



Bangladesh

As delivered

**Statement by
Mr. Abdul Alim, First Secretary
at the Second Committee on
agenda item 54 (C) International Migration and Development
60UNGA, New York, October 27, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

May I begin by appreciating the Secretariat for presenting valuable inputs. The deliberations of my delegation will focus on agenda item 54 (C) International Migration and Development. Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement of Jamaica on behalf of the G77 and China. In addition, we would like to highlight the following points:

Migration has turned to be a multifaceted and complex global issue. Like most other economic flows, migration operates as an equilibrating mechanism. Huge gaps prevail in labour and skill between north and south and within the South. Liberalization of policies can generate significant welfare gains. It leads to superior development outcomes and to "win-win" results for both sets of countries and for the individuals involved.

New World Bank publication, entitled International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain indicates that "close to 200 million people are living in countries other than the ones in which they were born and the remittance flow has doubled in the last decade, reaching \$216 billion in 2004, with \$150 billion going to developing countries"

Peoples are being considered more and more as agents of development. Moving across border, they can strengthen cooperation between home and host societies and supplement to development – not only through remittances, investment and entrepreneurial activities but also through the transfer of newly developed skills and knowledge. They also can contribute through fostering democratization and protection of human rights in their countries of origin. However, massive emigration of highly-skilled citizens poses troubling dilemmas for many smaller low-income countries.

International movement of service providers does not feature in the original framework of the MDGs. The High-level Plenary meeting 2005 also failed to address the issue adequately. Though, the close relationship between migration and development is now widely recognized, there is still a conspicuous gap in research and analysis on how this is linked to attaining the Millenium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Migration and short-term movement of service providers are two different phenomena. That must be clearly distinguished. Short-term Service providers move from sending state to receiving state based on contracts between the private firms in the two states. The

contracts are overseen by the respective governments. Regrettably, the recently published report of the World Commission on International Migration does not address adequately the issues relating to this category of migrant. The World Bank publication on "migration, remittances and brain drain" also disregarded this issue.

Professor Dany Rodrick, an eminent economist at the Harvard University estimates that the total benefit to sending and receiving states of short-term movement of less-skilled labour is immense. If only 3% of the OECD labour market is opened, the potential benefit can be between US\$ 150-300 billion annually.

Multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) offer a framework to address migration under Mode IV of GATS. But little progress has been achieved toward greater liberalization of temporary migration. In current round of negotiations, it is critically important to have full flexibilities under mode 4.

Facilitating remittance flows is another action with potentially high payoffs. Host countries must ensure unhindered transfer of funds to the countries of origin with minimal transaction costs. Sending countries should also help migrants use remittances properly, invest back home, and reintegrate upon return.

Bangladesh is a huge labour surplus country and belongs thus to the supply side of the world labour market. Government promotes employment of human capital as part of its development plan. International migration of labour has in recent years emerged as the most important issue in the development discourses in Bangladesh and has assumed centre-stage in the economic policy planning. Gross official figures between 1976-2002 show that some 3.2 million Bangladeshis left the country. The current flow is some 250,000 annually which is about 13.5% of the annual additional labour force.

Total earnings from remittances increased from about US\$3.37 billion in FY04 to about US\$3.85 billion in FY05, representing 14.2 percent growth. These remittances make a significant contribution to the GNP and help offset negative balance of payment by providing 30% of export earnings and some 20% of import payments.

Mr. Chairman,

Given the potential welfare gains from short-term movement of service providers, policies need to be devised to ensure that these gains are not wasted. The impact largely depends on the political, social, legal and economic environments in which the process takes place. Next year, the high-level dialogue on international migration will be a significant opportunity for the global community. We hope that it will set the foundation for enhanced international cooperation in resolving the migration related problems and pave the ways for utilizing its enormous potentials.