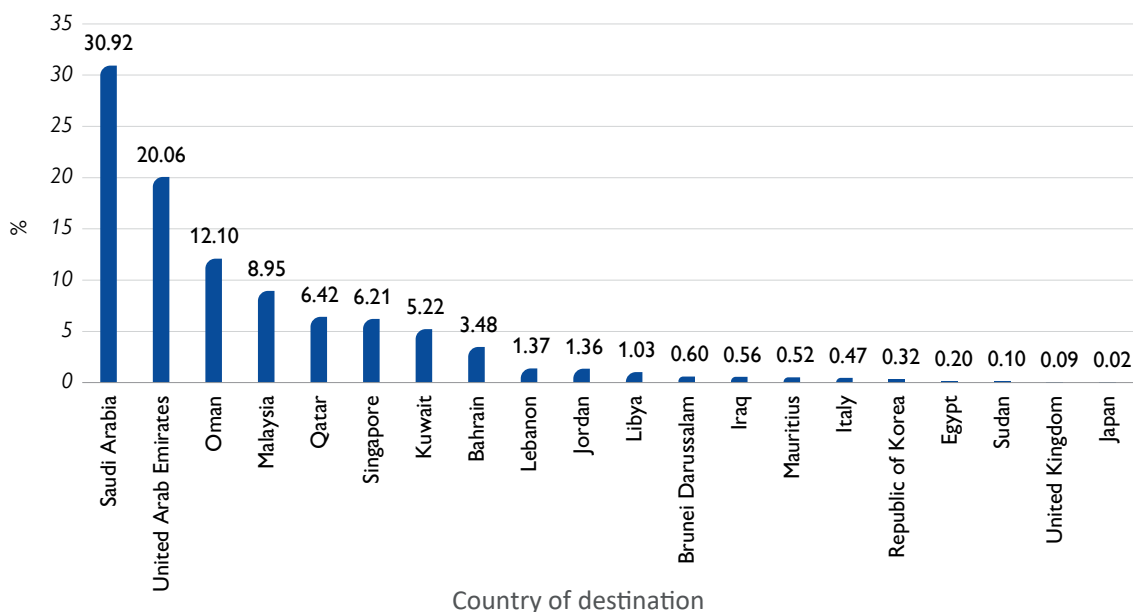
Source: UN DESA, 2019b.

Estimates from BMET put the number of migrants from Bangladesh who have held employment³ in various destination countries to be 11,806,084 between 1976 and 2018 as reflected in their online statistical reports (BMET, n.d). Figure 5 shows the 20 leading destinations where the migrant workers were employed during that period (numbers and percentages provided). As shown in Figure 5, the leading country of destination for the migrant workers was Saudi Arabia accounting for 30.92 per cent of the workers, followed by United Arab Emirates with 20.06 per cent of the total migrant workers. This

is followed by Oman (12.10%), Malaysia (8.95%), Qatar (6.42%), Singapore (6.21%), Kuwait (5.22%), Bahrain (3.48%), Lebanon (1.37%) and Jordan (1.36%) to make up the 10 leading destinations for migrant workers from Bangladesh. These dominant destinations all pose the potential for large numbers of migrants from Bangladesh to face varying forms of crises caused by natural disasters or human actions. These destinations also demonstrate that migration of workers from Bangladesh is largely directed to the two regions: the GCC States and South-East Asian countries.

³ This refers to cumulative “stock” of migrants, which would exclude undocumented and other categories of migrants not recorded by BMET. Since the figures are historical, they do not represent the numbers of Bangladeshis working in those countries at present, as some workers returned to Bangladesh for various reasons such as expiry of employment contracts between 1976 and 2018.

Figure 5. Top 20 leading countries of destination for migrants from Bangladesh, 1976–2018



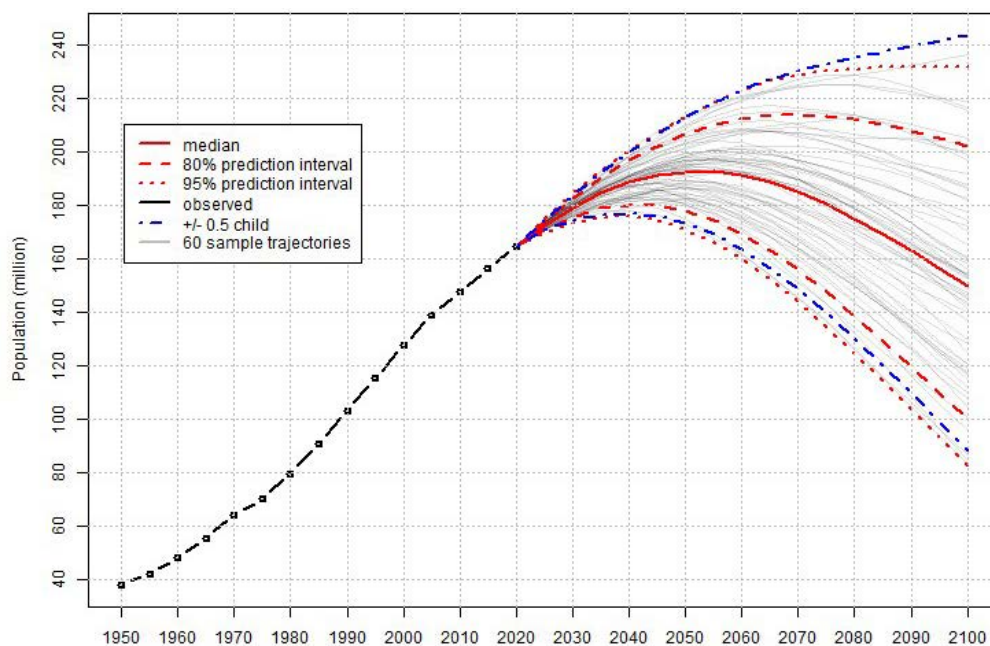
Source: BMET, n.d. (The current BMET statistical server is down due to COVID-19 situation.)

Bangladesh's rapid economic progress highlighted in the seventh five-year plan has however not translated into higher labour force absorption rates in Bangladesh, nor led to a rise in wages. In reality, the low wages have made the country become increasingly attractive to manufacturers and other investors lured by the relative cheaper cost of production. Figures from the 2019 revision of the United Nations World Population Prospects show some of the underlying demographic indicators that may help to understand further the observed migration trends. As of 1 August 2019, the estimated population of Bangladesh by the United Nations World Population Prospects was 167,302,974 million (UN DESA, 2019b). These population estimates show the births per day to exceed 7,000, while the deaths per day are just above 2,000. This leads to a net growth of the population in excess of 5,000 per day. The net migration is also high, with the estimated number of

migrants per day exceeding those who move into the country by over 1,000 persons.

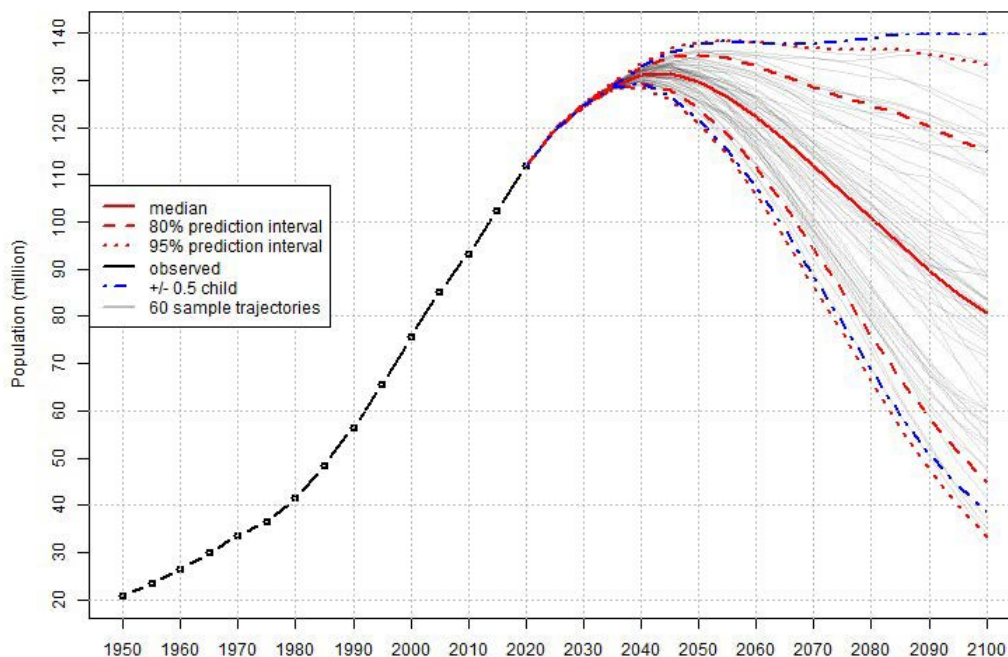
The probabilistic projections resulting from these population dynamics are shown in Figures 6 and 7. With a median age of the population at 27.5 in 2019, the population in Bangladesh is young. The projections for the population aged between 15 and 65 (shown in Figure 7) compared with those of the total population (shown in Figure 6) display a stark demonstration of the clearly continuing growth of the economically active population in Bangladesh. Figure 7 shows a much steeper increase in the population for the 15–65 age group between 1990 and 2020. This increase in the economically active population and the huge wage gap between Bangladesh as a country of origin and the countries of destination, which also have a high demand for workers, make migration hugely attractive (Hossain and Bayes, 2018:183–184).

Figure 6. Bangladesh's projected growth: Total population



Source: UN DESA, 2019b.

Figure 7. Bangladesh's projected growth: 15 to 64 age groups

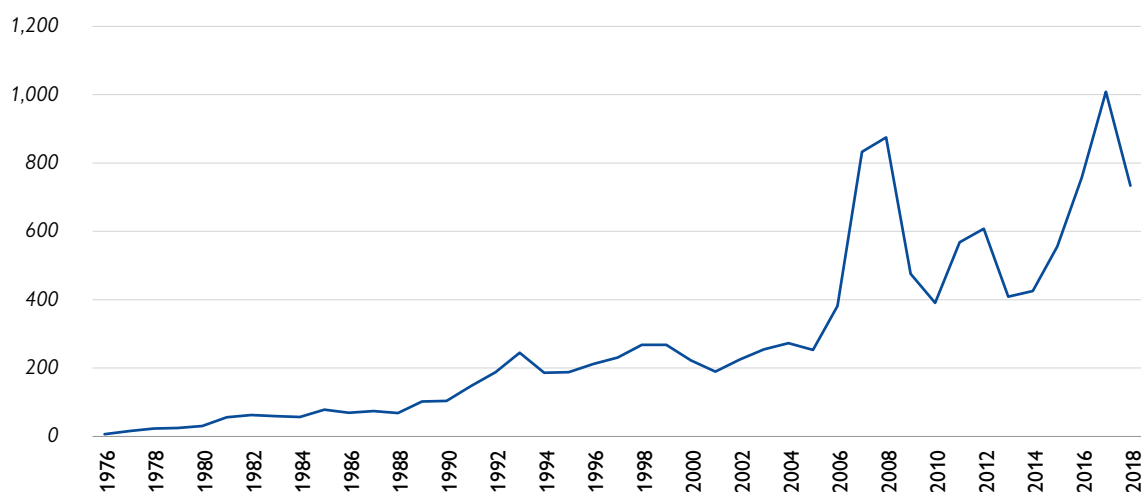


Source: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/Probabilistic/POP/15-64/50>.

Compounding the economic dilemma presented by the high rate of natural increase in the general and economically active population is the shortage of available viable livelihood options to millions of people both in rural and urban areas. With one of the highest population densities in the world, facing frequent natural disasters and having few options

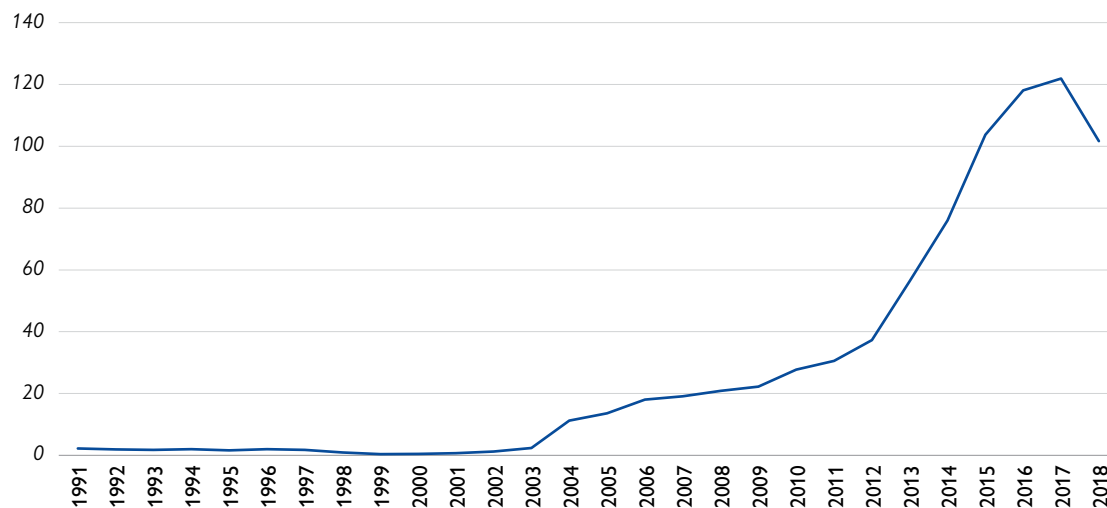
for employment, many people in the economically active age group in Bangladesh opt to migrate, most often to urban areas, and some to international destinations. Data from BMET (see Figures 8 and 9) shows steep increases in the number of migrant workers destined for various countries from 1976 to 2017.

Figure 8. Number of workers from Bangladesh in overseas employment (in thousands of workers), 1976–2018



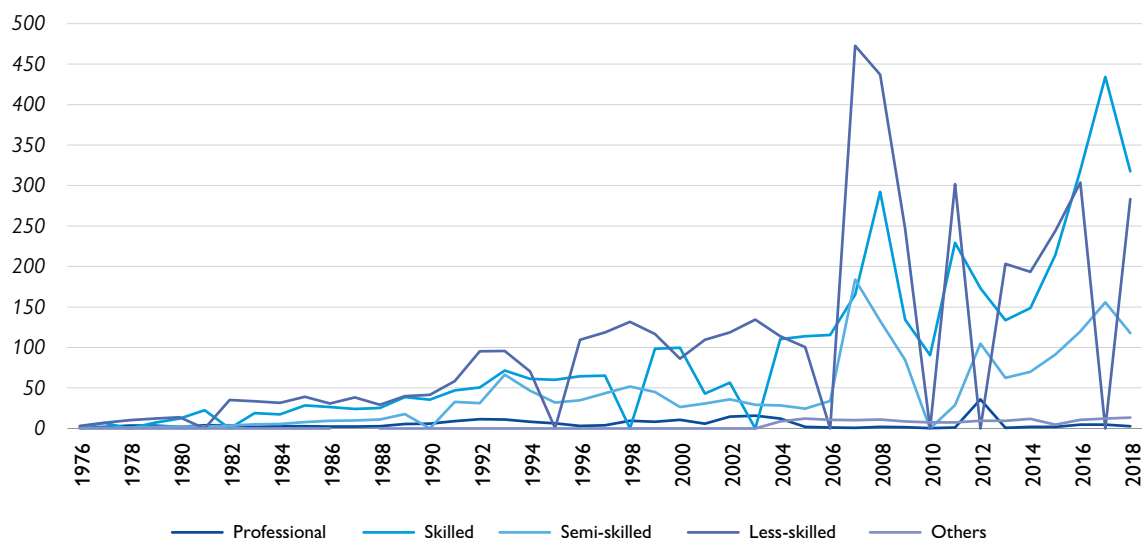
Source: BMET, n.d.

Figure 9. Number of female workers from Bangladesh in overseas employment (in thousands of workers), 1991–2017



Source: BMET, n.d.

Figure 10. Category-wise overseas employment of migrant workers (in thousands of workers), 1976–2018

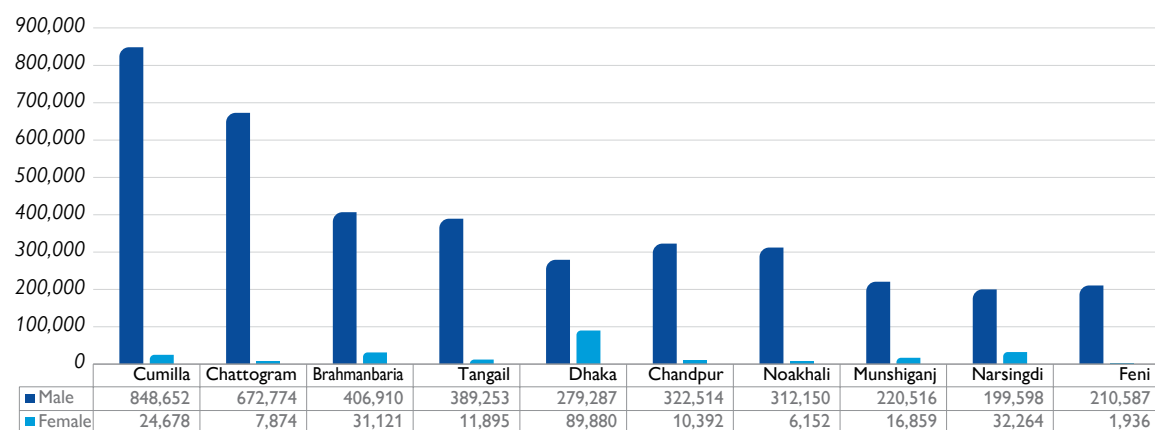


Source: BMET, n.d.

Data from BMET (2019) (Figure 11) shows the 10 leading districts where migrants from Bangladesh (disaggregated by gender) originated by gender for the period between 2005 and 2018. The figure shows that most of the migrants are male. The leading district of origin for all migrants is Cumilla, while the leading district of origin for female migrants is Dhaka. Other districts sending large numbers of female migrants are Brahmanbaria and Narsingdi. An International Labour

Organization (ILO) survey of returning migrants to Bangladesh conducted from November 2013 to February 2014 (Ahmed et al., 2015) showed the leading divisions where migrants from Bangladesh originated. These were led by Chittagong (accounting for 42.17% of all migrants surveyed), Dhaka (35.17%), Khulna (7.67%), Sylhet (5.25%), Barisal (5.17%), Rajshahi (3.25%) and Rangpur (1.33%).

Figure 11. Male and female migrants by 10 leading districts of origin, 2005–2018



Source: BMET, n.d.

The 2011 Libya civil war resulted in large numbers of Bangladesh migrant workers together with other nationalities fleeing to the Tunisian and Egyptian borders. There were an estimated 63,000 Bangladeshis in Libya at the time the civil war started, mainly unskilled and semi-skilled workers (World Bank, 2013). The World Bank provided funding to IOM to help repatriate 36,713 migrants, which was paid to them by Bangladesh authorities, and IOM was reimbursed for 13,484 of these.

From May 2015 to June 2016, IOM worked with the Government of Bangladesh to assist in the safe return of Bangladesh migrants stranded in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand. The incident, referred to as the “Andaman and Bay of Bengal Seas crisis”, saw thousands of migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar abandoned by their smugglers with the ships adrift in the waters of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. The crisis was precipitated by the disruption of the smuggling activities by Thailand authorities following the discovery of shallow graves near Thailand’s border with Malaysia. Due to the intervention by Thailand authorities, the smugglers abandoned ships and left the migrants adrift (IOM, 2017a). As a consequence, IOM and the Government of Bangladesh facilitated the safe and voluntary return of 2,813 survivors, which included 183 children that needed assistance for safe and voluntary return.

The countries where migrants from Bangladesh transit through or travel for work, study and visit are prone to various types of risks from natural and human-caused disasters. Table 1 shows the rating of risks from these disasters as prepared by the Index for Risk Management (INFORM). INFORM is an initiative of collaborative efforts of the European Commission and the United Nation’s Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness. A lower value on the INFORM

index or closer to “0” represents a lower risk and a higher value or closer to “10” represents a higher risk. The results shown in Table 1 list earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, tropical cyclones and droughts as the main natural disasters facing migrants in the 10 leading countries of destination for migrants from Bangladesh. They also show risks of disasters from projected conflicts and current highly violent conflict intensity with an indication of overall risk from human-caused disasters. They also show the overall INFORM risk for each country from these combined factors and ranks 191 countries for which data is available. The rating for Bangladesh is included for comparison with the 10 leading destination countries.

The risks rating in Table 1 show that migrants from Bangladesh face high risks from earthquakes in all the 10 leading countries of destination except Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Kingdom. The highest earthquake risk is in the United Arab Emirates where the earthquake risk is slightly higher than in the origin country of Bangladesh, followed by India and the United States. The risk for the migrants from floods is highest in India, Malaysia and the United States. Tsunami risk that the migrants face is highest in Oman, followed by India, the United States, Italy, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates. The risks from tropical cyclones are highest for the migrants in the United States and India, while the risk from drought is high in India and Oman. The overall risk from natural disasters that confronts migrants from Bangladesh in the 10 leading destination countries is highest in India, United States, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, while that from human-caused disasters is highest in India and the United States. The risk index also provides overall ranking for the 191 countries that places Bangladesh high on the risk ranking at position 21. The other countries that are ranked high are India (32), the United States (98), Malaysia (107) and Saudi Arabia (117).

Table 1. INFORM ranking of risks in 10 leading countries of destination for migrants from Bangladesh

Country	Number of Bangladesh migrants, 2019	Earthquake	Flood	Tsunami	Tropical cyclone	Drought	Natural	Projected conflict risk	Current highly violent conflict intensity	Human	Hazard and exposure	INFORM risk	Risk class	Rank
(a–z)		(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(0–10)	(Very low – Very high)	(1–191)
Bangladesh	N/A	8.7	10.0	8.2	6.9	5.0	8.2	9.8	0.0	6.9	7.6	6	High	21
India	3 103 664	7.9	8.4	8.1	7.2	6.1	7.6	9.5	7.0	7.0	7.3	5.4	High	32
Italy	123 894	6.1	5.4	7.4	0.0	2.8	4.8	0.7	0.0	0.5	2.9	2.5	Low	133
Kuwait	370 844	5.6	1.3	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.3	0.6	0.0	0.4	1.4	2	Low	149
Malaysia	410 195	4.1	6.6	7.1	2.9	3.3	5.1	3.3	0.0	2.3	3.8	3.3	Low	107
Oman	304 917	6.2	3.7	9.2	3.2	5.0	6.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	3.6	2.7	Low	127
Qatar	263 086	1.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	3.1	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.7	1.2	Very low	181
Saudi Arabia	1 246 052	2.8	3.7	0.0	0.0	4.1	2.3	6.5	0.0	4.6	3.5	2.9	Low	117
United Arab Emirates	1 079 013	9.0	3.8	7.0	1.8	4.1	5.8	0.1	0.0	0.1	3.5	1.9	Very low	152
United Kingdom	245 014	0.1	4.8	4.9	0.0	0.5	2.4	2.0	0.0	1.4	1.9	1.8	Very low	160
United States	240 404	7.9	6.4	7.9	7.6	4.5	7.0	9.7	0.0	6.8	6.9	3.5	Medium	98

Source: INFORM, n.d. INFORM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness and the European Commission. The European Commission Joint Research Centre is the technical lead of INFORM.



3. FINDINGS

3.1. MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN BANGLADESH MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE

In order to proactively identify all the stakeholders that should be involved in the consultative data collection process, a preliminary stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify all key stakeholders that would be involved during the development and implementation of the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework. As shown below, many of these stakeholders were consulted during the data-gathering process using KIIs and FGDs. The FGDs were done with returned migrants, many of whom had been rescued from the Andaman Sea and the Libya crises. Therefore, the stakeholder analysis conducted here is based on consultations with key informants in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Malaysia. Also, the method used here is based on the researcher's assessment of the relative importance and influence of the identified stakeholders during the data-gathering exercise and through review of relevant literature.

The stakeholders of the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework and five regional crisis response plans are defined as “any individual, group or organization with an interest in the outcome of the process of preparing the framework and regional crisis response plans, either:

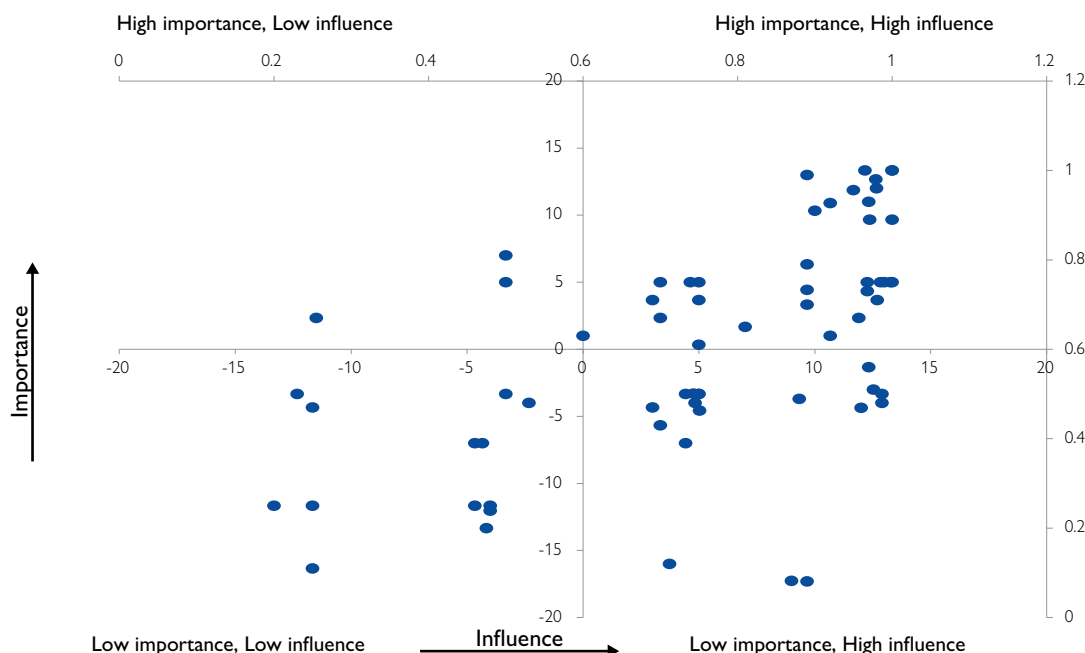
- as a result of being affected by it, positively/negatively
- or by being able to influence the framework and or regional response plans in a positive or negative way”.

The stakeholders are categorized as follows:

- Key stakeholders are those who significantly influence or are important to the success of any of the framework and/or regional crisis response plans preparation activities;
- Primary stakeholders are those who are ultimately affected, either as beneficiaries (+) or non-beneficiaries (-) in the process of preparing the framework and/or regional crisis response plans;
- Secondary stakeholders are all the others with a stake, interest or intermediary role in the process of preparing the framework and/or regional crisis response plans.

The Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework primary stakeholders are listed in Table 2. Their high level of importance and influence in the crisis response management activities from before, during and after stages led to their inclusion on the list based on a scoring that assessed these measures for each one of them. This exercise may be further refined prior to the implementation of the framework to ensure enhanced inclusion of all stakeholders. The primary stakeholders on the scatterplot displayed in Figure 12 are the ones on the upper right-hand quadrant, which is composed of stakeholders with high importance and high influence in the migration crisis response activities.

Figure 12. Importance/Influence matrix – Bangladesh Crisis Response Framework and five regional crisis response plans



Source: Author's illustration.

Among the key stakeholders are MoF, BMET,⁴ the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA),⁵ Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE),⁶ Labour Welfare Wings in various Bangladesh missions abroad, Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL),⁷ Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB)⁸ and Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (which is under the WEWB), Expatriates' Welfare Bank (Probashi Kalyan Bank (PKB)),⁹ Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) under which is the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC).

Leading ministries in migration crisis response would clearly be MoFA, MoEWOE and MoHA. MoEWOE has several agencies that work closely with MoFA through consulates in assisting Bangladesh migrants in crises. Agencies through which it executes the function of assisting migrants are BMET, BOESL, WEWB, PKB and Labour Welfare Wings in Bangladesh consular missions. MoLE has a key role as it is the managing authority of the Government of Bangladesh staff, and MoF, as it is the authority in budgetary allocation; both are relevant in terms of financial and human resources for migration crisis response. NHRC is also a crucial stakeholder as an independent statutory body with authority to inquire into human rights violations suffered by

⁴ BMET was established in 1976.

⁵ The leading Government of Bangladesh partner ministry for the preparation of this framework.

⁶ MoEWOE was established on 20 December 2001.

⁷ BOESL is a government-owned company established in 1984.

⁸ WEWB was established in 2002.

⁹ PKB was established in 2011.

any person, including Bangladesh nationals abroad. Although MoDMR has a domestic disaster response mandate, its agencies, particularly the NDMC, have specialized capacity and experience in disaster response that would be valuable in implementing and operationalizing this proposed framework. Other stakeholders include the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, which plays a role in resettlement and reintegration of migrant returnees, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), District Employment and Manpower Office (DEMO) and District Migrants Rights Network. Other stakeholders include civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and

middlepersons and the labour recruitment agencies through which they operate.

The stakeholders were first numbered on a general list attached in Annex 1. The list was then used to gauge the relative importance and influence of each stakeholder to the framework and regional crisis response plans. The Importance–Influence matrix was drawn up, and the numbered stakeholders were then allocated to quadrants that applied to them, as shown in Figure 12 – importance/influence matrix. This was then followed by the categorization of the stakeholders as “key”, “primary” or “secondary” to the framework and regional crisis response plans.

Table 2. Primary stakeholders identified in preliminary analysis

1	MoEWOE
2	MoF
3	MoDMR
4	MoFA
5	MoHA
6	MoLE
7	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
8	MoWCA
9	Bangladesh Bank
10	Bangladesh Civil Aviation Authority
11	NHRC
12	BOESL
13	BMET
14	DEMO
15	Labour Welfare Wings
16	The Expatriates' Welfare Bank – PKB
17	WEWB
18	ILO
19	IOM
20	UN-Women
21	Asylum seekers in destination countries
22	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA)
23	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
24	Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC)
25	CBOs
26	Delegation of the European Union

27	Destination countries
28	Diaspora organizations
29	Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
30	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
31	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC)
32	Japan International Cooperation Agency
33	Labour recruiting companies in destination
34	Migrants in transit
35	NGOs
36	Other irregular migrants
37	Public transport companies
38	Refugees in destination countries
39	Regular migrants
40	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
41	Transit countries
42	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
43	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants (WARBE)

Source: Researcher's analysis.

3.2. KEY LEGISLATION APPLICABLE TO MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH

Following Bangladesh's ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) in 2011, the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act of 2013 (OEMA 2013) was enacted. This was done through a consultative process and with technical assistance from ILO in accordance with Bangladesh's approach of ensuring that all international conventions and treaties that it ratifies are internalized through a legislative process of recognition, which guarantees that the whole instrument as having the effect of a domestic law (United Nations, 2016:8). The rights-based approach of ICRMW is reflected fully in the 2013 Act. These two legal instruments provide exhaustive provisions for the protection of Bangladesh migrants and workers both in Bangladesh and abroad.

In 2016, the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (EWOEP) replaced the Overseas Employment Policy of 2006. Drafted through

MoEWOE, the EWOEP is based on the following principles: "ensuring safe labour migration by upholding the fundamental human rights and human dignity of all migrant workers irrespective of sex, religion, race, caste as [a] Constitutional duty of the State; keeping conformity with gender-sensitiveness and national and international provisions on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women while taking policies and programmes; ensuring standard and decent work for all Bangladesh workers irrespective of sex, religion, race, caste; guarantying right to free choice of employment in country or abroad for all citizens; extending all support to protection of all workers by the State while abroad, and to protect their right to proper rehabilitation when they return home; solidarity to all international conventions and legal instruments ratified by Bangladesh on security, protection and human dignity of migrant workers; and ensuring welfare service and facilities to empower migrant workers and members of their families and to encourage participation in all stages of labour migration roundup" (MoEWOE, 2016).

As shown in Table 3, there are other pieces of legislation and rules governing international migration,

which include the following: (a) Overseas Employment and Migrant Rules 2017 (replacing Emigration Rules 2002); (b) Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act 2018; (c) Wage Earners' Welfare Fund Rules 2002; (d) Recruiting Agents' License and Conduct Rules 2002; and (e) Travel Agency Rules 2014. These rules regulate the management of migration, the welfare of migrant workers and the recruitment and registration of workers destined for overseas jobs.

Some of the other pieces of legislation that are directly relevant to international migration are the following: (a) Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012; (b) Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Rules 2017; (c) Money Laundering

Prevention Act 2012; (d) Bangladesh Labour Acts of 2006 and 2013; (e) Bangladesh OEMA 2013; and (f) Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015. In addition, the 2010 Bangladesh Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD), which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each government body engaged in disaster management, has a provision under Article 23(a)(b) for MoFA to submit request for international assistance to foreign governments/agencies as directed by the Government of Bangladesh and in coordination with Bangladesh's NDMC (International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), n.d.). This provision is silent on whether it can be used for disasters affecting Bangladesh migrants in foreign territories despite vesting the stipulated responsibility on MoFA.

Table 3. Existing policies/acts relating to overseas migration

Year published	Legislation/Policy
1982	Emigration Ordinance, 1982
2002	Emigration Rules 2002
2013	OEMA 2013
2002	Wage Earners' Welfare Board Rule 2002
2002	Recruiting Agents' License and Conduct Rules 2002
2010	Bangladesh SOD 2010
2014	Travel Agency Rules 2014
2015	Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015
2018	Wage Earners' Welfare Board Act 2018
2017	Overseas Employment and Expatriation Rules – 2017
2016	EWOEP 2016
2012	Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012

Source: Researcher's analysis.

In addition to these pieces of legislation that directly address various aspects of migration, there are other laws that have linkages and bearing on migration crises. These include the following: (a) Bangladesh National Environmental Policy; (b) Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009; (c) Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Development Program 2011–2016; (d) Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100; (e) National Forest Policy (1994); (f) National Fisheries Policy (1998); (g) National Policy for Safe Water and

Supply and Sanitation (1998); (h) New Agricultural Extension Policy (1995); (i) National Energy Policy (1995); (j) National Conservation Strategy; (k) National Environment Management Action Plan 1995; (l) Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995; (m) Bengal Vagrancy Act 1943; (n) Vagrant and Shelterless Persons (Rehabilitation) Act 2010; (o) Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance 1976 (targeting slum-dwellers) and other policies and plans, such as the Seventh Five-Year Plan and the

first Perspective Plan (2011–2021). The National Plan for Disaster Management 2015–2020 is also in progress of implementation following the preceding 2010–2015 plan. The Disaster Management Act 2012 provides a legal and institutional framework for disaster management, and the Disaster Management Policy 2015 provides strategic guidance for disaster management in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has also entered into various agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoU) with various governments regulating the employment of Bangladeshis in their countries. The complete list of these agreements and MoUs is provided in Annex 2. These are the instruments through which the intent of the OEM Act and the ICRMW are implemented regarding the rights of migrant workers when they explicitly call for the use of bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) and MoUs. To give effect to the implementation of these instruments in comprehensively protecting Bangladesh migrant workers, Bangladesh has been urging destination countries, especially in South-East Asia, to ratify the ICRMW and relevant ILO conventions. One of the biggest hurdles to the full protection of migrants from Bangladesh to the Gulf States is the fact that almost all of them have not ratified the ICRMW and other key ILO conventions.

3.3. PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Bangladesh plays active roles in regional and international initiatives that seek to enhance the management of migration. Bangladesh chaired the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2016 and played a key role in rallying the world towards the process that led first to the Global Compact for Migration process (which had emanated from 2016's United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA) summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants (GFMD, n.d.)) and New York Declaration, then to the development of the Global Compact for Migration, which includes addressing all aspects of migration including the humanitarian or crisis aspects. Thus, the GFMD, chaired by Bangladesh, played a catalytic role that led to the summit's New York Declaration, which proposed the plans to develop both the Global Compact for Migration and

the Global Compact on Refugees. Bangladesh has developed and is finalizing its country-level Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) as one of the IOM Member States that in 2015 endorsed IOM's MiGOF through Council Resolution 1310. MiGOF is the means through which IOM assists the government on appropriate policies and programmes towards achieving SDG 10.7 and its second principle states that good migration governance is based on effective responses to the mobility dimensions of crises (MiGOF is composed of three principles and three objectives).

Bangladesh also played a lead role in the formulation of the migration-related texts and targets incorporated in the document titled “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which was adopted by the Seventieth Session of UNGA in September 2015 (United Nations, n.d.) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The document's fourteenth point in the section with the heading “Our world today”, a description of the challenge posed by disasters and emergencies is captured succinctly thus: “Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades. Natural resource depletion and adverse impacts of environmental degradation, including desertification, drought, land degradation, freshwater scarcity and loss of biodiversity, add to and exacerbate the list of challenges which humanity faces.” (ibid.). The SDGs 8.8 and 10.7 in turn reflect the specific attention to ensuring that migration management contributes to the global objective of enhancing prosperity.

Bangladesh, along with several leading countries of origin of labour migrants in Asia, in 2003 called for the establishment of the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia, now known as the Colombo Process. Consisting of 12 member States and 8 observer States, the Colombo Process seeks to reap maximum benefits of labour migration for its members and at the same time ensure that migrants are protected from exploitative recruitment and employment practices. Since 2016, Colombo

Process workstreams have also covered specifically the protection of nationals abroad in the event of crises affecting their host countries.

Bangladesh is a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and signatory of SAARC's Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management, which includes risk reduction strategies and the establishment of regional and national response mechanisms. Bangladesh has ratified the SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disaster, which has provisions for seeking regional assistance under its Article VIII, under which a member State may request assistance from any other member State directly under intimation to or through the Secretary General of SAARC (IFRC, n.d.).

Bangladesh participated in and contributed to UNGA's High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) held in New York on 3 and 4 October 2013 (United Nations, 2016:16). At the gathering, Bangladesh was party to the declaration that called for the respect of human rights and international labour standards and also reiterated the commitment to fight human trafficking. One of the five priorities in the closing statement of the HLD was the need to develop plans to help migrants in crisis. This was also highlighted by the comments of then United Nations Secretary-General Ban-Ki-Moon, who stated in his opening remarks that "we need to address the plight of stranded migrants. Migrants are often caught in situations of conflict or natural disaster. My Special Representative, Peter Sutherland, who has championed this issue, has made a number of concrete recommendations for protecting migrants affected by such crises. I am pleased to note that the United States and the Philippines have offered to lead an initiative to create a framework that would articulate roles and responsibilities for all involved" (IOM, n.d.a).

Bangladesh participated in the Berne Initiative, which was a consultative process driven by States, towards achieving better management of migration at national, regional and international levels through improved cooperation of all States. With IOM as the Berne Initiative's secretariat, the process led to

the International Agenda for Migration Management (IAMM), which is a reference system and non-binding policy framework whose aim is to facilitate cooperation between States to adopt an orderly and humane planning and management of the movement of people (IOM, n.d.b).

Between 2014 and 2016, Bangladesh was actively engaged in the MICIC Initiative. Launched in May 2014 at GFMD in Stockholm and concluded in June 2016 with the release of its outcome document, the MICIC Initiative was a State-led process set up to improve the ability of States, the private sector, international organizations and civil society to prepare for and respond to the needs of migrants in countries experiencing conflicts or natural disasters, including by protecting their rights and dignity and alleviating suffering. Bangladesh participated in the initiative's working group, along with Australia, Ethiopia and Costa Rica and under the joint chairmanship by the United States and the Philippines (IOM, n.d.a).

Bangladesh has ratified or acceded to a number of international treaties aimed at protecting the human rights of workers, all which have a bearing on migrant workers' rights and migration crisis response. These are listed below of which several have direct implication on migrant workers' rights. In particular, several ILO conventions that IOM has ratified also are crucial in safeguarding the rights and safety of migrant workers and particularly related to recent incidents involving Bangladesh nationals trafficked or smuggled using trawlers to Malaysia, Thailand, Europe and Brazil on the way to North America through Mexico. These are the ILO conventions dealing with the Inspection of Emigrants Convention (No. 21, 1926), which Bangladesh acceded to in 1972, and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised) 2003 and the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, both of which Bangladesh ratified in 2014. Bangladesh has also ratified the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution 2002, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2003 (United Nations, 2016:17). Following is a list of the treaties and conventions dealing with migrants' rights that Bangladesh has ratified or acceded to.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (5 October 1998)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (6 September 2000)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 (6 November 1984)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1999 (6 September 2000)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984 (5 October 1998)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (3 August 1998)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (30 November 2007)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966 (CERD) (11 June 1979)
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953 (5 October 1998)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2000 (6 September 2000)

OEMA 2013 is itself in support of Bangladesh's approach of promoting labour export. However, there is recognition of the need to increase the percentage of skilled workers destined for overseas employment with the target set of reaching 50 per cent by 2030. To help achieve this target, the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) database, including data on migrant workers and of labour market information systems, were consolidated to help analyse the demand for different categories of workers in destination countries. Linking BMET's statistical data with the NSDC database to align skills development with those in demand in destination countries would be of further assistance in achieving the set skills target, together with making the enhancement of the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework a priority to align with the Colombo

Process recommendations. The resulting improved certification of competencies and skills of migrant workers will improve their overseas employability and reduce their vulnerability when they obtain safer and decent employment.

Other relevant instruments that have been ratified by the Government of Bangladesh include ICRMV (1990), in addition to enacting OEMA 2013 to regulate labour migration. The Government of Bangladesh has also enacted the Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act, 2012 in compliance with the Palermo Convention. As part of its commitment to South-South cooperation, Bangladesh participates actively in the Colombo Process for Asian labour-sending countries as discussed above.

3.4. BANGLADESH MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE FUNDING

Medium-term budget allocations do not cite migrant workers as a priority even though Bangladesh receives large amounts of remittances from its nationals abroad. The remittances inflow topped USD 15.54 billion in 2018, which represented a 14.9 per cent increase from the amount received in 2017 of USD 13.52 billion. The national appropriation process provides funding to front-line ministries for their operations and programmes according to their mandates and competencies. The leading ministries in terms of budgetary allocation for migration activities in general are MoEWOE and MoHA. The former, in addition to being the statutory custodian for managing labour migration, also provides direct services to migrants abroad through its agencies listed above, including the Labour Welfare Wings in consulates. The contingency planning budget that in the past have been used to respond to migration crises therefore falls under the MoEWOE. The latter has a statutory mandate to deal with emigration and is also responsible for verification of Bangladesh nationality of those returning to the country.

WEWB deals with the financial aspects of assisting migrants who return to Bangladesh. Although its official mandate is for migrant workers, it also considers request for financial assistance from other Bangladesh returnees, including irregular migrants,

on a case-by-case basis. MoHA, on the other hand, utilizes its budgetary allocation to assist returnees who are victims of trafficking and smuggling in addition to its usual consular and international cooperation diplomatic functions.

Another relevant agency also working as an agency of the MoEWOE is the Expatriates' Welfare Bank – PKB, which was established under MoEWOE by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through the PKB Act 2010 and was inaugurated on 20 April 2011. Its main functions are as follows: (a) provide collateral-free loans at minimal interest rates to outbound workers; (b) grant rehabilitation loans to returned migrants; (c) encourage migrants to invest in Bangladesh's productive sectors; and (d) facilitate easy and hassle-free transfer of remittances. It was listed as a scheduled special bank by Bangladesh Bank on 30 July 2018 and has so far opened 63 branches, 30 of which provide its services and also collect registration fees for migration services on behalf of BMET (PKB, n.d.).

MoFA has allocated funds to support planning, consular work and repatriation of Bangladesh nationals under ordinary immigration and diplomatic processes. It works closely with MoHA whose expenditure is on activities such as verification of nationality for returnees and background checks on possible outstanding legal processes against them.

Migration is referenced in the Five-Year Plan for Bangladesh, which has the protection of migrant workers' human and labour rights as one of its objectives. It also seeks to promote diversification of skills for labour migrants and increase destination countries while boosting migration from less affluent regions that lag behind like Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions. As the medium-term planning document, it follows that relevant ministries should be adequately funded in implementation to achieve these aims.

The international humanitarian organizations, working in partnership with donors and the Government of Bangladesh, moved swiftly during the Libya crisis in 2011 and assisted close to 37,000 Bangladesh migrants to find safety inside and outside Libya and

later to return to Bangladesh. The funding for the response was provided by the World Bank, which gave a loan of USD 40 million to the Government of Bangladesh to be implemented through IOM for the return and resettlement costs of the Bangladesh migrants. Through a tripartite partnership between the Government of Bangladesh, the World Bank and IOM, the funds were used for repatriation and a one-off cash transfer of BDT 50,000 that was given to each returnee to help them with resettlement.

There are other donors supporting migration programmes, such as the Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, which has funded the preparation of this Migration Crisis Operational Framework. The donor's quick response with funding allowed many of those caught in crisis to be evacuated safely during the 2012 Libya crisis and the 1991 Iraq war. However, a proposal suggested by WARBE, if implemented, holds the potential to increase the funds available for assisting Bangladesh nationals in countries in crisis and can also be scaled to cover other countries. The suggestion is to tax the recruiting agents, hiring companies and other merchants' businesses involved in labour migration and create a global fund for migration crisis response managed by IOM that would have emergency disbursement mechanisms to provide assistance when there is a crisis to support evacuation, return and reintegration activities.

3.5. CONSULTATION FINDINGS AND GAPS IN EXISTING MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE

Based on the consultations with key informants and the focus groups participants in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Malaysia on the current practices around migration crisis response, some existing gaps were uncovered. Some proposed enhancements that are also in line with the requirements spelled out in the terms of reference (ToR) and in good practices laid out in IOM's MICIC and MCOF guidelines are also presented. An evaluation of the current practices about responding to assisting Bangladesh nationals in countries in crisis is conducted to help shape the required changes to be included in the operational framework. Some proposed enhancements that are also in line with the requirements spelled out in the ToR for the preparation of this framework and with

good practices laid out in the MICIC Guidelines and in IOM's MCOF are also presented.

The identified gaps span the whole migration value chain from recruitment to return and reintegration, in the existing policy and legal context, and in the prevailing relationships between key ministries in the forefront of responding to migrants in crisis. The implications for enhancing best practices are also considered. The gap analysis is followed by some suggested acceptable institutional changes that would ensure integrated response to migration crisis, as well as the acceptable human capacity and systems that would be necessary for the multiple role players in the response processes.

The specific gaps identified include the following:

- There is a lack of specific policy addressing migration crisis response despite growing risks occasioned by rapidly changing global migration context.
- There is a lack of clear coordination structure for the management of international migration crisis, although the domestic emergency response capacity is excellent.
- There is a lack of clear national coordinated funding mechanism for international migration crisis response.
- Weak MoUs signed with destination countries such as Malaysia that push cost of migration high and increase indebtedness and also vulnerability.
- There is need to regulate the role of middlepersons in recruitment as they currently contribute to high costs and indebtedness among migrants.
- There is a need to intervene on the content of the information shared by middlepersons to ensure accurate information is shared with migrants so that they can make better-informed decisions in order to promote informed migration decision-making.
- There is a need to use innovative migration information dissemination approaches (such as kiosks, 24-hour services and other “migrant-friendly” services) to prepare migrants for crises that might affect them while abroad.
- The current BLAs and MoUs are focused only on labour issues and do not include clauses on protecting workers in the event of crises.
- There is weak national policy preparedness in dealing with human-made crises that lead to complexity in emergency response.
- There is a need to increase skills diversity through training programmes to have expanded destination choices for labour migrants.
- Currently, there is a lack of sufficient capacity in consulates to handle migration crisis surges in demand for services stemming from crises, hence the need to increase capacity and explore innovative approaches to service provision.
- Bangladesh migrant communities themselves are not organized, making it difficult to reach them quickly during crises through the consulates.
- The returnee data and statistics need to be captured in a systematic way to take advantage of the smart cards issued to labour migrants and being part of the Sendai Framework that encourages better data collection, including figures on persons affected by disasters.
- The prevailing weak Bangladesh domestic labour market absorption rate leads to most returnees migrating again to the same destinations or seeking other destinations, often exposing them to multiple instances of risks.
- With increasing numbers of female migrants, there is a need to set up specific protection mechanisms and facilities for severely traumatized returnees who face difficulties in readjusting to their communities. They would need transitional accommodation and counselling before returning to their communities, as is done in Sri Lanka and Nepal for example, where female returnees are provided temporary transitional accommodation close to the airport.
- The high rate of fraud perpetrated among migrants in Bangladesh and destination countries exposes them to double victimization, as they suffer indebtedness and the trauma of lacking jobs or being deported soon after arrival in destination countries.

- There is a lack of local support services for returnees at upazila level, and hence most are at risk of self-harm due to despair and in need of further follow-up to ensure they transition successfully back to their communities.
- Private recruiting firms in Bangladesh and those in destination countries, as well as employing companies, are currently not contributing in any way to migration crisis response in terms of funding and other ways such as capacity-building.
- Main destination countries in the GCC are not signatories to major international conventions that protect workers, which exposes workers to higher vulnerability.
- ILO and IOM have limited presence in the GCC main destination countries, making partnering with them for migration crisis interventions difficult and thereby further increasing migrants' vulnerability.

The points above summarize the current migration crisis response environment in Bangladesh and highlights some selected gaps. Some of the crises that have affected Bangladesh nationals abroad could therefore have resulted in less suffering and loss if these gaps had been addressed. The proposed framework in this document will therefore ensure that these gaps are closed and offer better assistance and protection to Bangladesh nationals abroad when crises occur.

The detailed findings from the consultations are presented and reflected in the proposed crisis operation framework, which also highlights some of these gaps. The detailed consultation findings are presented, beginning with policy issues, planning and operational issues in crisis response, institutional structures, roles and coordination, emergency response activities on the ground during crisis, pre-crisis and post-crisis activities for the migrants and overarching issues around best practices. The key themes around which the Migration Crisis Operational Framework is articulated are already determined with existing guidance documents, such as the MICIC Guidelines and IOM's MCOF. Therefore, a deductive thematic approach was used in analysis of the qualitative data collected as it was fitted within

the broad themes of these generally established response guidelines.

Data collection was done through KIs and FGDs, firstly in Bangladesh with key stakeholders identified in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh and IOM. The stakeholders are listed in Annex 1. Several FGDs were conducted, with the first one carried out being in Tangail with returnees from Libya, in Sakhipur, in Sirajganj with returnees from the Andaman Sea crisis, and in Keraniganj. The two FGDs in Malaysia were both done in Kuala Lumpur and those in Kuwait were done in Kuwait City.

3.5.1. FINDINGS FROM CONSULTATIVE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS IN BANGLADESH, KUWAIT AND MALAYSIA

In almost all the discussions with key informants, there was consistent confirmation of the competence and experience that Bangladesh has in responding to national emergencies inside of the country (especially the frequent cyclones), but that experience has not been translated into effective management of international crises abroad where Bangladesh nationals are affected. Part of the reason why this excellent capability has not been brought to the benefit of nationals outside of Bangladesh is because of the obvious jurisdictional limitation in the mandate of MoDMR and partly due to lack of clear policy mechanisms to make that experience available to relevant Bangladesh authorities located in countries hosting large numbers of Bangladeshis. The other reason cited is the lack of clarity on which agency would take the lead and what necessary coordination protocols (such as standing orders) would be followed to bring in other actors within the various government agencies that have a stake in the matter.

The FGDs with returnees were conducted in Bangladesh with returnees from the Andaman Sea crisis, those from the Libya crisis and others and also in Malaysia and Kuwait, the two destination countries selected for field visits. The analysis of the information collected during those discussions follows a thematic approach, casting a spotlight on key stages in their experience of the crisis that align with the MICIC

Guidelines' crisis response stages. The themes covered, as illustrated in Figure 14, are as follows: (a) their recruitment for the migration journey; (b) their experiences during the actual journey; (c) their experience during the crisis; (d) their rescue including experience during their stay at camps awaiting repatriation back to Bangladesh; and (e) their eventual return to Bangladesh and resettlement into their communities of origin. The scheme used in analysing the qualitative data from the FGD interviews regards that the migrants' experience of the crisis begins from the moment they get recruited by agents to undertake the journey, which culminates with them arriving in a country that is in crisis or is about to experience a crisis. This analytical framework allows the information gathered to show how migrants are already vulnerable even before they leave Bangladesh and after they return, as is emphasized by the attention given by the MICIC Guidelines to the three phases before, during and after a crisis.

Additional themes that emerged from the consultative discussions with key informants include migration crisis response policy, operational preparedness, emergency response, and migration risk awareness-raising and livelihoods support for returnees. These broad themes reflect the discussions with key informants in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Malaysia that tended to revolve around broader policy and operational experiences that are essential in assisting Bangladesh nationals in countries in crisis. In contrast, FGDs looked at the experiences of the migrants themselves, capturing their recruitment and departure from Bangladesh, their ordeal when crises occurred in transit or countries where they had migrated to and the emergency support they received upon return, including the assistance they might have received for resettlement.

3.5.2. MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE POLICY

The OEMA 2013 is the main legal instrument governing migration in Bangladesh. In the absence of a specific policy that is directed at addressing specifically how to provide assistance to Bangladesh migrants when they are caught up in countries in crisis, the main institutions dealing with migrants rely on the laws that define their narrow mandates. Most

of the migrants from Bangladesh who move do so under labour contracts that are governed by OEMA 2013, EWOEP 2016, the provisions of international conventions and treaties that Bangladesh has ratified, and also by various MoUs and BLAs signed with the receiving countries. Almost all the key informants emphasized the need for the MoUs to be strengthened to take care of the rights of Bangladesh migrants in various countries and pointed out that that should also include assistance in the event of crises.

To this end, the Colombo Process, which brings together a number of Asian migrant-sending countries, provides an opportunity to have a multilateral agreement forum with all the sending countries to discuss, among other things, the parameters around pricing of labour and also to include protection and emergency assistance for nationals abroad when crises occur. The multilateral agreements would need to be guided by OEMA 2013, the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act of 2013, the Global Compact for Migration and ILO conventions 181 and 189 governing the private labour recruitment agencies and domestic workers respectively.

In the opinion of some of the informants, policymaking efforts in Bangladesh have tended to play catch-up with migration rather than the other way around where policy would shape migration trends and patterns. This is because large-scale migration had already started in the 1960s, whereas policy formulation is still taking place. This is attested to by the fact that some of those who were migrants themselves became labour recruiters and are now are instrumental in the process of policy formulation. This represents a unique opportunity, if managed well, because of the benefit the experience that such role stakeholders have gained and which they can bring to strengthen the policies in favour of the migrants.

Most of the key informants were of the view that currently, there is no specific policy or protocol on migrants caught in countries in crisis, and they attributed the stranding of Bangladesh nationals during the Libya crisis to this policy uncertainty. They emphasized that it is necessary to quickly create policy certainty to address this issue, because the current global migration trends that are rapidly

changing have led to an increased number of Bangladesh nationals migrating for various reasons and to different destinations, and who will increasingly need safety in transit and at destination countries. It was felt that, in particular, the main gap in policy is how to respond to human-caused disasters such as armed conflicts and terrorist attacks. A good starting point, it was suggested, was to look at current domestic emergency standing orders and see how to amend and include the role of MoFA and how it would trigger emergency response for international migration crises.

The two policy areas that received the most impassioned calls for greater attention and action concern the need to regulate middlepersons involved in recruiting migrant workers, and the need to renegotiate the agreements with destination countries in the form of BLAs and MoUs to increase protection for migrants during crisis. The current bilateral agreement with Malaysia was seen as an example of a particularly flawed instrument, because it has raised the cost of migration to such an extent that it has pushed migrants to indebtedness, thereby increasing their vulnerability. Because of the costs of and the obstacles to migration, migrants prefer to overstay their visa or change their employer to remain in Malaysia as irregular migrants at the end of their contracts, or even change employers and thereby becoming irregular, rather than return home, as they often still have outstanding debts owed to the middlepersons. These agreements also do not have clauses on how to deal with crisis as they only focus on labour issues. Nepal was also cited as a country that has adopted a good approach by agreeing with destination countries on higher wages before sending workers. The World Bank indicated that they were testing an approach that offered better protection to domestic workers sent to Saudi Arabia and a report would be published soon. In Kuwait, the migration of Bangladesh nationals is still governed by a 1991 MoU that, according to the Bangladesh embassy officials in Kuwait, is in need of updating to better regulate the issuing of visas and eliminate recurring instances of visa fraud. Most of the migrants were also duped into signing contracts that implied high deductions from their salaries to recover the loaned amounts, which

left them with little net income while in Kuwait. Some of these incidents have led to the embassy in Kuwait being sued by recruitment companies to recover loaned amounts when Bangladesh migrants default and are deported.

One of the key recommendations that was raised in the consultations is the need to formulate a trilateral agreement, which is currently lacking, that allow the leading response agencies (such as IOM and ILO) to have a presence in the Gulf States where the largest number of migrants from Bangladesh are located. However, they were of the view that such an agreement between the Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations agencies and the destination country governments in the GCC ought to address these issues. That agreement would be the result of consultations between the leading ministries – MOFA, MoEWOE and MoDMR – and others who would spearhead trilateral agreements between these specific destination countries and IOM and ILO. Their consultation would then result in the preparation of standing orders that reflect the respective roles of these two United Nations agencies in responding to international crises affecting Bangladesh migrants by the type, magnitude and location of crises.

In summary, the recommendations that were raised by the key informants that relate to policies and laws are as follows:

- Put in place a national migration crisis response policy that would address assistance for nationals affected by crises abroad.
- Strengthen OEMA 2013 to increase protection for migrants including during crisis and as part of the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and MiGOF in Bangladesh.
- Strengthen the MoUs signed with destination countries to scale up provisions for the protection of Bangladesh workers by clarifying the responsibilities of recruiters in destination countries, employers and destination countries' governments in protecting Bangladesh migrants during crisis.
- Enact multilateral agreements with sending countries under the Colombo Process to

strengthen cooperation in emergency response during crisis affecting migrants.

- Create specific programmes under the Global Compact for Migration, SDGs, relevant ILO conventions and other international conventions to create implementation and monitoring frameworks for the protection of nationals affected by crises abroad.
- Negotiate agreements with destination countries in the Gulf region to have IOM and ILO presence increased to guarantee rapid assistance of Bangladesh migrants in the event of crises.
- Harmonize response guidelines for leading ministries involved in Bangladesh to create standing orders that clarify roles and responsibilities when providing assistance to Bangladesh migrants caught up in countries in crisis.

3.5.3. MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE PLANNING

A fundamental part of good planning is the collection, analysis and use of data that at present appears to be in place through the work of BMET, which systematically collects labour migration data that is regularly published on its website. BMET also has an information centre where family members of migrants can receive information on the whereabouts of their relatives and the circumstances in which they are, especially because compensation issues in the case of death or loss of property occasioned by a crisis may arise. BMET has a large database with information on migrants in various destination countries. Since 2010, outbound migrants who travel through regular labour contracts have also been issued a smartcard by BMET. The card holds their personal information, their destination country, the employer's details, services offered by the employer and their salary under the contract at the time of departure. In addition to BMET, the other institutions involved in planning are PKB, MoEWOE, the Labour Welfare Wings, MoHA and the Civil Aviation Authority. The current pre-departure briefing for migrants under various MoUs and BLAs does not include any awareness-raising information-sharing or training on what to do when there is a crisis in a country of transit or

at the country of destination. What was raised by stakeholders concerns included the need not only to introduce such preparation for migrants but also to clarify the roles of the host country authorities and employers when a crisis occurs within the MoUs, BLAs and contracts issued to the migrants.

On the crucial element of human resources capacity essential for migration crisis planning, the participants pointed out that a major problem is the constant transfer of officials who work with migrants so that others who replace them are compelled to start from scratch with the migration issues that are often unfamiliar to them. What was suggested to deal with this constant loss of capacity is the need to create a pool of “cadres” that are conversant with the issues to prevent the glut in experience in order to provide progressively improved assistance to migrants. For that pool to work in preventing loss of capacity, it was suggested that at least 50 per cent of the positions in key departments like the MoEWOE and BMET be made permanent so as not to lose them to rotation that depletes capacity. The cadres would need to be assigned within the Bangladesh Civil Service without affecting any changes in the organograms of these institutions. The systems part of enhancing systemic capacities should also be enhanced to enable standardization of practices along the entire value chain, from policy formulation or revision, response planning and coordination, the actual emergency rescue and relief and the eventual return and resettlement of returnees. There was an expressed expectation that the initiative of creating this framework would create the opportunity to put in place systematized guidelines and move away from separate institutional and individual preferences.

In terms of planning and preparedness, the key informants raised the example of NDMC, which has demonstrated excellence and elevated Bangladesh to become an international leader in terms of planning, preparedness and response to frequent cyclones. This is demonstrated by its ability to warn and evacuate over 2.5 million people ahead of the cyclones, which leads to decreased number of fatalities and loss of livelihoods. This model of crisis planning, preparedness, resilience and response can be used for international migrants, too. Part of NDMC's success is based on

mapping of disaster risk areas and populations at risk, which allows for rapid response when the cyclones approach. A similar mapping of where the migrants are based, including other details such as the activities they are engaged in at their workplaces, would ensure that Bangladesh embassies and missions abroad are able to provide emergency rescue and assistance promptly. The missions should also have contacts of relatively better-off Bangladesh nationals in those countries who can then become assets during the crisis to support with tracking, mobilization and location of nationals as part of the rescue activities in the event of a crisis.

Some of the key informants were of the view that capacity strengthening should also be undertaken at the Bangladesh embassies and missions in destination countries. In their opinion, those employed to work in the consulate sections should be acquainted with the broader migration issues and aspects of migration crisis management specifically. Their preparation for the work should entail thorough training in labour migration and the safety issues around movement of Bangladesh nationals to other countries for work, study and other reasons. This training could be provided through a one-year attachment of all foreign mission officials who deal directly with migrants with the expatriate ministry before they are deployed. The training should also include language courses to equip them with the abilities to communicate in the language spoken in the destination country's local language wherein the mission is located. An additional subject in the course should be communication skills required to handle interactions with migrants, local communities and counterpart authorities in the destination country. One of the key informants put it thus:

And also, another issue is that people who are going to work in the consulate section should be acquainted with the migration system. What practices we have now, if somebody is working with the different ministries, they have advantages with the labour safety, what you know about the

labour, what you know about migration. So our suggestion is that, if someone is going there, he/she has to be with our expatriate ministry for one year. He/She has to work; he/she should know what the migration problem is and what the migration system is. Then he/she has to learn the language where she has been appointed.

Apart from human resources, another element that was highlighted by the key informants during the consultations was the essential task of mobilizing both the institutional and the financial resources to be deployed in the crisis response. In terms of institutions, key stakeholders in both Bangladesh and destination countries would need to be identified and their roles be specified in standing orders and destination response plans and mobilization plans respectively. In terms of the financial resources, it would involve specifying the rapidly drawn funds in budgets allocation to responsible institutions, and also donor funding that would be accessible on short notice and used in the emergency response activities, as well as in the longer-term return, resettlement and livelihoods stabilization activities. This exercise related to identifying donors and stakeholder would therefore apply for Bangladesh and also the destination countries in line with the recommendations included in the MICIC guidelines, which stress the importance of considering and implementing actions before, during and after migration crisis approach in providing assistance.

A final element in the planning exercises would involve planning beforehand for the evacuation and return of the affected migrants. This pre-planning would need to be reflected at two levels: (a) at the level of an overall evacuation plan, developed at national level, prepared as part of national planning that would specify the diplomatic aspects; and (b) at an embassy-level plan, which, as specified in MICIC templates, would provide the details of an evacuation plan for each country of destination.¹⁰ The planning would involve MoFA, MoDMR, MoHA and MoEWOE with its various specialized agencies,

¹⁰ One model to follow for the development of this plan is available on the MICIC website, available at <https://micicinitiative.iom.int/resources-and-publications/consular-contingency-plan-template>.

such as BMET, PKB and the Labour Welfare Wings and CSOs such as BRAC. These institutions would specify their roles and coordination mechanisms in the process, which would allow Bangladesh nationals affected by any crisis in host countries to be identified, rescued and returned to Bangladesh more effectively, including through the mobilization of all relevant stakeholders. To create a tiered response approach with clear command structures, a central committee drawn from these agencies would be established to coordinate their work.

3.5.4. OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

Bangladesh's excellence in domestic emergency response preparedness previously discussed was also cited as a demonstration of its high level of operational capacity. However, the same level of preparedness has not yet been achieved in responding to international crises affecting its nationals, as previously discussed in some detail. It would be important to learn what is needed to transfer the experience gained during a number of incidents that involved embassies of Bangladesh, IOM, ICRC and other United Nations agencies assisting Bangladeshis that were caught up in Iraq, Libya and the Andaman Sea. Other agencies mentioned that were involved include the Civil Aviation Authority, Airports Authority, Bangladesh Red Crescent Authority, BRAC, BMET, PKB, CBOs and various units under MoHA. These lessons are captured in the succeeding section that discusses what some of the Bangladesh victims and stakeholders of those crises who were safely returned expressed as what was important in providing adequate assistance. In terms of available capacity to respond to returnee migrant surge at airports and other ports of entry, the previously mentioned institutions have been involved in the past, and they would be in the front line in partnership with other NGOs and international organizations.

In terms of operational preparedness, coordination was identified as a major problem and one that needed to be clarified through policy and standing orders. The current situation is characterized by rivalry and tension between the agencies on who will play the leading role and when individuals who often view some tasks allocated to other ministries as falling

under their own offices. So rather than coordination and cooperation, there is competition and jostling on who will take the leading role. This state of affairs suggests that there is a need to clarify roles and those responsible for them more clearly. For example, one of the key informants pointed out that "...there is a need for clarification on roles, so if it's a security or law enforcement issue, then MoHA can lead; if bilateral issue, then MoFA can lead, and coordination will lead to better harmonized response." A proposed approach would need to have a hierarchy clarified and cascading authority and roles from national to the smallest location in countries of destination with identified nationals from Bangladesh.

Working closely with international partners led by IOM, the ministries that would then play a leading role are MoFA, MoEWOE and MoHA. Because each of the ministries have narrow mandates, it would be necessary to clarify through standing orders that MoFA would issue the trigger for international migration crisis response. There would then be an interministerial international migration crisis committee that would coordinate the response according to previously allocated roles and responsibilities based on key capabilities. The counterpart ministries in the host countries would also have to be identified and would be the link to which MoFA's response activation trigger team liaises with at the destination countries to ensure that the actual rescue of Bangladesh nationals takes place. The operational cooperation between these ministries and their active agencies would be mediated through the Bangladesh embassies and other protocol channels specified in the consulate's missions' country migration crisis response plans, and in bilateral agreements and other instruments that may be specified under regional consultative processes such as the Colombo Process.

The Bangladesh nationals in various countries should also be encouraged to organize themselves in similar ways to what Filipino nationals have done by putting in place a "wardenship" system, where some community leaders are pre-identified and appointed informally to assist their fellow nationals during crises. The "wardens" would work closely with the Labour Welfare Wings, immigration officials and labour attachés at the embassies to plan and prepare

for emergency evacuation of Bangladesh nationals. This system would help because the current Labour Welfare Wings are overwhelmed with requests for assistance and are only present in 29 countries.

3.5.5. RECRUITMENT AND MIGRATION PROCESS

A key intervention to reduce vulnerability to crises in countries of destination that was raised by all key informants is the need to eliminate visa fraud during the recruitment process and bring down the high costs charged to prospective migrants. The main issue raised by government agencies in Malaysia and Kuwait and by the Bangladesh missions in those countries is the high numbers of Bangladeshis who fall into irregular migration status due to their indebtedness to migration brokers in both Bangladesh and destination countries. They thus opt to remain in irregular status in a bid to raise funds and repay outstanding fees. In Kuwait, the cost of migration for Bangladesh workers stands at between 2,000 and 2,500 dinars (KWD) (approximately USD 7,000). Kuwait, with an estimated 289,406 migrants from Bangladesh, was said to have 24,335 of them in irregular status, resulting from them having left their initial employers. Some of the opportunities that emerged in terms of funding to address these issues that can help reduce vulnerability before migration include investing in language training programmes and digital visa-issuing systems especially at destination countries such as Kuwait. The Kuwait Arab Fund, for example, is funding agriculture sector activities in Bangladesh in an initiative that will therefore help build capacity in that sector, even for those who may choose to migrate to work in Kuwait.

The high cost of migration was a major concern during one of the FGDs held in Sakhipur with a group of returnees from Libya. The group had all been evacuated from Libya between 2012 and 2014. The group of migrant returnees indicated that they had gone to Libya after being promised well-paying jobs by agents who charged them BDT 250,000 and above. They undertook the journey since they wanted to improve their lot, because they had seen others that had left and were working in Libya who were

sending back large amounts of money every month to their families back in Bangladesh. Some of them had borrowed BDT 300,000 and others up to BDT 350,000 and because of the failed migration to Libya were only able to pay the debts off when they came back and started doing some work in Bangladesh.

The recruitment

People in our area are mainly working in the textile industry or in agriculture. Many people from here go to Malaysia in trawlers. What we earn here is not enough to survive with our children. So we thought, let's take a risk. Many people have left, and we decided to follow those people. If we are fortunate enough to enter Malaysia, then we could make some money. We would then be able to bring up our children well. Our families would be better off. So I took a risk with BDT 220,000.

– Andaman Sea crisis returnee

The agents had told them of the opportunities and assisted them with getting passports and the “manpower” card issued by BMET. They promised the migrants that they would earn huge salaries in Libya of BDT 30,000 to 50,000 per month. Some agents even asked for BDT 500,000. One of the returnees had managed to send back BDT 140,000 from Libya to pay back the loan. Another one had borrowed BDT 500,000 and was able to remit BDT 200,000 while he was still in Libya. While in Libya, they had to work as casual labourers. In some cases, payment was not guaranteed as some of those who hired them would pay them and others would not. The employers, the researchers were told, would even fire bullets close to their feet while they were working when they demanded payment to scare them into submission. The jobs were menial, such as construction at house renovation sites, cleaning after tree planting and other such casual labour work. They would find jobs by waiting as a group near the place where they were staying and those looking for labourers would come to pick them.

A second group that also had been rescued from Libya was interviewed in Tangail. They had returned from Libya in 2011, earlier than the first group described above. They were composed of several individuals of varying ages, with one 23-year-old now working at a pharmacy, a 35-year-old who was about to migrate again to Oman, a 33-year-old who was unemployed at the time of interview, a 27-year-old who was also trying to migrate again to an undisclosed country and a 25-year-old who was driving a compressed natural gas taxi since returning from Libya. With the exception of one of them, all the migrants in the group had gone through agents who had promised them jobs in Libya. The one who had not used an agent had previously worked in Dubai but was deported after just two and a half months following which he left again for Libya. The returnees had travelled to Libya from 2008 to 2010, but all were returned following the outbreak of conflict in 2011.

The recruitment of migrants by labour agents is the first step in the process in the chain of migration events that culminate in Bangladesh nationals finding themselves in crises abroad. To finance their trip, almost all the migrants took large loans and made arrangements to send monthly payments back to Bangladesh. As described below, the agents are often working for smugglers who use trawlers or other transport methods to ship the unsuspecting migrants to destinations where they find out that the promises of work are untrue. The recruiting agents charged them up to BDT 220,000. Often, a substantial amount is required upfront, with one of the returnees reporting having paid BDT 120,000 and the rest being taken from his relatives. The balance was demanded from the relatives when they reached Teknaf. The promise of very high incomes was the bait, which the agents used to convince the migrants that the promised jobs they would get at destinations would be well paying to enable them to repay their loans. Most of those who took part in the FGD also reported having heard or observed the families of those who had migrated before them, some of whom were their acquaintances, making huge improvements thanks to the remittances regularly sent back to families left behind in Bangladesh. However, due to the nature of the recruitment process, Bangladesh

migrants tend to take lower-earning jobs than their Indian counterparts, as some of them related that the Indian migrants had better-paying jobs.

Another FGD was held in Sirajganj with a group of returnees from the Andaman Sea crisis. Their description of the journey indicated that they too had used agents who charged them hefty sums of money to help them make the journey across the sea to their countries of destination. One of the participants indicated that the agent took him to a graveyard in Teknaf where he stayed while waiting for departure and was told he could not back out on the plan as he would be killed if he did so. The smugglers then took away everything from the victims before embarking on the sea trip and only left them with the clothes they were wearing.

The perilous journey

People were getting crazy by being on the sea for so long. People asked the trawler men why it was taking so much time. They asked the trawler men to either take them back home, or to drop them at some nearby land. Whoever said such things were killed by the trawler men. Twelve people from my trawler died. They jumped in the water because they were going crazy after staying in the crowded trawler for 28 days.

– Andaman Sea crisis returnee

Another participant now working in the textile industry in Bangladesh had spent three months at sea on a trawler in 2014 on a journey that had started in Cox's Bazar. He then spent three months in a camp in Myanmar awaiting repatriation. Another one now working in the textile industry went from Teknaf, then to Sirajganj, then to Thailand in 2014 in 28 days and then stayed in jail for over 10 months in Thailand before being returned by IOM. Yet another one who is now doing business had spent 52 days at sea, was rescued by Indonesian authorities and stayed in what he described as VIP conditions in Indonesia for four and a half months before being returned to

Bangladesh by IOM. Another participant now doing power tiller business after receiving support from IOM reported having left from Teknaf and spent 3 months and 27 days at sea before being arrested and kept in a camp in Malaysia for 10 months, then returned with a group of 35 others to Bangladesh by flight. One of the returnees described his journey on board a trawler with an estimated 700 people, of whom about 300 to 350 were Bangladeshis with only three of them being women. They were rescued by Indonesian fisherfolks together with many Rohingyas¹¹ who made up the rest of the migrants on the boat. Both the Bangladeshis and the Rohingyas were said to have boarded the trawler on St. Martins Island and on the Bangladesh–Myanmar border where also the Bangladeshis boarded the trawler. On that specific trawler, which had as many as 800 migrants crammed into it, more than 200 migrants were reportedly killed by the smugglers – some of them shot, others thrown overboard. The overcrowded boats offered no room or place for the migrants to refresh themselves, as there were no bathroom conveniences.

The experiences of the returnees who stayed in camps while waiting to be returned to Bangladesh was equally harrowing. One group was reported to have spent more than two months in what they described as “camps that were more like jails” in Malaysia where one of the Bangladesh migrants died. One participant aged 18 had spent two months in the detention centre before repatriation.

In the FGD held at Tangail with a group of migrants that had been returned from Libya to Bangladesh in 2011, all the participants said they had taken flights to Libya that had been organized by their recruiting agents. One of the respondents said that, upon arrival, he did not take up work that he had been promised by the agent (which was to work as an electrician) but was instead employed by a Chinese company. Most of the returnees got to work in the welding and construction industry when they arrived, but others could not find any work. Most of them

reported having been put to work without getting paid and only getting verbally abused and physically assaulted by supervisors when they demanded their pay. The physical assault led them to run and seek help from the Libyan police, who then led them to the Bangladesh embassy that then linked them with a more humane employer until the time came when the civil war started that led to their evacuation.

3.5.6. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RESCUE

The key informants reiterated that the well-established principle in emergency response of prioritizing saving lives and providing for the basic needs for Bangladesh nationals should guide all the response activities. The embassies are in the front line of responding with assistance to Bangladesh nationals in transit and destination countries. Based on the assistance provided during the Libya, Andaman Sea crisis, Iraq crisis and others, the basic needs of food, shelter, water, sanitation and health are critical to saving lives and was provided by many of the first responders in host countries affected by crisis. However, some of the key informants emphasized that a similar level of priority should be accorded to providing protection to those affected. This is because if all the prior mentioned basic needs are provided but without protection, the affected population or individuals like children and women remain vulnerable to exploitation, including sexual exploitation and trafficking. This is important since often food is offered as bait to victims by predators to lure and then exploit them.

In order to guarantee that lives are saved and casualties among Bangladesh migrants are reduced during crises, the key informants suggested the establishment of a partnership with first responders in the countries of transit and destination. From the experience acquired in the crises mentioned above, IOM, other United Nations agencies, ICRC, Red Crescent Societies, Mercy Corps, CBOs, civil protection volunteers and others were on the ground assisting affected migrants soon after the start of the crises. The Bangladesh embassies and missions need

¹¹ Note that the term *Rohingya* as used to describe the Muslim peoples of Rakhine State, Myanmar, is not accepted by the Government of the Union of Myanmar, which in June 2016 issued an order directing State-owned media to use the term “Muslim community in Rakhine State”.

to have firm partnerships with these organizations and if possible firm agreements on how to cooperate and coordinate during a crisis needs to be established where such an agreement doesn't already exist.

Often, affected migrants are located in camps or other safe places where help can reach them. It is important to bear in mind that the waiting time at such locations can present opportunities for smugglers and traffickers and others who seek to exploit them to reach the vulnerable migrants. Some of the needs migrants have when in those locations include psychosocial support and provision of the means to communicate with their families back in Bangladesh or elsewhere. In the case of Libya, an example that was shared was how VVARBE, through its network of contacts in the diaspora, was able to work with ICRC to find sanctuaries such as churches and mosques to where Bangladesh nationals were directed to flee while waiting for international evacuation.

Depending on the nature of the crisis that has affected them, victims may have lost their travel and identity documents, making it essential to take them through a humane and careful nationality verification process, bearing in mind that it may be directly linked to their ability to access return assistance, compensation, assets recovery and longer-term livelihoods recovery. It was recommended that the verification process should be short and not as lengthy as was the case with the Andaman Sea crisis returnees. Where loss of life occurs, processes and procedures in the Bangladesh embassies and other missions should clarify how to repatriate or inter the remains with careful consideration of cultural and religious norms.

In Kuwait, the retention of travel documents by the employers is a major issue in terms of how Bangladesh migrants might be able to leave during an emergency. Although the Kuwait Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) currently runs shelters for victims of physical and sexual abuse where hundreds of migrants are accommodated pending repatriation, in case of an emergency, these facilities would be overwhelmed. The current facilities are also set up for women only. Because most of the migrants in Kuwait from Bangladesh are male, the facility that was

visited by the researchers during the consultation trip to Kuwait had no female migrant from Bangladesh. During discussions with PAM officials in Kuwait City, it was disclosed that there are plans to build similar facilities for male migrants.

The next step identified in the actual rescue activities is the transportation and repatriation to Bangladesh. All those interviewed commended the role that the Bangladesh embassies and IOM played during the previous crises and in the case of Libya, the role of the World Bank in funding the return of some of those affected, albeit through BMET and IOM. Ground transportation is also sensitive, particularly when the crisis is a natural disaster that may have an impact on infrastructure, such as roads or a conflict that may lead to road closures and widespread violence. The capacity of local authorities, emergency agencies and rescue personnel may also be diminished as a consequence of them being directly affected or overwhelmed. These secondary risks to the life of those who may have survived the initial crisis can be avoided by preparing carefully identified routes for ground transportation and including them in the response plan prepared by the embassy, and also by disseminating that relevant information to Bangladesh nationals through appropriate mainstream media and other available channels such as social media. The Bangladesh Embassy in Malaysia also emphasized the importance of preparing migrants by training them in the English language so that they can comprehend critical information during emergencies. This was seen as a major barrier as expressed by one of the embassy officials, thus:

Most of the people coming here are from the rural areas. They are very honest, and their education level is not satisfactory. And they cannot ask somebody in English also. They cannot understand what is told in English also, but you know very well that once upon a time, we were under the rule of the British empire. For that legacy, most of the cases must learn English. It is under our curriculum. My personal desire is that the coming workers should be able to speak English. It may be very little but for the communication. So for this reason, it is very hard especially for the crisis management, when a

worker falls in trouble for their speaking disability; they cannot make the people understand what he needs or what sort of requirements.

During the repatriation phase, IOM worked with Bangladesh embassies to process travel documents and provide charter flights and tickets for the Bangladesh nationals. During the Libyan crisis – when thousands of Bangladeshis were returned from Egypt and Tunisia – the Bangladesh embassies in these countries worked with IOM to book the flights and arrange transfer to and reception at the airports in Tunisia and Egypt. This exercise was done within a short period of time, and because of the thousands of Bangladeshis who needed to be taken back home, it took numerous charter flights to complete. During the 1991 Gulf War, an estimated 105 charter flights had to be arranged in addition to regular airlines flight bookings, for some of the returnees – all of which was done by IOM in cooperation with the embassies. The speed of evacuation from Iraq led to reduced number of casualties, with about 100 Bangladesh nationals reported dead by the conclusion of the crisis. Even lower casualties were reported during the Libya crisis. Some of the key informants pointed out that India used their navy ships to evacuate their nationals from Libya, which might be an option when there is a large number of victims.

In addition to the rescue effort that involved providing shelter, blankets, health care, water, sanitation and food (all done through a number of local and international humanitarian organizations), the migrants were also provided with financial allowances in the form of cash in varying amounts to help them with their onward transportation to their homes on arrival at airports in Bangladesh. The voluntary and cooperation approach for assisting the Libya returnees saw migrants assistance organizations and NGOs, such as WARBE, Bangladeshi Ovhbashi Mohila Sramik Association, Ovhbashi Karmi Unnayan Program and others provide food, water and a cash amount of BDT 1,000 to each returnee on arrival at the airport in Dhaka to help with onward transportation to their destinations.

The arrangements made at the airports in Bangladesh also involved arranging for the dedicated use of arrival immigration counters where a verification process

requiring documentation issued by embassies and IOM was done. The conclusion for most of the key informants is that the rescue and return of migrants would involve cooperation and assistance from many actors in the affected countries, but that the Bangladesh embassies in those countries, IOM and other international first response organizations such as the Red Crescent would play a leading role.

The rescue

Sir, please let me relate to you a story. When we were going to the IOM office, a gang of 8 to 10 people captured us and asked for money. The taxi driver knew us. The captors demanded 1,000 euros (EUR) from each person. They claimed EUR 10,000 in total as we were 10 in number. The taxi driver was a good person. He helped us. He told our captors that we were destitute, poor people who are being sent to the country of origin by an organization (IOM) for free, as we could not arrange for going back with our own funds. The taxi driver convinced the captors to let us go for KWD 100. So, we paid them KWD 100 and went to the IOM office.

– Libya crisis returnee

One of the participants among the Andaman Sea crisis group of returnees who was on the ship intercepted by Thailand navy related that they had 780 people on the ship. There were 70 Bangladeshis on board that ship who, after being identified as such, were separated from the other nationalities and transported in a separate vehicle to a camp in Thailand. The nationality groups were identified based on languages and their places of origin and kept separate. Those apprehended near Langkawi reported that their transporters had abandoned ship and fled when approached by authorities. The ship drifted to Langkawi where they were rescued and taken to camps. Before being taken to the camps, officials from the Bangladesh embassy went to Langkawi and identified themselves by carrying the Bangladesh flag at the place of initial detention to

which the Bangladesh nationals shouted “Joy Bangla!” The migrants’ initial request to make phone calls to their families back home was not granted. After almost 11 months, they were later moved to two other camps in Penang and Alo Setar. They were eventually allowed to contact their family at the new camp. The length of stay at the camps was prolonged with one group reported having stayed at the camp for close to 11 months. The migrants also did not stay in one camp necessarily throughout the waiting period. All the returnees reported having been provided transport back home by IOM.

Most of the returnees, with the exception of the one who was in Indonesia, reported that the camps where they were held were like jails. However, they reported receiving assistance from well-wishers in the form of food items, such as dried fish, rice, bread, biscuits and cakes brought to them in crates. At least one person was reported to have died in the camp in Thailand after falling ill while waiting for repatriation. The group in Thailand said they received assistance from a woman and a man from Bangladesh who were well-wishers that helped them make phone calls to their families for two minutes each. While at the camps, IOM and embassy officials took information from the returnees that was used for verification. The verification process was described as very strict, whereby the names of parents, children and other family members were taken and if there were mistakes, people were not allowed to return to Bangladesh. Other details collected to verify their origin included the name of the village and district and post office close to one’s home. The officials were careful that way to ensure no persons from Myanmar ended up in Bangladesh by providing false information. These details were then sent to the local police for each of the migrants who went there to verify by approaching their families at the addresses provided. The police report was then sent to Dhaka and then relayed back to Thailand. One telling comment on the potential for refusal to return is the case of about 60 people whose verification came back negative as they gave wrong information about their fathers and family members. They were apparently immigrants from Myanmar who had relocated to Chittagong and built houses in the mountains.

The destination experience

Something worse happened to me. I was beaten up in Libya. I was working as a construction worker. I worked for two months. I didn’t get any salary. I asked for my salary, and for this, I was beaten up.

We were about 40 to 45 people flying to Libya together on the same flight. After we landed, we were taken to a house in the desert on a bus. It was difficult to live there. They asked us to stay there and said that people would come and fetch us. It was our first day, and so we didn’t understand anything. After three hours, rice, vegetables and chicken arrived in a pickup along with utensils. We had to cook and eat. We were there for four to five days.

– 2011 Libya crisis returnee

Another FGD was conducted at Sakhipur with a group of migrants that had been returned from Libya between 2012 and 2014 soon after an earlier group that had been returned in 2011. The participants related that when they arrived in Libya after being recruited by agents to go and work there, they faced difficulties finding work. Instead, they were captured and kept hostage by Islamic State (IS) people who forced them to work, sometimes with no pay. One of the returnees was captured together with others by a group of Bangladeshis who took BDT 35,000 from him, beat him up and threatened to kill him, even though he begged them and told them he was just a poor person from Bangladesh. The crisis started in 2014 when IS attacked and they found themselves stuck. They heard from a Libyan who informed them that IOM was assisting people to return by giving them free air tickets to fly back home. They all had their passports and other documents with them since there were no formal recruiting agents in Libya, and they had to look for work by themselves when they arrived there. The only hope they had was IOM, which was providing free tickets to return home so when they learned of it, they immediately went to IOM for help. They said that if it was not for the assistance provided by IOM, they would have

died in Libya, as there was no other organization or institution offering help. The repatriation assistance was offered through the Bangladesh Embassy in Libya. The waiting period in Libya was approximately two months while their documents were being processed by the embassy and their medical tests were done. The embassy advised them to stay off the streets during that waiting time for their own safety. They were informed which day their departure was to take place only one day before, and hence they hardly had enough time to pack their belongings for the trip back to Bangladesh.

The earlier group of returnees from Libya who had been repatriated in 2011 related their experiences at an FGD meeting in Tangail. They recalled that when the war started, there was rampant insecurity with a breakdown in law and order, and there were muggings and other forms of attacks. The local population had turned against foreigners whom they violently attacked and extorted money from. Then there were announcements on where people should go to seek assistance. When they heard them, they gathered 5 km from where one of the returnees lived, and there the United Nations had erected tents and provided blankets. The Red Crescent was also there and provided food. One of the returnees was hidden in a secret room by his employer together with five other Bangladesh nationals but later, because of increasing attacks, they all escaped at night without telling the employer as they feared for their lives and went to the airport. They were then flown to Turkey, from where they then headed back to Bangladesh. Others were assisted by their employers and well-wishing Libyans who took them either to camps set up by the United Nations or helped them return to Bangladesh directly. Others were taken to a refugee camp at Benghazi near the airport, where they stayed for 21 days with food being provided by the Red Crescent. At the camp, they indicated that the most important help they received was first and foremost a safe haven where they were staying away from the fighting. The other needs that they had which were met included food and health care, which were also provided by Red Crescent. They felt that the Bangladesh Embassy should have organized to pick them up from their locations and take them to a safe

site to ensure their safety. Transport to the camp was difficult for some as when the fighting broke out, there were many roadblocks that they wanted to use to reach safety. One of the returnees said they had called one journalist named Munni Saha, who was working for the ATN Bangla News, who then reported on their plight in the media. As a result, the returnees highlighted this aspect that they considered important to be the role of media in bringing their plight to the attention of the outside world so that they could receive timely assistance to return home. Many of them reported that they fled without being paid some of their salaries which afterwards they could not find a way of claiming or recovering. The three leading organizations that helped them were the United Nations, IOM and the Red Crescent.

3.5.7. RETURN, RESETTLEMENT AND LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT

During the discussions with the Andaman Sea crisis returnees at Sirajganj, they pointed out that after their rescue, their return flights were then arranged by IOM in cooperation with the Bangladesh embassies in respective countries. After verification in the camp, the Thailand group reported having been taken in police vehicles to Bangkok and placed in local jails where their documents were rechecked; they filled some forms, and then IOM informed them that they would be flown back to Bangladesh free of charge. They reported that there were many Indian nationals in that jail waiting to be taken back to their country. In this transit jail, some inmates who had mobile phones were charging BDT 1,000–1,500 to allow them to make calls to their families back home, as the families were desperate to speak with them. The owners of the mobile phones would call the migrants' families and ask them to send bKash transfers to them. Only after the cash was transferred to them would they then allow the migrants to speak with their families. Some of the families had raised money thinking that their migrant family member would need to pay for the return. However, IOM provided them with transport to the airport, food at the airport, a cash amount of BDT 16,807 each and put them on a flight back to Bangladesh. The returnee from Indonesia reported that at the airport in Malaysia, some well-wishers who were employees of a Bangladesh-based

company called Dolphin sympathized with their plight and gave three of them a cash gift of BDT 3,000, while the others got BDT 500 each. When they arrived at the Dhaka International Airport in Bangladesh, they also got some cash from well-wishers in the amount of BDT 500 each, and IOM also gave them BDT 3,500 each.

The return

About 450 people were there. Our people were 70 in number. Over time, they flew 60 people and a corpse in the first flight. There was a person who died in the camp during the month of Ramadan. Then they flew 200, and then 100. Then, out of the 70 people, 35 people were flown to Bangladesh among whom was I, and the rest 35 were flown later.

– Andaman Sea crisis returnee

The Bangladesh well-wishers at the airport also helped them to call their families when they heard that they had not communicated with their families for the past 14 months. They were given a document by the embassy officials and asked to go through immigration counter number 1 on arrival at Dhaka airport. Upon return, most of those who were brought back by IOM received resettlement assistance to help them restart their livelihoods in Bangladesh. One of the returnees received BDT 100,000 from IOM, which he used to start his power tiller business. Some said they started livestock business, and others put up clothing retail stores. They listed the assistance that they received from IOM as the gifting of the cash grant, providing them with support and advice on resettlement, and also linking them with a local NGO called ACD, which continues to work with them. IOM also continued advising them not to undertake similar risky migration and has put some of them on some training programmes that the participants did not specify. When asked if they would have still proceeded with the journey if they had known that it would lead to the crisis they encountered, all of them answered that they would not have undertaken it and said that they now usually warn others and raise

awareness about the dangers and risks of migration in their communities.

The return process for the Libya groups saw them being transported from Libya to Tunisia and then at the airport in Tunisia, where they were met by IOM staff who were waiting to receive them and helped them with their onward trip after verifying their paperwork. They were then flown to Turkey, where another team of IOM staff repeated the verification, gave them refreshments and then put them on the flight to Bangladesh. When they landed in Dhaka, IOM provided them with BDT 4,800 to help them when they got home. Upon return, they all received BDT 100,000 for their resettlement from IOM. They said that some of the people bought cows, and others used the money to repay the loans that they had taken when they were migrating to Libya. Some were employed, others were pulling rickshaws, one of them started a small retail store business, and one said they are driving electric easy bikes. One other returnee from Libya is now a trader who buys goods on credit, sells and keeps profits, and another one is an agricultural labourer. They indicated that what they would appeal for is further assistance to support their livelihoods back in Bangladesh.

The Libya 2011 returnee group that was camped at Benghazi airport learned that IOM was taking people back to Bangladesh through the Egypt border. They organized themselves and rented a vehicle, paying the driver KWD 50 to transport them to the border, a journey that took 24 hours. They went to IOM and were assisted with food by Egyptians locals. Since they did not have their passports with them as they had been left with the employer when the war started, they completed the form at IOM offices at the camp. They were then flown back through Cairo airport after four days and then from there to Bangladesh. At the airport, they were given BDT 1,000 and some food by the Government. The process of helping to return the migrants was initiated 15 to 20 days after the war started, but when the process started, it worked effectively and was quick in sending them back. When the migrants returned to Bangladesh, they each received BDT 50,000 from the Government to restart their livelihoods. The funds may have come from IOM as it is the organization that interviewed

them. One of the returnees reported having migrated to Dubai afterwards but was deported and again in the process of migrating to Oman to work. Another one took up work with a construction company back in Bangladesh and another one was employed at Walton Company. Other institutions that are helping the returnees are PKB, which offers them loans for resettlement against assets that they may have as collateral, and BRAC, which provides counselling support over and above the BDT 100,000 unconditional grant.

Throughout the crisis, most of the victims indicated that they rely on social media for information on crisis situations. They specifically cited YouTube and WhatsApp as their main sources of information. One person related how, when they were in Lebanon and the war started, they got a text from the embassy indicating how they would receive assistance. They indicated that there was someone who supervises them at work and so could not go to the embassy since they work through that one supervisor. This pointed to the need to make migrants aware that evacuation messages from the Bangladesh missions are to be treated as emergencies when they are issued, and workers should then immediately make their way to appointed safe places or evacuation points irrespective of restraining attempts from their employers.

The FGD participants highlighted the need for programmes to help train and inform people before they embark on trips about the correct visas to get, the lawful ways of migrating and the risks involved versus the promises given by recruiting agents. They suggested that it is important to learn skills such as other languages like English, which become vital in times of crisis as one is able to communicate and may even save lives. This underscored the value of education before migration in their own view. The Labour Welfare Wings in Bangladesh embassies received praise from one of the returnees who commended the support they had offered him when he faced land issues back in his home. The embassy, through the Labour Welfare Wing, gave him great support. The process involved him completing a form describing the address back home and the details of the problem. The form was then forwarded to MoFA,

who in turn forwarded it to MoHA, which then referred to the Superintendent of Police in his district who resolved this issue by involving the two groups in the dispute and reached a mutual resolution. He said although those services are available to migrants and others including assistance during crisis, most migrants do not know about them, which indicates that they should have more visibility.

Most of the key informants pointed out the importance of creating awareness about the risks of being caught up in countries in crisis to the people who choose to migrate. This activity would take place before and during the migration process. On the other hand, providing support to re-establish viable livelihoods to those who return to Bangladesh after a crisis is also as important. Both activities are complementary. The complementarity can be understood from the realization that the hope of improving their lives leads people to the decision to migrate because of underlying absolute or relatively poor socioeconomic circumstances. Most of the victims take loans from recruiters to finance their trip to work abroad, and majority are encumbered by unpaid debt when they return after a crisis. Pre-departure awareness therefore would provide information on the risks and point out existing viable alternatives in Bangladesh to migration without discouraging those who have made final decisions to move. Almost all participants in the KIs emphasized that the pre-departure briefing that is being currently offered to labour migrants under MoUs is not raising awareness on the possibility of facing crises in transit and in destination countries. For those who return, they would need to receive financial and moral support to rebuild their livelihoods. The post-crisis returnees also require psychosocial support in their efforts to readjust back to their communities where both their traumatic experiences and societal disapproval may take a heavy toll on them.

The type of pre-departure preparation that was suggested by the key informants went beyond mere awareness-raising to training that would make the migrants “aware of everything, so they can be aware and they can prepare themselves whatever the obstacles coming”, as one of the migrants put it. Additional training would include communication skills to help migrants adjust in the employment

country, which may be useful when seeking assistance in times of crisis. Part of strengthening the assistance provided to migrants would also include requiring the employers and the employment countries accountable to providing assistance for return and resettlement of former workers.

The counselling that was offered when disbursing the money to the beneficiaries focused on advising them on what they could do with it for their livelihoods. The returnees from Iraq were offered compensation for the loss of cash money and some usable goods. This was done under the United Nations Compensation Commission's (UNCC) categories that included cash in the bank or at hand that could have been lost, furniture and other household appliances and any other assets such as jewelry. The returnees from Iraq were offered a lump sum grant for their loss in the amounts of a minimum of USD 2,500 up to a maximum of USD 100,000, depending on the extent of their assessed loss, with the highest amount being given in case of a death. The Libya crisis returnees were however given lower compensation grants, amounting to only BDT 50,000 as a grant. What is remarkable is that almost all the returnees (an estimated 80 to 90%) went back to Libya and other countries in the Middle East as one of the key informants narrated:

...Counselling when disbursing the money to the beneficiaries on what they could do with it for their livelihoods. It also depends on the situation, for example in Iraq, two types of properties are there. One is cash money and the other is usable goods. Normally in the war period, it is damaged; you cannot get it back. ... That's why in the United Nations compensation they had five to six categories: (a) how much you have lost; (b) whether the money was in the bank or not; (c) whether some cash money was at home; (d) some furniture; (e) some household appliances, and particularly for the bank accounts, it is very easy to get it. There is a record and other things ... for other things, they declared a lump sum grant for that ... And normally the migrant workers don't have any immovable properties there – land and other things – it is not there because they cannot buy land or houses ...

particularly for the migrant workers ... but for other valuables, during this Gulf War, UNCC starting from USD 2,000 ... USD 2,500 to even USD 100,000 ... depending on their loss ... and he is to put some papers in this way, the goods are there ... This is the voucher and other things they want proof ... but for the Libya crisis, there was no such compensation... only BDT 50,000 as grant ... but the migrant workers, almost 38,000 of them came back, but again almost all, almost ... around 80 to 90 per cent went back again ... for loss of life, actually in the Middle East, Libya crisis, we could not give some extra money to them because we have the provision for giving BDT 300,000 for death cases.

This high rate of remigration among those who had undergone the Libya crisis suggests the need to strengthen the livelihoods support options available for the returnees. However, a comparative study looking at the remigration rates of those who received the United Nations reintegration assistance compared to those from Libya might help clarify if the higher remigration among the latter group can be attributed to lower amounts of reintegration assistance provided. In the Libya crisis, the provision in case of death was BDT 300,000. This amount is applicable for all cases of Bangladeshis who suffer a death loss. Proof of the poor level of education and information-sharing among the migrants is that a small number of the returnees failed to complete and file the required forms and missed out on payment because they thought the Government would not pay.

One gap in understanding the success or failure of these post-return interventions is that no study has been done to try and understand the return and reintegration experiences and challenges of those affected in Bangladesh. There is still an opportunity to do follow-up studies with the Libya returnees since the BMET records and UNCC data provide information that would facilitate relative ease to trace them. However, the opportunity has been lost in the case of the returnees from Iraq because the related UNCC database that had been designed by UNCC is held on an outdated software, which makes it difficult to retrieve the information.

3.5.8. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

One of the examples of best practices in migration crisis assistance is the experience the country has gained in responding to the Rohingya crisis. The established cooperation and assistance received from IOM and other international partners – as was also the case with the assistance to the returnees from Libya, which took only one month because of the good working relationship – were regarded as good examples to be emulated. This model of cooperation showed the need to take the strength from the local role players and bring reinforcement from international assistance, in this case from IOM. This allowed the whole exercise to leverage localized solutions that provide clearer perspective and approaches on how to deal with the problems and reduced dependence on outside help.

The humane treatment of migrants was also called for to avoid the repetition of the experience in Malaysia, when the Andaman Sea crisis victims were held in chains like criminals. The efforts of one of the key informants helped end the practice of putting chains on the victims when he took photos and published them in the media, leading to a public uproar. This incident underscores the need to treat each migrant with dignity as a person with full human rights. There is a need to empathize with persons caught up in migration crisis, which will help in preventing suffering and loss of life.

Another innovative approach recommended by both the International Centre for Climate Change and Development and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies is the need to deal with climate migration and recognize it as a new phenomenon, as it is acknowledged as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process in the Marrakech Declaration. This would require that diplomats be taken through courses in climate diplomacy as part of their training before deployment.

On the preparedness side, innovative ideas for the sharing of information with migrants, raising their awareness and training them included using information booths in communities to reach even those who are reluctant to approach local offices set up in Bangladesh for migrant workers. This would

constitute a big contribution towards providing credible and timely information to migrants so that they make informed decisions to migrate. The philosophy guiding this approach is that it is worth spending more at this stage on information and preparedness before migrants depart, which would lower their levels of vulnerability to reduce losses and consequently lose related costs during and after crises. A World Bank and BRAC joint initiative (the Safe Migration Project) had the aim of attempting to close this information gap by developing and disseminating information and working with middlepersons to ensure that they are sharing accurate information to prospective migrants in Bangladesh so that they make “informed decisions” to migrate or not. Similar initiatives by IOM, UNDP, UN-Women and other agencies have been initiated to raise awareness among prospective migrants on the risks involved during migration and at destination countries. The provision of “migrant friendly” services that are available 24/7 – such as those currently offered by the governments of Sri Lanka and the Philippines – is an example of a measure aimed at reducing their vulnerability, and was suggested as something that Bangladesh should adopt.

There is also the need to leverage the well-educated and professional section of Bangladesh diaspora in responding during times of crisis to tap into customs and norms of cooperation across social groups that are well established in Bangladesh culture, as is done by the Philippines and Indian communities abroad. This would make the professionals the first people to respond and offer shelter and other assistance to their fellow Bangladeshis outside the country. This represents a shift that would regard migrants as an asset themselves in response during a crisis. However, these arrangements need to be formalized to connect these first responders with embassies and consulates of Bangladesh in countries of destination. Hence, even though many of them do this spontaneously by assisting their fellow compatriots in the event of a crisis, it would be useful to capture that spontaneity and not depend on it entirely, but leverage it to create an accepted and more structured way of assisting affected persons during a crisis. The embassies would need to work to then identify a group of Bangladesh professionals

with whom they engage on migrant-related issues and leverage on their varied skill sets during crisis to provide a variety of services, such as interpretation and legal assistance (in addition to shelter and basic relief assistance). This would be a departure from the current practice where the embassy typically invites Bangladesh diaspora for four or five events at the embassy every year but retains no ongoing connection with them.

A best practice approach that is being implemented jointly by the UNDP advocates for a rights-based approach to assisting migrants. The initiative that is jointly implemented with the Government of Bangladesh is called Access to Information (or in short A2I). The project was piloted in three Gulf States with the introduction of call centres and a digital office, offering support to migrants, particularly unskilled migrants, and receiving complaints and corresponding with the Bangladesh concerned ministries so that they can address their issues and rights. This is a unique

platform that can also be instrumental in assisting them during crisis.

In terms of using strong training programmes to prepare migrants and diplomats in countries where migrants are destined, the example of the Philippines was seen as a best practice to be emulated. In addition to the strong wages and rights bargaining position it confers on the sending country, it also strengthens the migrants and consulates at destination countries in being able to respond to crises and reducing the impact. At the same time, the enhanced human skills conferred to the migrants ensures that they have a more diverse choice of destination countries where they can take their skills, some of which have lower risk of crises. The Philippines have achieved this by partnering with private companies to offer the training and work with the migrants, in realization of the limited reach and capacity of their diplomatic missions to provide the support required by a large number of migrant workers.

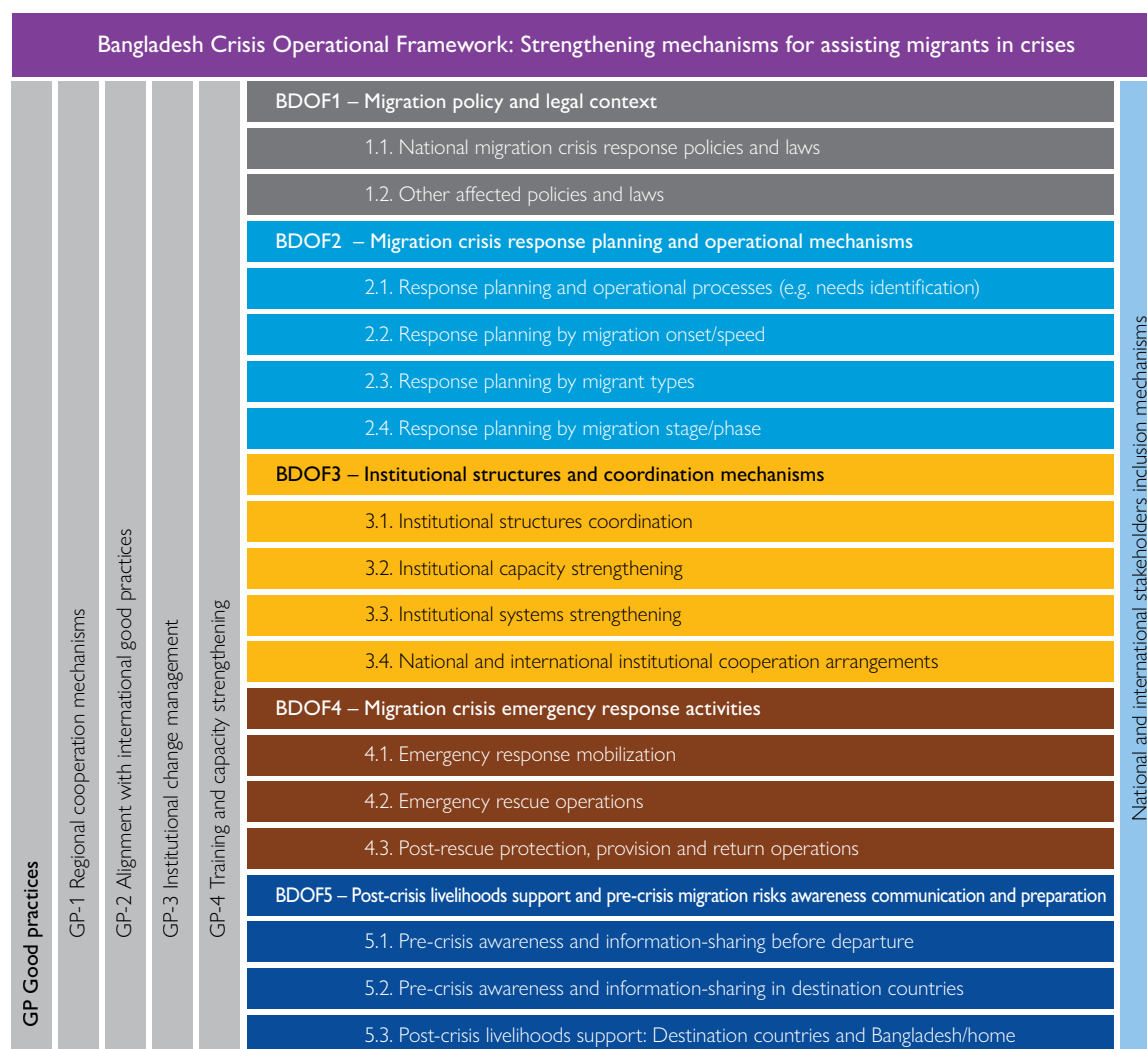
4. KEY PILLARS OF THE PROPOSED BANGLADESH MIGRATION CRISIS OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK



The proposed Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework is discussed in detail in this section and illustrated using key pillars, hereinafter referred to as Migration Crisis Operation Pillars (MCOFPs), as shown in Figures 13 and 14. Figure 13 provides an overview of the components or pillars of the framework, from policy and legal context to the actual emergency response operations. The cross-cutting nature of ensuring best practices and stakeholder involvement at all levels is highlighted. Figure 14 provides further depiction of the interrelations between the different pillars and begins to drill deeper into the actual activities involved for each of the pillars. From this, it is possible to see the specific actions required in line with the information gathered through data collection and consultations carried out in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Malaysia discussed above and also in line with the MICIC Guidelines and MCOF, as applicable guidelines tailored to the Bangladesh national context. It is recommended that the MCOFPs be used to specify the functions and roles of each of the key agencies in migration crisis response through specification of the

key responsible Government of Bangladesh ministry or agency for each pillar according to its unique competency and statutory mandate as illustrated in Table 4. The detailed specification will show for each pillar which is the leading agency, and can be expanded in preparation for implementation to include other agencies that may play secondary roles. It is recommended that this initial specification in Table 4 be refined through a consultative process to cover as many of the roles as possible, and later have it reflected in an amended relevant legal instrument or standing order as the recommended (though not exclusive) specification for assisting Bangladesh nationals caught up in countries in crisis. Under this structure, each of the MCOFP will have a specified coordinator aligned with their core mandate and capability in the crisis response value chain. A central Bangladesh migration crisis management committee should then be established, drawing on the model of similar leading agencies, such as the Philippines Crisis Management and Security Committee (CMT) highlighted in the section describing best practices.

Figure 13. Pillars in the Bangladesh Crisis Operational Framework



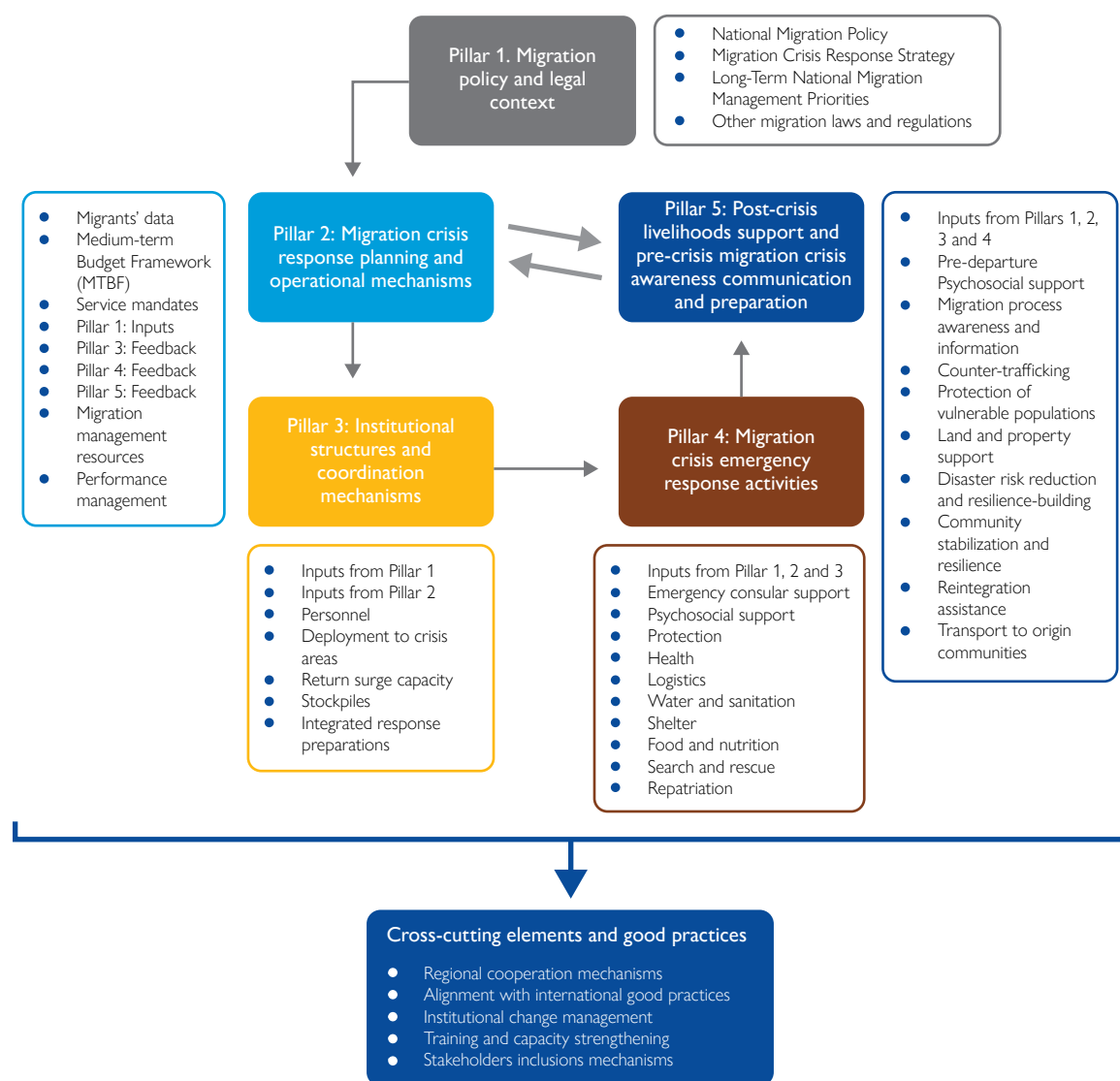
The details shown in Figure 14 point to the interrelations between the pillars and linkages that are required in policy, planning, coordination and execution of emergency support activities for nationals affected by crises abroad. Beginning with policy and legal context that governs the management of migration, it highlights the need to specify the “emergency” or “crisis” aspect of responding to the many challenges that Bangladesh—as a migrant-sending country—ought to confront in its broader national migration policy as an initial foundational pillar. This would provide the necessary mandates and statutory

clarity on how the specific planning of migration crisis response would be handled as a second essential pillar. The planning would also help in enabling a crucial third pillar, namely having ready the necessary operational preparedness to respond with required assistance for migrants in various countries when crises occur in their host countries. These first three pillars will have laid the necessary groundwork to ensure that when the actual emergency response activities in the fourth pillar are being carried out during a crisis, they are grounded on solid policy and legal mechanisms, based on sound prior scenario planning and anchored on

well-fabricated structured coordination mechanisms. The fifth pillar of emergency awareness before and during migration, as well as livelihoods support activities after repatriation, would take care of pre-emptive work of sharing information with migrants on one hand and supporting returnees and their families to rebuild their lives after surviving a crisis on the other hand. All these must be buttressed by an intentional adoption of good practices gained from

prior emergency response experiences both inside Bangladesh and outside when responding to the crises described above. It should also be flavoured with experiences gathered from international and regional experiences as part of a studied understanding of other sending countries' experiences. These pillars are further elaborated in detail below, taking the findings from the consultative process into consideration.

Figure 14. Interrelations between the pillars in the Bangladesh Crisis Operational Framework



4.1. PILLAR 1: MIGRATION POLICY AND LEGAL CONTEXT

The policy and legal context as shown in Figures 13 and 14 is foundational for effective planning, coordination and actual operational emergency assistance to Bangladeshis caught in countries in crisis. Institutions and individuals involved in planning and actual provision of assistance to Bangladeshis caught up in countries in crisis should derive their execution authority from the law. Policy will elaborate the strategic importance of providing assistance, and the law will specify the legal mechanisms on which to base the institutions' activities. Thus, a strategic preparedness and administrative clarity thrust will characterize the assistance provided to Bangladesh nationals affected by emergencies when they are in other countries or in transit. This framework further discusses and recommends specific recognition of these requirements in the national migration policies and laws.

4.1.1. MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE POLICIES AND LAWS

Some gaps were exposed during the data collection that was undertaken through FGDs and KIs and during the review of current policies and laws related to international migration. There is a need to ensure that assistance to Bangladesh migrants caught up in countries in crisis is provided within established policy and legal parameters. The existing laws and regulations that relate to migrants are listed in Table 2. There seems to be an agreement that what needs to be done is to strengthen the provisions of OEMA 2013 to guide the front-line ministries in catering for the requirements and imperatives of saving the lives of Bangladeshis during crisis and providing adequate assistance to them before, during and after the crises. The enactment of a new specific policy directed at migration crisis response was not seen as necessary, but provisions within the existing national migration policy and other relevant legal instruments would be sufficient.

For assistance to migrants caught in countries in crisis, the amendment should specify the required strategic planning cycles, required planning reports, responsible institutions and set such other statutory

requirements as necessary while indicating who the responsible officials are in the identified institutions. Although emergencies cannot be fitted within regular fiscal planning cycles, the policy should require the preparation of a national migration crisis response strategy that should include the following: (a) a section reviewing migration trends using data from BMET and other sources; (b) recent migration crisis events and numbers of affected Bangladesh nationals; and (c) regional risks analysis, vulnerabilities, institutional capacity and cooperation agreements in place for assistance to Bangladesh nationals. It should also review the available resources and international donor environment for rapid funding mobilization. The document should also summarize Bangladesh's long-term migration management priorities and clearly articulate how those priorities align with the national development plans and priorities.

Where possible, the national migration crisis response strategy should provide high-level guidance for the other pillars in the migration crisis framework shown in Figure 14. That would mean specifying the statutory requirements for all the pillars and, where possible, specify forms, templates and timelines for preparation and submission of certain planning and reporting documents. Such overall guidance will in turn be used by responsible ministries and agencies in resource planning and organizational capacity requirements specifications. Because of the changes in global migration context and in order to factor in new developments, the amendment should specify the frequency with which the national response strategy document should be updated. A similar specification should be made for the long-term national migration management priorities publication proposed under pillar 1 in Figure 14.

The long-term national migration management priorities publication would be aligned with Bangladesh's long-term planning, such as the Seventh Five-year Plan previously discussed. However, it should reflect a refined understanding of trends in international migration, the labour markets and other global circumstances. The document would, for example, offer proposals for diversifying skill sets being exported to countries where there is labour demand and indicate how that may be met through

training, language skills programmes, collective wage bargaining agreements through such initiatives as the Colombo Process, as well as how to leverage on the diaspora for accelerated realization of development targets in the five-year plan by reducing migrants' vulnerability to crises in countries where they live and work.

4.1.2. OTHER AFFECTED POLICIES AND LAWS

In addition to the policies that are proximate to migration crisis response, there are other secondary policies and laws that have a bearing on the success of operations aimed at providing assistance to Bangladesh migrants caught in countries in crisis. What is required in the case of these laws is for them to have provisions relating to migration crisis response that are considered in preparing the strategic documents proposed under pillar 1. These include the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012; Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012; Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (Amended 2013); NHRC Act; National Women Development Policy 2011 (which establishes non-discrimination of women); Bangladesh Passport Order (PO No. 9 of 1973); Bangladesh Passport Rules 1974 (rule 11); Bangladesh Citizenship Order (1972) (which provides for dual citizenship for Bangladesh nationals); Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 (which commits Bangladesh to provide assistance to its nationals abroad through its consulates); and National Skills Development Policy 2012 (which provides for the diversification of skills for migrant workers).

4.2. PILLAR 2: MIGRATION CRISIS RESPONSE PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL MECHANISMS

The success of emergency assistance to Bangladesh migrants during crises that they face while in transit or in destination countries will also depend on the deployment and efficiency of personnel, resources and institutions with the mandate to provide assistance. The required efficiency can only be achieved through careful preparedness, taking into account such factors as onset or speed of crises, migrant crisis types and the stages of the migration crisis, as recommended in the MICIC Guidelines and

in the MCOF guidelines. It also important to bear in mind the levels of vulnerability among the migrants themselves, with undocumented migrants, women, children and persons with disabilities (PWDs) being at higher risk and therefore requiring innovative methods for outreach and provision of assistance. The proposed improvements to ensure enhanced planning and operational efficiency are discussed in further details below.

To ensure the planning by onset, type and stage is effective when implemented during a crisis, there are elements that should be applied at every stage and that will provide a firm foundation for success. One of those elements is the use of data and information, which was acknowledged by the key informants during the consultative meetings. It is currently only being applied on a limited basis, even though very good data is collected by BMET. The so called manpower smartcards issued to migrants contain useful data, but there is still room to use the data in preparing analytical and academic reports. Embassies and missions abroad also collect information as part of their consular work in destination countries. To a large extent, it is possible, with available information, to map out locations of Bangladesh nationals abroad in aggregate terms and even attempt risks and scenario planning similar to what is done for cyclone preparedness by the Bangladesh NDMC.

Some of the front-line ministries and agencies like MoHA, MoEWOE, BMET and PKB are allocated funding under the national MTBF. These rapid drawdown and regular fiscal cycle budgetary allocations have been used in past crises for assisting migrants, especially with return and resettlement. These agencies draw on these funds for use in emergency assistance to migrants based on specific mandates. These mandates may need to be amended to spell out clearly the specific planning for emergency assistance for nationals affected by crises abroad as a specific activity category. This distinction in the service mandate should be accompanied by line item budgeting allocation to provide the needed human and other resources for providing the assistance. One of the recommendations made by some of the key informants was the need to have dedicated cadres who are trained on responding to migration crises

and who should be retained in these key institutions. The budgetary allocation for convening the training would be made to MoFA, who would then receive nominations from the ministries of Labour, Home Affairs and MoEWOE. Along with the specification of the roles of the human resources in these ministries would also be a detailed responsibility assignment matrix, RASCI,¹² which would be used for defining the performance management and evaluation measures for all those with a role to play in assisting Bangladesh migrants caught up in countries in crisis.

However, the planning needs to be done using a continuous improvement approach that takes lessons from previous interventions. As shown in Figure 14, this means that pillar 2 has to be further iteratively strengthened with inputs from pillar 1's updates from the policy context, and also from pillars 3 to 5. This implies that experiences from operational activities in crisis preparedness and response, as well as from migrants in crises, experiences from the actual rescue activities and also from the interventions preceding the migrants undertaking the doomed journeys together or for their return and reintegration will be used to strengthen the planning.

The data used in the section that discusses the Bangladesh national context as a sending country highlights the predominance of labour migration as the main type and reason of migration to various destination countries. Most of the labour migration occurs under MoUs and BLAs signed with destination countries and is brokered by labour recruiting companies or agents in both Bangladesh and receiving countries as previously discussed. Although labour migration accounts for over 70 per cent of migration, other types of migration also occur and are on the rise, including those migrating for further studies, family reunification, tourism, religious festivals and of higher skilled workers moving predominantly to North American and European destinations. These migration types are characterized by migrants who are documented and who use regular migration channels, even though some of them may later become undocumented for reasons such as

visa overstay and change of employers. These documented migrants are easy to reach during crisis, as they are willing to reach out for assistance from the consulate and even host country government and humanitarian organizations. They are also likely to be better educated and hence well informed of the steps they need to take to evacuate to safety.

The other type of migrants are those who are undocumented, as illustrated in the poignant stories of those who had been smuggled and were rescued in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman seas. Their own accounts of how they got into the crisis, narrated in the vignettes above, paint a picture of migrants from relatively poor households who are lured with the promise that migrating to those countries will help them escape poverty back in Bangladesh. They are therefore vulnerable before they even leave the country. When they successfully arrive in countries where they are smuggled to, they remain undocumented and exposed to exploitation and abuse at the hands of employers and others who are involved in the human smuggling and trafficking business. Because they are also unwilling to contact authorities or even Bangladesh missions abroad, they are harder to reach both before and during crises and are therefore at higher risk.

Women migrants, children and PWDs have higher levels of vulnerability that becomes acute during crises. When the crisis is a conflict, they become particularly prone to sexual violence, trafficking and enslavement. In some cases, women workers are already in enslaved conditions with restrictions to their movement, and limited access to media and means of communication, further making it even more difficult for them to appeal for assistance during a crisis. Some of the innovative approaches suggested by key informants during consultations are that the embassies of Bangladesh should tap into the migrant communities' networks by identifying persons who are well known in those communities and formally working with them on evacuation plans that would be used during crisis.

¹² Responsible, accountable, support, consulted, informed.

These broad planning elements would be adopted for the different migration crisis events but would need to be adjusted to suit each crisis' onset or speed, type and stage. Some proposed planning approaches for these different migration situations are discussed further below.

4.2.1. RESPONSE PLANNING BY MIGRATION CRISIS ONSET/SPEED

Crises in countries of destination may occur rapidly or may have a slower onset. Natural disasters, such as tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, human-caused disasters such as terrorist attacks, xenophobic attacks, unforeseen multiple-casualty accidents at constructions sites, factories or residential areas and political unrests all tend to develop fast and can engulf cities, regions inside a country, an entire country or multiple countries, leaving little or no time to get out of harm's way. When they catch many of the victims unprepared, this may lead to higher levels of material loss and higher numbers of lives lost. Slower-onset crises, such as cyclones, monsoon rains, slow-onset political conflict, large-scale deportations and certain types of epidemics may provide some time for preparing to evacuate, although they may still lead to high casualties especially droughts and famines. Between these two extremes are other crises, such as abandonment in seas or other transit places similar to the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea crisis and the more recent incidents in the Mediterranean that pose extreme risk of loss of life and also provide a chance for rescue when vessels carrying migrants are intercepted at sea. The slow-onset crises offer an opportunity to put early warning systems and coordinated evacuation plans in place. They allow the utilization of data and information in planning ahead with estimates of population at risk, their location and plausible evacuation logistics. They also lend themselves to well-planned mobilization and coordination of rescue operations.

Due to the time window available for planning evacuations, the response to such crises tends to be well resourced both in terms of human resources, equipment and funding. There is also room for adopting lessons learned from previous operations elsewhere as part of the continuous improvement

process proposed above. Based on the successful cooperation of Bangladesh embassies with IOM, the Red Crescent, other United Nations agencies and local NGOs in previous responses to crisis in Libya and Iraq, adopting those lessons into a national plan and consular-level plans using the MCOF and MICIC templates for the different crises by onset is the most practical approach. Rather than continuing to rely on ad hoc response approaches, these plans will become easy and quick resources that lay out details such as the following: (a) profile of migrants at risk and their locations; (b) risks in the country; (c) emergency response zones; (d) crisis scenarios; (e) roles and responsibilities of the different actors; (f) coordination structures; (g) evacuation plan; (h) phases of the crisis; and (i) logistics. This structure – typical to many consular contingency plans of countries all around the world – contained in MICIC guidelines for embassies and consulates can then be adopted by MoFA with some amendments and used to prepare an umbrella or master plan that covers the ministry as the national lead agency.

4.2.2. RESPONSE PLANNING BY MIGRATION CRISIS TYPE

The types of crises and their differences in terms of onset also have intrinsic typological attributes that influence the type of risk that the migrants get exposed to, as well as needing unique responses. In the case of rapid-onset natural disasters (such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides and fires), the survival chances of at-risk migrants may be influenced by the quality of infrastructure. Migrants' levels of awareness, preparedness and ability to respond to warnings and evacuation orders issued by authorities would also minimize loss of property and lives. The actual emergency rescue planning here will be largely done by host country emergency authorities, which likely still will be operational and mandated to assist all affected persons. During interviews in the countries visited, it was reiterated that no distinction is made during rescue operations between citizens and foreigners, which though stated as an official position, does not negate higher levels of vulnerability among migrants due to factors such as language barriers and isolation.

With regards to the slow-onset crises like the weather-related ones, civil war, other forms of conflict, epidemics and large-scale deportations, there is much more room for MoFA through the embassies to put the provisions for evacuation contained in the consular response plan into action. The existing working relationships with first responder organizations such as IOM and Red Crescent together and with migrants' own groups and associations on the ground should be maintained through regular meetings and information-sharing events. This set of deliberately planned events by the embassy should be budgeted for and planned annually and included in the immigration and labour officials' performance contracts. To avoid this becoming merely just social occasions, there should be meeting agenda items and required reporting with briefing to the ambassador included in the contract. The issues coming out of these meetings should then be included in regular cable reports sent to the ministry in Dhaka, as well as well-structured thematic country situation reports.

The type of crises that lie between these two extremes, such as the recent Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea crisis and Libya's migrants crisis, presents a different challenge that requires innovative planning approaches. The difficulty in planning ahead for these types of crises is firstly because it is not possible to predict where they will occur. Secondly, the victims almost always are undocumented, and hence their travel status (including sometimes proof that they are Bangladesh nationals) have to be verified. Thirdly, the Government of Bangladesh only gets to know of the plight of the victims at the peak of the crisis when law enforcement agencies or other rescue organizations have responded and the Bangladesh nationals are either in a safe place, have suffered calamity or are in peril. The planning that is appropriate for these types of crisis is prevention and mitigation. In other words, cooperating with international partners and other governments to prevent smuggling and trafficking of Bangladesh nationals on one hand and on the other hand, stepping in when the victims are discovered to cooperate with partners, such as IOM and Red Crescent to return and resettle the victims back home.

Bearing in mind that migrants often have higher levels of vulnerability especially when they are undocumented,

the Bangladesh MoFA, working through the embassies and as part of its planning activities, should include frequent assessments of nationals at risk in various destination countries. Based on these assessments, it should then build mechanisms for coordinating with emergency authorities in those countries during crises. The Bangladesh consular plans prepared using MICIC templates for country response plans will also include these details. The consular plans are crucial in ensuring successful assistance to Bangladesh nationals during crises and the inclusion of a budget in them will ensure that they are well funded. However, the personnel and systems capacity for rapid assessments should be evaluated by MoFA in order to implement any increase in the numbers of personnel at the consulates that may be needed to provide higher demand for support during crises.

4.2.3. RESPONSE PLANNING BY MIGRATION CRISIS STAGE/PHASE

IOM (n.d.b) describes the three stages for which crisis response management actions needs to be taken as follows: (a) pre-crisis planning and interventions; (b) interventions during the crisis; and (c) post-crisis interventions. The pre-crisis planning and interventions stage is described as including “efforts to set up systems monitoring and/or anticipating the hazardous events in order to prevent or mitigate their impacts” (IOM, n.d.c:18). Thus, as described further in the section that lays out the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders, the efforts at this stage are aimed at preventing the occurrence of a crisis and protecting those at risk.

The interventions during the crisis are described as “efforts taking place in response to the hazardous events/process, in order to reduce their impacts on the affected people and systems – including, in particular, to contain its direct effects or address any additional needs incurred as a result of this event” (ibid.). As the wording suggests, this is the mitigation and response stage for the emergency agencies, with their efforts directed at reducing the impact of the crisis and thereby reducing the loss of life and property and meeting the immediate basic human needs of those affected.

Post-crisis interventions are described as “efforts that address the process/event’s impacts in order to help people recover from the crisis and overcome its impacts” (ibid.). These efforts at this stage are directed at ensuring that those affected individuals and communities recover from the impact and begin to rebuild their livelihoods. It is useful to split the efforts into those aimed at short-term recovery and those that are aimed at long-term recovery. The former serves to ease the affected migrants to transition to long-term recovery. There is, of course, a direct relationship between the severity of impacts that the crisis or hazard has had on the migrants and the scale and extent of recovery activities and assistance.

4.2.4. CRISIS SCENARIOS AND RESCUE PLANNING

Central to contingency planning is developing scenarios that help in getting a good understanding of specific challenges and impacts that a hazard or crisis may have on Bangladesh nationals at risk. As detailed in IOM’s *Reference handbook for consular staff* (n.d.c:58–60), the scenario planning should assess and simulate a hazard’s evolution by looking at its onset, its trigger site or area and the extent of the area it has impacted. It should also look at the nature of the impact it would have by looking at the number of affected migrants and the sort of impact it has had, the extent and type of impacts on their livelihoods, and their needs as a result of the impact. Other aspects that scenario planning should assess are its likely impact on the local area on infrastructure, environment and capacities of the local authorities and communities.

The scenario planning should also include the challenges that the hazard would pose in terms of its predictability or ability for forecasting its direction, intensity and impact, its impact on accessibility including communication, its potential to trigger other secondary impacts like earthquakes, landslides and so on, and what other forms of support may be needed to back up the local actors. The scenario need to be weighted by estimates of impacted populations by specific attributes, such as medical attention, PWDs, children, mental health cases and families.

4.3. PILLAR 3: INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS

A key pillar in ensuring successful assistance to Bangladeshis in countries in crisis is to ensure that the authority, roles and responsibilities of each institution and individual involved are clearly defined. This proposed clarity should be reflected in the structure of institutions involved and show how responsible individuals should coordinate with others inside of their institution and those in other institutions to guarantee efficient provision of assistance. The necessary capacity and systems strengthening will also be identified with the provision that budgets exist for implementing such interventions. IOM’s *Reference handbook for consular staff* (n.d.c) emphasizes that it is the country where the migrants are living during the crisis that is responsible for everyone within their territory regardless of origin or status. The institutional improvement discussed here relates mainly to Bangladesh-based government agencies and MoFA, which retains responsibility of assisting migrants in destination countries when there is a crisis through its consulates.

The institutional improvement approach proposed here is multipronged as it examines the key institutions, clarifying their roles and responsibilities, strengthening coordination and cooperation between them, strengthening their own internal coordination structure, strengthening their human resources capacity and strengthening their systems and procedural capacity.

4.3.1. KEY INSTITUTIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of key institutions are defined as much by their mandate and jurisdictional or geographical reach as by their level of involvement at the different stages of the migration crisis. Institutional mandates and jurisdictional area of operation may tend to restrict some of the institutions from participating in the activities for a specific phase, while other institutions may be able to participate at all stages. The roles before a crisis can be summed up as broadly falling under prevention and protection of migrants from embarking on dangerous journeys or from exploitation. The roles during crisis are

broadly aimed at mitigation and actual response. Mitigation seeks to lessen the impact of the hazard and therefore reduce the loss of life and property. Response seeks to save lives, meet all the basic human needs and protect property and other valuables of the migrants. The role after a crisis is that of recovery, which involves assisting victims and their communities to rebuild their livelihoods after a crisis.

The occurrence of crises affecting Bangladesh migrants in other countries places primary responsibility for immediate assistance on the MoFA through its consular representatives and the MoEWOE through its Labour Welfare Wings at consulates. They would work with the affected country's emergency response agencies and international organizations such as IOM to provide emergency life-saving assistance and evacuation.

The consular crisis response plan would also kick into effect, allowing officials to deploy personnel in providing services to affected Bangladesh nationals. The consular staff should ensure that they reach Bangladesh nationals despite factors that may make it difficult to access assistance or understand instructions, such as language barriers, fear of the host country's authorities, immigration status, gender and relationship with workplace supervisors or employers. This also means having any material with information relevant to the hazard translated beforehand into Bangla. It also means being able to use other media preferred by Bangladesh migrants in that country to send information on hazard preparedness and evacuation instructions. Where social media is used, the consular officials need to signal how to verify the reliability of the information shared by indicating alternative media sites or contacts who may validate what is communicated.

The experience of Libyan returnees highlighted some of the obstacles that migrants face when they need to evacuate quickly from a life-threatening hazard. These obstacles include the following: (a) real threat of violence targeted at migrants for reasons including xenophobia and theft; (b) blocked, barricaded or damaged roads identified as evacuation routes in the response plan; and (c) lack of enough means of transportation available to move the migrants

to safety (or, when such transport is available, the charges may be too high). Other obstacles include the employers withholding travel documents and payment due to the migrants and also kidnapping for ransom. The consular staff would have to work closely with emergency response agencies of the affected country and other partners in identifying where all those affected in any of the above situations are located and providing assistance by available means.

The support to Bangladesh nationals once evacuated may now shift to providing basic services, verification of nationality, psychosocial support, putting them in touch with family members in Bangladesh, issuance of travel documents and assistance with travel back to Bangladesh for those willing to return. The labour officials in the embassy will also need to provide assistance related to ensuring workers get their pay, other forms of compensation according to their contracts, and also assist with arrangements to repatriate any other benefits due to them for those wishing to return. Those wishing to remain may require assistance to return to work through existing or extended contracts. In instances where the hazard is in the form of xenophobic attacks (such as in South Africa in 2008, Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and other places where businesses owned by Bangladesh nationals were disrupted), then consular staff will have to provide assistance in quantifying the loss and finding ways of pursuing compensation claims.

Institutions in Bangladesh play a significant role particularly in the pre-crisis and post-crisis phases when migrants are preparing to leave or in transit and when they return following rescue. The awareness-raising activities for migrants before they embark on the journey needs to focus on preventing illicit smuggling and trafficking and also all other forms of exploitation. There are programmes implemented through BMET, BRAC, United Nations agencies, MoEWOE and other NGOs and CBOs in Bangladesh that need to be strengthened to include more preparation for hazards and crises in countries of destination. At the forefront of these activities should be BMET through its DEMOs and technical training institutes. Information that is not strictly meant for labour migrants but aimed at all migrants can be disseminated through this vast network of

offices. BMET's many training and pre-departure programmes, including for female domestic workers, need to be strengthened to include modules on crises preparedness. The Government's manual on compulsory pre-departure briefing, prepared with technical assistance from ILO, should also include the crisis preparedness modules. It should also be a requirement that all NGOs, migrants' rights organizations, United Nations agencies and other international organizations provide pre-departure briefing and training.

When migrants return from a country affected by crisis, their needs as – expressed in the FGDs previously summarized – are mainly counselling or psychosocial support, financial support for their immediate needs and longer-term livelihood support, and assistance with accessing all forms of State assistance, as well as compensation related to their loss or loss of life from other institutions like the UNCC. This means that the agencies taking up these roles and responsibilities are not merely those with statutory mandate to deal with migrants as summarized above. The responsibility extends to other agencies, CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, unions, human rights organizations and activities and judiciary officials. The range of issues involved here implies inclusion of more stakeholders, especially because assistance extends beyond the individual returnee to their family and eventually to the community.

Institutions at the forefront of resettlement and reintegration assistance to returnees from countries in crisis have in the past (as was the case with the 2012 returnees from Libya) received support from IOM, UN-Women and other NGOs in resettlement and reintegration to returnees. PKB offers loans against collateral for the returnees to start businesses while BRAC offered the Libya returnees resettlement assistance of BDT 100,000 unconditional grant and psychosocial support. This is one area that, as a useful link to community-level development, can benefit from increased involvement of stakeholders particularly because the high rate of repeat migration pointed to the persistence of the same socioeconomic incentives leading migrants to seek opportunities overseas. It also offers room for innovative approaches, such as those being adopted

by BRAC to tap into the experiences of returnees themselves as part of the team that works with other returnees to provide these vital services. The kind of bilateral cooperation envisaged in the ICRMW Article 67 paragraph 2 would need to be explored as it encourages States parties to cooperate in order to create sufficient economic opportunities for the resettlement of migrant workers and their durable social and cultural reintegration in the State of origin (United Nations, 2016:48).

The roles of recruiting agencies, employers, other private sectors stakeholders, non-civilian agencies and migrants themselves has a bearing on all crisis stages even though they may individually be involved with one element in the migration process. The umbrella organization of recruiting agencies in Bangladesh (BAIRA) plays a constructive role in negotiating labour export MoU terms, regional and international collective bargaining efforts, actual recruitment, pre-departure briefings, actual travel bookings and connecting migrants with employers in the country of destination.

4.3.2. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS

The roles and responsibilities of the different institutions working from before crisis, during and after the crisis often overlaps and therefore requires cooperation in order to provide assistance effectively and efficiently. At each stage of the crisis, effective response depends to a large extent on tiered single-command response that is driven through standing orders, but that remains flexible and scalable. As previously noted, the immediate emergency response in the country of destination is handled firstly by local authorities, NGOs and other first responders at the site of the hazard. These are often working through a well-planned incidence response command structures and therefore receive support and overall direction from national structures in that country. The consular staff in the embassy of Bangladesh would therefore, as per the demands of protocol, only have access to local information on the hazard through these established structures. The subject of institutional cooperation among these agencies

in the country of destination therefore falls outside the scope of this framework. What is critical is to clarify how Bangladesh consular officials are linked to the response and therefore are able to cooperate with the national agencies to provide assistance to Bangladesh nationals.

However, consular staff at Bangladesh embassies can, through their response planning work, with those institutions with a presence in locations where Bangladesh nationals are living, working, visiting or transiting that they have identified when preparing the stakeholder assessment part of the response plan.

Bangladesh's military is a key player in disasters response domestically and has actively participated in regional disaster response exercises. Although these efforts are oriented to the Bangladesh national (domestic) disaster response coordination architecture (Humanitarian Response, n.d.), they involve international partners. The eighth such exercise was conducted in 2017, the Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange. The exercise involved 13 nations, including the United States, and was co-sponsored by Bangladesh's Armed Forces Division, MoDMR and the US Pacific Command. The Bangladesh's Armed Forces Division is one of the 10 members of the Bangladesh National Disaster Response Coordination Group.

4.3.3 INSTITUTIONAL INTERNAL COORDINATION

Each of the key stakeholders identified in this framework document will, upon adoption, be required to prepare an Organizational Support Plan (OSP) that shows how and to whom it will vest the various responsibilities for its implementation and how they will work in a coordinated way in migration crisis response. This may have implications for change management and lead to collective bargaining negotiations if new duties are added to existing positions on ministries and other government agencies organizations. The purpose of internal coordination in these institutions is to ensure that the different responsible structures and processes within it are unified in the delivery of its capability and responsibility in responding to any migration

crisis incident. The following elements will need to be specified in the organization plan prepared to support the implementation of the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework:

- Key internal departments involved and their roles;
- Key managers involved and their roles and responsibilities;
- Key performance management indicators;
- Responsibility assignment matrix (RASCI);
- Key counterpart ministries and partner agencies points of contact for coordination;
- Budgetary implications.

4.3.4. INSTITUTIONAL HUMAN CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

All the key stakeholders' institutions within the Government of Bangladesh should also embark on a process of strengthening their human resource capacity to implement the intent of this framework. The strengthening of their internal human resources capacity will ensure that each one has acquired effective and efficient institutional capacity for the delivery of reliable life-saving interventions during migration crises affecting Bangladesh nationals. This process will follow naturally from the requirements revealed during the OSP planning. The following activities will need to be implemented to strengthen the human resources who will be responsible for implementing the framework:

- Skills audit to show new skills and competence requirements for implementing the framework;
- Skills upgrading and technical competence training;
- Social and cultural reorientation;
- Retention and recruitment strategy;
- Pay scales review.

Apart from a long-term national requirement to establish an emergency management centre that would have some courses focused on migration crises, at the institutional level, there is much that can

be done to enhance both technical skills and social skills required when assisting Bangladesh migrants in general and those affected by crises in particular. The migrant-friendly approach that is adopted by Sri Lanka and Nepal of providing 24-hour information and service centres can be easily implemented using existing infrastructure and regional offices of agencies under MoEWOE, such as PKB and BMET. Such an approach would meet the twin objective of providing longer-term national migration disaster management capacity and the shorter-term objective of equipping migrants and returnees with the skills they need to find well-paying work and also skills for resettlement and reintegration respectively. This would fit in with the Seventh Five-Year Plan's strategic objective of diversifying skills of migrants and consequently labour export destinations. The capacity needed to implement this radical improvement in skills will need to be increased in front-line ministry and also strategic partnerships with organizations, such as ILO, BRAC, IOM and others.

4.3.5. INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURAL STRENGTHENING

As the numbers of migrants from Bangladesh increase and their destinations also increase, the scale and frequency of crises that are likely to confront government agencies requires sophisticated systems and procedures. To adequately respond through the approaches proposed in this framework, key government institutions will also need to strengthen their hardware, software and procedures to better assist Bangladesh nationals in countries in crisis. The strengthening of systems and procedures is also an enabler of cooperation and coordination both at national and international levels because it equips agencies with the tools to bypass human error throughout the crisis response stages. This means strengthening hardware and software for early warning and deterrence, monitoring, research and analysis, reporting and for financial management. Procedural improvement means reorienting procedures to enhance organizational delivery of services aimed at assisting Bangladesh nationals affected by crises in countries of destination and while in transit.

Based on the responsibility assignment matrix (RASCI) generated from the process of systems and procedural strengthening, detailed process mapping specifying steps to be followed, authorization stages and required completion of standard forms and templates will be undertaken. All the key stakeholder ministries and agencies working under them will then need sufficient systems in place and contingency arrangements for records management and business continuity backup plans to safeguard their systems.

4.4. PILLAR 4: MIGRATION CRISIS EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The actual emergency response to assist Bangladesh migrants will occur in the countries where they are located or in transit. This places a large measure of the responsibility to ensure that appropriate assistance is provided on the foreign missions of Bangladesh. However, the missions may not in and of themselves have the requisite logistical capacity or resources to reach all affected Bangladesh nationals but will have to work with destination country emergency rescue agencies. Notwithstanding the limitations in their operational reach, it is important to clarify what assistance that they ought to ensure is provided to those affected Bangladeshis based on the different needs that arise for those affected in a crisis. These emergency assistance activities are discussed in further details below.

4.4.1. EMERGENCY RESPONSE MOBILIZATION

IOM's *Reference handbook for consular staff* highlights what needs to be done in terms of mobilization by stating that "the mobilization and use of resources available for crisis planning and response purposes should be coordinated with other actors working within the crisis area (e.g. the host country's emergency preparedness and response, local CSOs, private sector and the nationals' groups and organizations), as well as with other consular posts and institutions in the country or in the region, Emergency Response Teams and other assistance structures at capital level, or third countries with which cooperation agreements might exist" (IOM, n.d.c:61). Due to the limited resources and capacity at most of the embassies of Bangladesh, IOM's *Reference handbook for consular staff* suggests

to plan beforehand for assistance with mobilization by consulting embassies of friendly countries with a request for assistance should a crisis occur affecting its nationals in that country.

Limitations on the embassy notwithstanding, whatever resources are available in terms of human, assets and financial resources will have to be rapidly mobilized to respond to the emergency. The specific aspects of rapid mobilization include the following:

- Activating emergency advisory alert for Bangladesh nationals using identified media and other methods. This should be done through consular emergency communication staff.
- Specify alert level indicating if the hazard is imminent, in progress or has taken place.
- Put in place all personnel involved in response.
- Initiate rapid drawdown of funds for emergency assistance.
- Set up incident management central post and regional posts where Bangladesh nationals are found.
- Mobilize all tools and equipment for provision of emergency basic needs (water, sanitation, health, protection, food, shelter and transport).

4.4.2. EMERGENCY RESCUE OPERATIONS

This emergency operations for rescuing Bangladesh nationals should roll out in phase 2 identified in IOM's *Reference handbook for consular staff*, which is labelled "leave unless you must remain" or "leave if it's safe to do so" phase. It also covers phase 3 labelled "get out without delay". Phase 4 ("closure of mission and withdrawal of staff") when the missions would be closed needs to include an indication of the essential staff that is left or the alternative locations where consular emergency assistance can be provided after the closure and evacuation of the consulate.

At the start of phase 2, the consular staff should have already coordinated with local authorities, volunteers and humanitarian aid groups with information regarding Bangladesh nationals at risk who will need to be rescued. Registration forms for Bangladesh nationals should be ready and used in the field during

the rescue to capture key information, including specific needs of the victims. Based on prior planning and rapid drawdown of emergency funds, extra staff should be hired and deployed to rescue nationals working closely with local rescue teams. The team should be equipped with maps, enabling them to locate victims, enough drivers and pilots to operate all transportation vehicles available for the rescue, and materials for registration with enough space to record all details of losses including death. Other materials and equipment needed for the operation as listed in the *IOM Reference handbook for consular staff* include the following:

- Communication equipment (plan for as many backup channels as possible);
- Up-to-date contact list, satellite telephone with instructions, extra batteries and chargers for cellular phones, laptop with spare batteries, crank-powered radio, drinking water and food, materials for issuing documentation;
- Blank passports and materials to issue passports or emergency documentation, such as application forms, scanner, photocopier, digital camera, stamps and stamp pads;
- Some ways to accept payments;
- Printed lists of service providers that victims can be referred to, by type of service and with contact details;
- Basic relief items including flashlights with batteries, search-and-rescue equipment, blankets, first aid supplies, flares, tents, clothes and all that may be necessary for the staff;
- Other materials, such as flags, note pads, blank signs, nameplates, felt-tip pens;
- Cash reserves.

These items would have to be procured early enough and stockpiled in easily accessible locations and regularly monitored using a well-maintained stockpile registration system. Consular staff responsible for emergency planning should be able to procure the items with short shelf life on short notice and manage their storage and transportation to affected nationals within the time window where they are needed most

in order to save lives and reduce the outbreak of disease.

4.4.3. POST-RESCUE PROTECTION AND RETURN OPERATIONS

Those rescued from hazard will then need to be evacuated to safe locations and provided protection. Those who are willing should also be provided with onward return assistance to Bangladesh. At this stage, the priority is to ensure continued preservation of life and safety through protection, provision of alternative shelter or accommodation, transportation to safe locations, assistance with nationality verification documents and contacts with other family members either in the affected country or in Bangladesh, and the actual return transportation back to Bangladesh. At this stage, the Bangladesh mission in the country, together with local and international agencies involved in protection and movement of migrants, plays a crucial role. In some instances, as in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa 2008 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2011, the affected nationals may only need transport to a safe location in the country where they are. In other situations, such as Libya 2012 and 2014 where civil conflict broke out, they will need to be returned to Bangladesh. The means of transportation may be arranged by the Bangladesh mission and other humanitarian actors when the crisis is severe. In other instances, those affected may still be able to use available means of transport to move to safer locations according to advice and communication from the consulate. In the case of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea crisis victims, the involvement of the Bangladesh missions was only after the victims were rescued from abandoned trawlers and placed in custody by Thailand and Malaysian authorities.

As the returnees from Libya indicated when they shared their experience during their evacuation from their locations in Libya when the war started in 2011, they became aware of the reception camps set up by the Embassy of Bangladesh in Libya, IOM and Red Crescent and then made the decision to make their way there. There are obstacles to consider that included facing the risk of violence on their way to the camp, difficulties finding transport (which was expensive or dangerous) and the risk of kidnapping

while on the way to the camp. These risks and others that migrants face during evacuation underscore the importance of protection and clear communication by the Bangladesh mission in the affected country on recommended transport routes to use and the available safe means of transport. Where possible, the missions should provide transport in coordination with other humanitarian actors.

For those nationals who decide to return to Bangladesh, they will almost always, unless they had purchased some emergency travel insurance, require the assistance from the Bangladesh mission in the country to book tickets for their trip back home. The means of transport can be by air, ship or trains. The experience from the Libya, Iraq and Andaman Sea crisis returnees shows that this exercise requires cooperation between Bangladesh missions, as well as the country's emergency response and law enforcement authorities and other international humanitarian organizations. The reception centres set up at Dhaka international airport – where NGOs and other humanitarian agencies brought volunteers to provide water, food and some cash transfers to the returnees – provides an excellent model.

Although most of the returnees' immediate need after the basic needs are met is to be reunited with their families once they return, there is a need to consider the special circumstances of sections of the returnees, such as female victims of abuse and exploitation, and make arrangements to provide temporary shelter where they can receive additional psychological support. This is the approach adopted by Sri Lanka and Nepal where facilities close to the international airport are used for this purpose.

4.5. PILLAR 5: POST-CRISIS LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT AND PRE-CRISIS MIGRATION RISKS AWARENESS COMMUNICATION AND PREPARATION

Two crucial aspects of assistance for migrants from Bangladesh arise before migration occurs and after a crisis. Although pre-crisis activities appear intuitively not to be relevant to emergencies, the need for working directly with those who may be affected in future crises before they occur is vital. This can be

strengthened beyond the current briefing activities by including recognition of the migrants' vulnerability to crises. Those who survive crisis often need assistance to support their livelihoods and settle back either in their host countries or back in Bangladesh after repatriation. These activities and the proposed ways to strengthen them are discussed in further details below.

4.5.1. POST-CRISIS LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES AND BANGLADESH/HOME COUNTRY

Following the successful rescue and evacuation discussed above, almost all those affected will require many forms of assistance either in the country where the crisis occurred or after returning to Bangladesh. Assistance in the destination country may simply mean the following: (a) reconnecting family members and employees with their employers; (b) facilitating immigration status amnesty and regularization for those who may be irregularly present in the affected country; and (c) providing financial and material assistance to rebuild businesses, psychological support and where there were injuries and health recovery. Those who decide to stay may also need assistance with reapplying for lost or damaged documents, such as passports, national identity and birth registration cards and qualification certificates. In certain cases, Bangladesh nationals may need legal assistance where earnings or other benefits have been lost or withheld by previous or current employers following a crisis.

Assistance for those who return to Bangladesh, like the experience of those from Libya and Andaman Sea crisis, begins right from the time they land when they are provided with some cash assistance from government agencies and IOM to enable them to travel to their final destinations. This is further accompanied by the legally allowed compensation from BMET depending on the extent of loss. For longer-term livelihood re-establishment, they receive grants from BMET, IOM, UN-Women and other humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh and in their communities. They are also provided with psychosocial support whose objective is to help them overcome the trauma experienced during the crisis and transition back to their communities where they

may face stigma directed at them and experience a sense of failure.

One of the biggest challenges that returnees face following a crisis is that they still owe recruiting agents money that they had borrowed to finance the migration trip. This places a huge burden on them and also on their household, which is one of the reasons that some of them used to justify why they chose to migrate again. The high level of indebtedness leads also to household-level crisis and difficulties in adjusting back to productive life for some. Extended psychosocial support and follow-up with other livelihood-based assistance while they are back in their communities should be done through local administration structures.

4.5.2. PRE-CRISIS AWARENESS AND INFORMATION-SHARING IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES

In the country where the crisis occurs, there are institutions at various levels from national government ministries to locally based community organizations that are the main avenues for disseminating information and early warning message when there is an impending hazard. However, as noted earlier, migrants may be excluded from the information due to language barriers, isolation or lack of access to media. This places a responsibility on the Bangladesh consular officials in destination countries to have a well-planned prevention and preparedness section in their response plan. The prevention and preparedness section would enable them to produce and disseminate awareness-raising materials delivered on media platforms that all Bangladesh nationals can access. They should also have an early warning and emergency communication system in place that is usable, reliable and scalable to reach Bangladesh nationals wherever they are. They should also have a prepared plan on how to reach Bangladesh nationals who may have specific vulnerabilities, such as special needs in areas where they are located with the early warning and preparedness messages.

These activities must be planned and rolled out with specific sensitivity to such needs that make Bangladesh migrants at heightened risk during crises. One of the

main factors include language barriers as previously pointed out where the messaging for early warning, awareness and evacuation instructions may be in a language and medium not understood or accessible to them. Another factor may be the overall sensitivity to cultural and religious norms when disseminating messages for emergency awareness and evacuation. In addition, migrants may not be reachable due to factors related to their immigration status, and also may have a heightened need for psychosocial support in the process of evacuation due to factors such as exposure to exploitation and abuse.

4.5.3. PRE-CRISIS AWARENESS, INFORMATION-SHARING AND TRAINING IN BANGLADESH FOR OUTBOUND MIGRANTS

While there is pre-departure training being provided for labour migrants who use the services of BAIRA member agencies and those registered by BMET, there is room for expanding the content and reach of the pre-departure briefing and training to include crisis awareness and preparedness. BMET's geographical reach in Bangladesh is extensive through its 42 district offices and 42 technical training institutes, which places it, as an agency of MoEWOE, in the best place to provide the crisis awareness and preparedness training. The MoEWOE itself has Welfare Desks in the 64 district offices of the Deputy Commissioners and three additional Welfare Desks at the three international airports for providing urgent on-the-spot 24-hour assistance to outbound labour migrants (United Nations, 2016:9). The footprint of these offices in the country that are all under the MoEWOE demonstrates its suitability to continue offering pre-departure awareness and training, but it would need to expand the content of the courses to include migration crisis issues. Under OEMA 2013, the Government has put in place rules to govern the conduct of recruiting agents that can also be amended to require them to provide crisis awareness and preparedness training to outbound migrants that they assist.

Regulation and enforcement of the pre-departure migration crisis awareness and training for regular migrants especially those who migrate under MoUs with destination countries is relatively easy to

implement. There are millions of other migrants from Bangladesh who travel for studies, as expatriates, tourists and as irregular undocumented migrants who should also be reached with the messaging on the potential hazards they may encounter while in transit or at destination countries. In addition to using social media, there should be information booths located close to district labour offices that would allow for the dissemination of information even to those who may be reluctant to engage with formal offices. To overcome the problem highlighted by some of the stakeholders who were consulted where middlepersons distort information, and, in order to counter the false information using accurate information for better migration decision-making, accurate information should be provided to them.

4.6. CROSS-CUTTING ELEMENTS AND GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FRAMEWORK

To tie all these pillars together, it is important to ensure that good practices are adopted and that some key elements that cut across or apply to all the pillars are included in the response policy, planning, coordination and emergency activities. These include regional cooperation mechanisms with sending and receiving countries, putting in place required changes in institutions responsible for implementing this framework while strengthening their capacity, and also most importantly, ensuring inclusion of migrants themselves in the entire crisis response value chain. These good practices and cross-cutting elements are briefly discussed in the next sections.

4.6.1. REGIONAL COOPERATION MECHANISMS

For Bangladesh, the key regional cooperation mechanisms for migration crisis response are the GFMD, HLD, SAARC, the SDGs, Colombo Process, Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the IAMM Initiative, which followed from the Berne Initiative. Bangladesh has also ratified many international conventions and treaties. The BLAs and MoUs signed with destination countries for Bangladesh labour migrants also add to the cooperation mechanisms regulating aspects of migration crisis response.

The leading destination countries for Bangladesh migrants are the Gulf States (Figure 5), which have not ratified most of the conventions and international treaties that protect migrant workers. This places the largest number of migrants from Bangladesh in heightened position of vulnerability. This is because without the protections offered under these treaties, the migrants' rights are often violated, which means that when crises arise, they may face difficulties accessing emergency assistance. The diplomatic negotiations urging these countries to ratify the relevant treaties and conventions should also go hand in hand with lobbying for IOM and ILO to open country offices in those countries. These organizations have proven to be reliable partners with the Government of Bangladesh when migration crises affected Bangladesh nationals, and their presence will offer a chance for rapid emergency evacuation when needed.

The BLAs and MoUs signed with destination countries need to reflect better protection of Bangladesh workers in terms of wages and also migration crisis protection. The regional Colombo Process platform offers an opportunity to harmonize wage and rights of migrants for sending countries in South Asia and South-East Asia. There is a need to adopt Nepal's strategy across the board of negotiating for these rights, and an acceptable wage for workers is an essential element in reducing migrant's vulnerability.

4.6.2. ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES

Countries in South Asia and South-East Asia have a mix of predominantly migrant-sending countries and a few, such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, predominantly migrant-receiving countries. The two regions also have countries such as the Philippines that offer best practices for migration management. As described in detail in IOM's *Reference handbook for consular staff*, the Philippines offers numerous best practices worthy of adaption to the Bangladesh country context. These model practices include comprehensive pre-departure orientation seminars and also post-arrival orientations. The Philippines' Foreign Service posts are also required to prepare and regularly update crisis contingency plans for all

their nationals in the country of destination. The contingency planning has a strong migrant involvement component referred to as "wardenship", which entails Filipino migrant community leaders participating in the crisis "command-and-control" procedures by looking after a number of fellow migrants from the Philippines (IOM, n.d.c:72).

The Government of the Philippines has also – through a joint leadership of the country's Department of Foreign Affairs and Department of Labour and Employment – adopted a four-level crisis alert systems for Filipino migrants in various destination countries. Notably, their foreign missions remain open to provide safe evacuation of Filipino workers even when level 4 is issued requiring mandatory evacuation, as was the case in Sanaa, Yemen in 2015, and the Arab Spring chaos in Libya and Egypt (IOM, n.d.c:77).

The Government of the Philippines has also centralized migration crisis management to coordinate the various government departments and agencies in providing assistance to Filipino workers in countries in crisis. This is done through the Philippines' CMT.

A similar tiered command structure is recommended for Bangladesh, where a joint committee chaired by one of the departments would coordinate the response and provide guidance on international protocol to be observed in cooperating with destination country government agencies and other international partners. A complete mapping of the main actors among the government agencies, specifying their core capability and their role similar to what is done at high level in Table 4 needs to be completed as part of the implementation stage for the framework. That exercise will feed into the responsibility assignment matrix RASCI to further specify the actors within the institutions and what their roles will be.

The Philippines' approach of using wardens selected from the Filipino migrant communities who are empowered informally to support other Filipinos is a good model for involving migrants in preparing and responding to crises. This approach is especially relevant for Bangladesh's consular resource and

capacity constrained context. Sri Lanka and Nepal also offer good examples of how to support female migrants who may have endured trauma by ensuring that they are assisted to transition gradually back to their communities after being hosted at a facility where they receive psychological support.

The Sendai Framework provides for countries to generate reports on disasters as a tool for assessing countries' compliance. Some of the countries submitting data readiness reports are capturing data on the number of migrants or foreign nationals in their territory affected by the different types of disasters. This approach, if adopted by the destination countries and even Bangladesh herself, will be a rich source of data that will allow planning and emergency response based on accurate information.

4.6.3. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The proposed approaches in assisting Bangladesh migrants caught up in countries in crisis will require some institutional adjustments. Those changes are best implemented using a consultative approach that prepares all stakeholders for the adjustments. The stakeholders may include workers, trade unions, suppliers, vendors, recruitment agencies and shareholders in specialized agencies involved in response. The proposed changes in processes, systems and culture in the delivery of assistance to Bangladesh migrants will require preparing the key organizations involved for change through various interventions, developing a new organizational culture, providing organizational and leadership coaching and mentoring and motivating staff along the change journey.

The institutional change management will be informed by the requirements of this framework where certain roles may require adjustment for its successful implementation. The process will then require, as a first step, to identify the necessary changes that will align with the goal of improving migration crisis response based on the findings of this report and any other changes that the Government of Bangladesh may deem necessary to implement. The impact of those changes will have to be assessed for each institution and collectively and how those changes

will impact stakeholder's expectations. Where training and interventions is required to reorient organizational cultures especially in the migrant-facing services, it will have to be carried out with the goal in mind being to lead to the outcomes of excellence in providing emergency assistance to Bangladesh nationals in countries in crisis.

4.6.4. TRAINING AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The implementation of this framework will, together with change management interventions previously described, also require strengthening the capacity and training of staff in the front-line ministries and government departments involved in the crisis response activities. The training and capacity strengthening will range from equipping officials involved in pre-departure activities, such as orientation where they will need to consider crisis preparedness for those involved in assisting returned migrants with psychosocial support and settlement assistance.

According to the findings from the consultations, greater emphasis on conveying accurate information before migration, thorough pre-departure briefing and training and the provision of diversified skills training, will all require that responsible government agencies and partners have to enhance capacity to provide these interventions. A training programme will therefore have to be designed, beginning with the training of trainers cascading from national level to the lowest levels where middlepersons operate in recruiting migrants.

The institutional setting and infrastructure required to roll out the extensive training exists in Bangladesh, mostly in MoEWOE and BRAC, both of which have a national footprint of numerous branches. These could be used without having to embark on large-scale infrastructure programme for building training centres.

4.6.5. ALL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUSION MECHANISMS

The complexity of the entire value chain of providing migration crisis response and assistance brings with it

numerous and diverse set of stakeholders. The main stakeholders or clients are the migrants themselves and their changing needs as they transition from considering available migration options to taking the journey, to the eventual crisis encounter, and finally their decisions on whether to return or remain in the affected country. As demonstrated in the findings, their migration history does not often end with their return, as some of them may choose to migrate again either back to the same country or to new destinations. They are often assisted by recruiting agents, transport companies, airlines and government departments involved in issuing travel documents and in the registration of departing nationals. Others involved include financial institutions that lend them money, welfare organizations, NGOs, international development and humanitarian organizations, destination country government agencies, destination country recruiting agents, their employers, the consulates of Bangladesh in destination countries and many others that participate in the eventual rescue and return operation during crisis.

Each of these stakeholders bear a responsibility, and the execution of their duties implies a good or bad outcome for migrants caught up in crises abroad. The Government of Bangladesh has a constitutional and moral obligation to take the lead role in encouraging all these stakeholders to understand what is required of them in the efforts to save the lives of Bangladesh nationals and minimize the loss they suffer when crises affect them while they are in transit, visiting foreign destinations and when they are residing there

as workers or students. As previously discussed, the role of middlepersons is one of the weakest links in ensuring that migrants access the right information and that they do not get over indebted. While there are ongoing programmes to use their local presence in disseminating accurate information, these can be expanded and strengthened further and should extend to registered recruiting agencies. The reduction of fraud in the process of sending migrants also will require participation of the middlepersons, recruiting agencies and travel agents in both Bangladesh and destination countries.

In destination countries, consulates should continue playing a lead role in crisis preparedness, planning and response. However, the opportunity for involving migrants in a more deliberate and strategic way is largely untapped. The Philippines' model of appointing "wardens" from among the migrants who play the role of connecting the consulates with all migrants is worth of emulating. The return process and reintegration involve many other non-profit organizations and CSOs working closely with the Government of Bangladesh and international partners to provide basic needs and cash transfers to the returnees. As previously pointed out, the successful implementation of these recommendations will be guaranteed through the leadership role of the Government of Bangladesh. Table 4 provides an initial scope of the roles and responsibilities of the leading government ministries in implementing this proposed migration crisis response framework for Bangladesh.

Table 4. Coordinators for the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operation Framework pillars

<p>MCOFP 1: Migration policy and legal context</p> <p>Coordinator (Joint): MoEWOE and MoHA</p> <p>Key elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify crisis aspect in policies such as OEMA and others; • Specify required strategic planning cycles, reports and standard forms; • Specify officials in government in their job descriptions; • National migration crisis response strategy including resourcing plans, risk analysis and long-term migration management priorities; • Indicate update intervals for planning documents align with five-year plans. <p>Coordinator (Joint): MoEWOE and MoHA</p> <p>Key response core capability: MoEWOE (Administration of labour migrants' welfare); MoHA (Immigration Services)</p> <p>Responsible for administering and implementing the laws relating to outbound international labour migrants. It is in charge of issuing licenses to private labour recruiting agencies and has the authority to carry out any action to protect migrant workers from fraud and any other abusive activities. It has a number of agencies under it that help implement its mandate. The main MoEWOE functions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and administer international labour migration laws and policies; • Take action against recruiters carrying out unfair activities; • Protect migrant workers against fraud and abuse; • Issue licences to private recruiting agencies; • Suspend, revoke or cancel any licence issued to recruiting agencies; • MoHA to take up leadership role in all other non-labour migration.
<p>MCOFP 2.1: Migration crisis planning in Bangladesh</p> <p>Coordinator: MoFA</p> <p>Key elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data in mapping location, distribution and vulnerability as foundation for planning including risk scenario planning; • Lead agencies under this framework should draw planning budget from MTBF; • Along with MTBF allocation, mandates should reflect their role in migration crisis response to allow for human resource and systems update in alignment; • RASCI to be drawn up to reflect these mandate changes and reflected in performance contracts; • Prepare and regularly update national response plan. <p>Key response core capability: Coordination of migration crisis planning in Bangladesh</p>

Responsible for administering and implementing laws and protocols relating to providing assistance to Bangladesh nationals through their destination country consular representatives in Bangladesh. The main MoFA migration crisis planning functions in Bangladesh through its head office ministry are as follows:

- Implement and administer international relations laws and protocols;
- Issue diplomatic status and immunities to foreign missions and representatives;
- Prepare Bangladesh national foreign relations strategic plans, including protection for Bangladeshis abroad;
- Appoint consular staff and accredit them to destination countries;
- Maintain and enter into new diplomatic cooperation agreements on protection of Bangladesh nationals abroad.

MCOFP 2.2: Migration crisis planning in destination country

Coordinator: MoFA

Key elements

- Assist diaspora to organize themselves through “stewardship” model;
- Draft national crisis response plan, including scenarios;
- Put in place early warning mechanisms, including regular situation reports;
- Put in place mitigation measures by crisis type;
- Put in place crisis response arrangements for all crisis stages;
- Put in place special provisions for PWDs and other vulnerable members of the Bangladesh migrant community.

Key response core capability: Administration of international relations and consular services

Responsible for administering and implementing laws and protocols relating to providing assistance to Bangladesh nationals in countries of destination through Bangladesh consulates. It also establishes and maintains diplomatic relations with destination countries' government and other partners involved in protecting the welfare of Bangladesh migrants. The main MoFA migration crisis planning functions in destination countries through the consulates are as follows:

- Register all Bangladesh nationals in destination countries;
- Prepare destination country migration crisis response plan;
- Issue preparedness and emergency evacuation advisory alerts to Bangladesh nationals;
- Reach cooperation agreements with emergency rescue authorities for the protection of Bangladeshis during crisis;
- Provide necessary protection services for Bangladesh nationals;
- Create and maintain contacts with Bangladesh nationals in destination countries.

MCOFP 3.1: Migration crisis response planning and operational mechanisms in Bangladesh

Coordinator: MoHA

Key elements

- Focus on preventing illicit smuggling and trafficking of migrants;
- Raise awareness and training on pathways to regular migration;
- Further strengthen international cooperation to combat smuggling and trafficking;
- Leverage wide reach of DEMO offices to provide accurate information;
- Update pre-departure manual to include crisis awareness;
- Stronger multi-partner counselling, livelihood support, resettlement assistance and due compensation;
- Partner with destination country agencies to improve skills training;
- Clarity on institutional roles and responsibilities as proposed here;
- Institutional internal coordination;
- HR and systems capacity strengthening and procedural efficiency.

Key response core capability: Immigration Services

MoHA is responsible for all migration facilitation services, including issuing of travel documents and immigration services at all ports of entry and departure. It captures all departures and arrivals at all ports of entry and departure of Bangladeshis at entry and departure points. It issues passports, birth certificates, death certificates and temporary travel documents for all nationals and migrants. The MoHA migration crisis operational preparedness functions in Bangladesh are as follows:

- Issue valid travel documents to all migrants;
- Verify and clear all migrants for issuance of travel and registration documents;
- Clear migrants through immigration services at the ports of exit;
- Verify and clear returning migrants through all entry ports into Bangladesh;
- Provide protection services to migrants upon return to Bangladesh;
- Issue replacement travel and other vital registration documents to returnees affected by crises.

MCOFP 3.2: Migration crisis response planning and operational mechanisms in destination country

Coordinator: MoFA

Key elements

- Embassy-level national crisis response plan including mapping, scenarios and types, onset, speed, levels of vulnerabilities, such as gender, age, language, isolation and culture;
- Put in place early warning mechanisms in destination countries;
- Personnel at embassy available, trained and responsive “cadres”;
- Use innovative approaches to reach undocumented and other vulnerable migrants such as tapping into migrant networks and social media channels in Bengali;
- Partner with first responder organizations and destination country agencies;
- Prepare crisis response stockpiles in contingency plans and sanctuary points;
- Conduct regular assessments and situational reports in embassy reporting.

Key response core capability: Administration of international relations and consular services

Responsible for implementing foreign relations activities and protocols at destination countries through its consulates. MoFA works through immigration attachés at consulates to verify nationality and issue travel documents and other vital registration documents and certificates to Bangladesh nationals in destination countries. MoFA's migration crisis operational preparedness functions in destination countries are as follows:

- Prepare consular country migration crisis response plan;
- Identify emergency evacuation partners to assist Bangladesh nationals;
- Identify evacuation routes based on locations of Bangladesh nationals;
- Identify migrants' protection sanctuary points and partners;
- Identify emergency supplies and equipment suppliers and stockpile points;
- Identify key role players in emergency rescue for Bangladesh nationals.

MCOFP 4: Migration crisis emergency response

Coordinator: MoFA

Key elements

- Put in place cooperation and coordination mechanisms with host country's crisis response agencies;
- Mobilize all resources for response including personnel, teams, equipment and provisions;
- Activate emergency response operations by phases in consular response plan;
- Provide rapid verification and registration of affected nationals;
- Transportation and repatriation;
- Consider Nepal and Sri Lanka's examples of facilities at airports for abuse victims.

Key response core capability: Coordination of emergency rescue and repatriation

Responsible through its embassies and consulates for protection of the safety of all Bangladesh nationals in destination countries. MoFA works closely with destination countries' authorities involved in emergency response, together with international humanitarian agencies, to provide emergency evacuation, protection and repatriation of Bangladesh nationals. MoFA's migration crisis emergency response functions are as follows:

- Issue emergency advisories to Bangladesh nationals;
- Issue evacuation orders;
- Deploy emergency assistance to Bangladesh nationals;
- Provide resources, tools and supplies for emergency assistance to Bangladesh nationals;
- Provide protection services to Bangladesh nationals during crisis;
- Assist with transport and repatriation of Bangladesh nationals back home or recovery in the destination country.

MCOFP 5.1: Pre- and post-crisis awareness, information-sharing, training and livelihoods support in Bangladesh

Coordinator: MoEWOE

Key elements

- Pre-departure briefing to include crisis awareness and response;
- Post-crisis post-return assistance strengthening (such as psychosocial, documents, legal, loans and grants);
- Compensation and longer-term livelihoods support;
- Debts repayment assistance with focus on household-level impacts;
- Expanded skills training enforced at all levels.

Key response core capability: Coordination of awareness and livelihoods support in Bangladesh

Responsible through its various agencies (PKB, BMET, BOESL, WEWB, WEWF) to provide pre-departure briefing training, financial assistance and post-return psychosocial support, financial assistance and reintegration support. Its pre- and post-crisis awareness information-sharing, training and livelihoods functions in Bangladesh are as follows:

- Prepare, publish and disseminate accurate migration crisis risk information materials;
- Train middlepersons on migration crisis risks to be offered to migrant recruits;
- Provide pre-departure training courses with migration crisis content;
- Undertake migration fraud prevention and awareness campaigns;
- Provide psychosocial support to returned migrants and their families;
- Provide financial assistance and livelihoods support to returnees;
- Provide longer-term reintegration support to returnees and their households.

MCOFP 5.2: Pre- and post-crisis awareness, information-sharing and livelihoods support in destination countries

Coordinator: MoFA

Key elements

- Put in place a crisis communication system that is usable, reliable and scalable to all;
- Reconnect affected nationals with families and employers;
- Provide consular support for lost documents and contracts and withheld wages;
- Negotiate regularization for identified irregular migrants post-crisis;
- Regular updates through migrant groups;
- Extend consular assistance hours and also reach by geographical reach.

Key response core capability: Coordination of preparedness and crisis response assistance abroad

Responsible for preparing and disseminating early warning and preparedness information to Bangladesh nationals in destination countries. MoFA works through its missions abroad to put in place information and support mechanisms that enable Bangladesh nationals in destination countries to be aware of risks and prepare for emergency evacuation and post-emergency recovery. Its information, awareness and livelihoods support functions in destination countries are as follows:

- Conduct contingency planning and training activities;
- Prepare and disseminate migration crisis awareness-raising materials;
- Establish warning and communication systems for Bangladesh nationals abroad;
- Provide multilingual and culturally sensitive messaging for crisis preparedness and assistance;
- Facilitate links with migrant social groups for disseminating warning and response information.

Cross-cutting elements and good practices

Key elements

- Bolster further regional cooperation initiatives (such as SAARC, ASEAN, Colombo Process, GFMD, MCOF, HLD, SDGs, IAMM, Berne Initiative and Sendai Framework);
- Multilateral negotiations with destination countries especially GCC States to ratify treaties that offer better protection (tough one);
- Strengthened protection and higher wages elements in BLAs and MoUs;
- Include pre-departure and post-arrival orientations in process;
- Introduce “wardenship” as the Philippines has done;
- Adopt crisis alert system;
- Reintroduce crisis management joint central committee to allow “tiered” command structures;
- Urge all signatories to include migrants affected by disasters in Sendai Framework reporting;
- Comprehensive stakeholder mapping and management approach for change management and inclusion framework;
- Institutional capacity strengthening including personnel capacity enhancement, RASCI specification and systems and processes updates.

All ministries and relevant Government of Bangladesh agencies

Responsible for preparing and disseminating early warning and preparedness information to Bangladesh nationals in destination countries. MoFA works through its missions abroad to put in place information and support mechanisms that enable Bangladesh nationals in destination countries to be aware of risks and prepare for emergency evacuation and post-emergency recovery. Its information, awareness and livelihoods support functions in destination countries are as follows:

- Conduct contingency planning and training activities;
- Prepare and disseminate migration crisis awareness-raising materials;
- Establish warning and communication systems for Bangladesh nationals abroad;
- Provide multilingual and culturally sensitive messaging for crisis preparedness and assistance;
- Facilitate links with migrant social groups for disseminating warning and response information.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The findings from the consultative data-gathering conducted in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Malaysia shows suggest the way to frame the proposed Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework. Some of the salient conclusions from the foregoing analysis are that greater emphasis and investment in preparing and sharing accurate information to prospective migrants, combined with culturally and gender-sensitive post-return support, is needed. This information and awareness gap calls for capacity strengthening at all levels of those involved in the migration value chain from the middlepersons to the consular staff and those involved in assisting the returnees to improve migration crisis response. The leading institutions, guided by a further strengthened policy and regulatory environment and following a tiered coordinated approach with clear command structures, can build a leading response capability that will help save the lives and property of Bangladesh nationals abroad. The destination countries especially in the GCC also will need to ratify international migration rights instruments to strengthen the protection of Bangladesh labour migration. This should also be accompanied by Bangladesh's insistence on better BLAs and MoUs that elevate the rights of migrants and protect wages. At the same time, migrants themselves at the behest of consular officials in destination countries need to better organize themselves by adopting the Philippines' best practice of appointing informal wardens who help in ensuring that nationals are assisted when there is a crisis. An inclusive funding framework for migration crisis response when Bangladesh nationals are affected should be pursued, which calls for the creation of a fund financed by charges levied on recruitment agents, travel agents and employer firms in destination countries.

Some of the main recommendations clustered into major thematic areas are as follows:

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

- Better migration crisis response policy clarity is needed because current legislation does not address it directly.
- Negotiate better BLAs and MoUs that reduce migration costs, offer better wages and remove incentives for middlepersons to trap migrants in debt, which heightens their vulnerability when they become irregular.
- Improve visa validation procedures before departure to eliminate fraud.
- Reduce the time it takes to conduct proof of nationality verification for Bangladesh migrants caught in crisis.
- Improve protection and psychological support offered to female migrant returnees by adopting the Sri Lankan and Nepalese best practices of housing them in shelters close to the airport for some time before their reintegration into their communities.
- Increase protection of Bangladesh nationals in various forms of detention or temporary shelters after crises.
- Provide other migrant-friendly service points with 24/7 operating hours that can utilize existing MoEWOE and its agencies' extensive regional offices footprint.
- Increase prevention against human trafficking and smuggling and strengthen victims support to avert crises such as the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea crisis.

- Strengthen the capacity of the Government of Bangladesh's Vigilance Task Force for it to effectively tackle irregular migration, as envisaged in OEMA 2013.

PLANNING AND COORDINATION

- Re-establish a migration crisis response committee chaired by MoFA.
- Create a tiered migration crisis response command and response structure with roles of key agencies clarified as the example in Table 3 illustrates.
- Introduce mandatory national migration crisis response strategic plans that would give direction to the consular destination country response plans.
- Urgently prepare consular migration crisis response plans in all Bangladesh foreign missions using tools such as MCOF and MICIC Guidelines and standard operating procedures (IOM, 2014) for consular officials dealing with migrant workers developed in cooperation with IOM.
- Adopt data-driven migration crisis response planning approach using an approach similar to the NDMC's practice of conducting mapping vulnerable populations and scenario planning.
- Create strong links with Bangladesh migrant communities in destination countries through wardens who will be instrumental in emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
- Establish regular monitoring and reporting that would oblige to fully report on migrants caught in crisis as required in the Sendai Framework data questionnaire.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Create a global migration crisis response fund financed through fees levied on private sector involved in migration.
- Tap into international humanitarian and development funds, such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Kuwait Arab Fund and others.

- Leverage the regional economic communities for cooperation in further capacity-building in migration crisis response.
- Further formalize and deepen cooperation between the Government of Bangladesh and international partners, such as IOM, ICRC, ILO and Red Crescent, among others around migration crisis response activities.
- Put in place bilateral agreements with destination countries providing the terms for amnesty for Bangladeshis who have fallen into irregular status at countries of destination.
- Insist on an end to the retention of travel documents of Bangladesh workers by employers and some destination country recruitment agents that is practiced largely in the GCC countries.

TRAINING AND DATA

- Use the MoEWOE national branches footprint to roll out awareness-raising, accurate information dissemination and training campaign targeting middlepersons and migrants to counter fraud and exploitation.
- Insist on all pre-departure orientation briefings offered by recruiting agents, travel agents and any other agencies to include migration crisis awareness content.
- Strengthen data collection and analysis on returnees to better understand and implement appropriate migration crisis response initiative and practices.
- Provide specific migration crisis response management and planning training to relevant ministries and consular staff.
- Standardize systems, tools and processes for migration crisis response planning and management by introducing relevant standard forms and information technology-enabled processes.
- Enhance role of CBOs, CSOs and NGOs in migration crisis training, awareness-raising and assistance before departure and after return.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. GENERAL LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE BANGLADESH CRISIS RESPONSE FRAMEWORK AND FIVE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE PLANS

Stakeholder	Function
Government of Bangladesh agencies	
Bangladesh Bank	Remittances and fiscal support
Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited	Implementing agency of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE)
Bureau of Manpower Education and Training (BMET)	Statistics and training
Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh	Main migrants' repatriation partner
District Employment and Manpower Office	Local employment
Labour Welfare Wings	Implementing agency of MoEWOE
Migrants in transit	Study interest
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	National disaster management
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	Policy and legal statutory oversight
Ministry of Finance	Bangladesh's fiscal management authority
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Population analysis and research
Ministry of Home Affairs	Policy and legal statutory oversight
Ministry of Justice	Legislation and administration of justice affecting migrants
Ministry of Labour	Labour statutory of the Government of Bangladesh ministry
Ministry of Local Governments and Rural Development	Local and rural affairs
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	Women and children's rights
Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission	Bangladesh's human rights statutory authority
Labour Welfare Wings	Implementing agency of MoEWOE
Probashi Kallyan Bank	Migrants' financial support
Wage Earners Welfare Board (WEWB)	Migrant workers' welfare
United Nations agencies	
International Organization for Migration	Lead implementing agency for migration
International Labour Organization (ILO)	International labour interests
UN-Women	United Nations' women's rights body
United Nations Population Fund	United Nations' population affairs interests
United Nations Development Programme	Migration and development
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Regional humanitarian response

Stakeholder	Function
Non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and welfare organizations	
Building Resources Across Communities Migration Programme	Recruitment, data and welfare of labour migrants
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society	Migrant crisis first responders
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust	Legal aid
Bangladesh Migrant Welfare Organization	Welfare
Bangladesh Migrants Foundation	Welfare
Bangladeshi Ovhibashi Mohila Sramik Association	Welfare
Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program	Welfare
Diaspora organizations	Study interest
Diaspora sending households	Study interest
District migration rights network	Local-based migrants association
Faith-based institutions	Provide social support to migrants
Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants	Bangladesh migrants' welfare
Other civil society organizations	Civil society non-profit
Other community-based organizations	Community level non-profit
Development partners	
Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh	Main donor for the Bangladesh Migration Crisis Operational Framework
Department for International Development	Donor migration projects and programmes
Japan International Cooperation Agency	Donor migration projects and programmes
USAID	Donor migration projects and programmes
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh	Donor migration projects and programmes
World Bank	Migration project and programme support
Regional economic communities	
Association of South East Asian Nations	Regional policy and consultative processes
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	Regional policy and consultative processes
International organizations	
International Centre for Migration Policy and Development	International migration management
International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent	Humanitarian first responder
International Federation of the Red Cross	Migrant crisis first responders
Research organizations	
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies	Migration and development research
International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Independent University, Bangladesh	Migration and climate change research
Refugees and Migratory Movements Research Unit	Refugees and migrants research

Stakeholder	Function
Private sector	
Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies	Recruitment and hold data on labour migrants
Labour recruitment firms in destination countries	Recruitment and hold data on labour migrants
Private health-care providers	Potential health providers to migrants
Public transport companies in destination countries	Used by migrants
Transit and destination country stakeholders	
Asylum seekers in destination countries	Study interest
Destination countries	Study interest
Local authorities	Represent communities that host and provide services to migrants
Other irregular migrants	Study interest
Prisons department	May hold incarcerated migrants
Refugees in destination countries	Study unit
Regular migrants	Study interest
Transit countries	Study interest

ANNEX 2. LIST OF AGREEMENTS, PROTOCOLS, MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING AND OTHER BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION OF BANGLADESH MIGRANT WORKERS

Agreements

- Qatar–Bangladesh Agreement and Additional Protocol (AP) regulating the Employment of Bangladeshi Workers in the State of Qatar (28 January 1988)
- Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Kuwait and Bangladesh on the [Affairs of] Manpower (31 October 2000)

Memorandums of understanding

- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Great Socialist Peoples' Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the Field of Manpower (31 October 2008)
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation in the Field of Manpower between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Iraq and the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (31 August 2013)
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of the Republic of Maldives Concerning Placement of Manpower (29 May 2011)
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of United Arab Emirates and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the Field of Manpower (21 May 2007)
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of Bangladesh and the Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Korea on the Sending of Workers to the Republic of Korea under the Employment Permit System (13 June 2012)
- Memorandum of Understanding on the Employment of Workers between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (26 November 2012)

- Memorandum of Understanding between the People's Republic of Bangladesh/Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan/Ministry of Labour in the Field of Manpower (26 April 2012), CMW/C/BGD/151
- Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Manpower between Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Ministry of Labour, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the Recruitment and Employment of Bangladeshi Domestic Female Workers (26 April 2012)
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