

# **Report on the Participation of United Nation's High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (UNHLD) 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, New York, USA**

In December 2003 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly decided to convene a High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development for its 61st session. The 1<sup>st</sup> HLD on migration took place on September 14-15, 2006 at the UN general headquarters in New York City. The UNHLD led to the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), an initiative that addresses migration and development interconnectedness in a practical manner.

## **UN High Level Dialogue 2013:**

The UN General Assembly was held the second High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development at the UN headquarters in New York in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013. As part of the preparatory activities leading to the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the UN General Assembly held an Informal Interactive Hearings with representatives of NGOs, civil society organizations, and the private sector on July 15, 2013 at United Nations headquarters. The objective of the Informal Interactive Hearings was to provide an opportunity for NGOs, civil society, and the private sector to interact with Member States and offer input for the High Level Dialogue.

In preparation for the UNHLD, WARBE DF along with the members of Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) organized two national level consultation meetings respectively on October 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> 2012, and September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The main objectives of the consultations were: i) To bring together key migration and development organizations, networks, grassroots, community based organizations, migrants' rights advocates, trade unions, representatives of the media, and academia along with relevant government ministries to coordinate and jointly strategize efforts relating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013, ii) To update and help stakeholders understand the status and processes associated with the HLD, iii) To broaden consensus, strengthen position and advocacy agendas on migration and development, iv) To come up with a civil society position paper on migration and development, highlighting the specific issues faced by migrant workers from Bangladesh.



WARBE Development Foundation has a history in ardently campaigning and leading grassroots activities to promote a rights-based approach in migration. With this vision, WARBE DF has contributed to the discourses around migration and development on the regional, national, and international levels. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of this year, WARBE DF representative Syed Saiful Haque attended at the second United Nation's High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development with support from the partner organization AWO International. He also participated in programs and activities of the People Global Action (PGA), a parallel forum organized by the civil society organizations in New York from October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>. The primary theme for the PGA was "People, Power & Communities: Building Bridges for Migrant, Labor & Human Rights." The PGA program and activities included: self-organized workshops, visits to local migrant communities, rallies, and a march from Foley Square leading across the Brooklyn Bridge. These activities aimed to raise collective voices and challenge states to undertake migration and development policy-making from a human rights and people-



centered approach, call to end the widespread criminalization of migration, and hold governments accountable to their international human rights and community development commitments.

While the UNHLD plenary was comprised of an array of government, and non-government actors, it was also represented by civil society. As such, the regional, national, and international coordination of more than 100 civil society organizations proposed an Eight-Point and Five Year Action Plan, whereby underlying the importance of working towards a *negotiated outcome* at the UNHLD. This plan was incorporated in the agenda and the discourses of the UNHLD to ensure that the voice of the migrant community was heard (see attached docs).

The UNHLD had four plenary sessions and four roundtables, which focused on key thematic areas. The overarching theme of the HLD reads: “Identify concrete measures to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications.” The four accompanying roundtables were organized accordingly: Roundtable 1: Assessing the effects of international migration on sustainable development and identifying relevant priorities in view of preparation of the post-2015 development framework, Roundtable 2: Measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants, with particular reference to women and children, as well as to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons and to ensure orderly, regular and safe migration, Roundtable 3: Strengthening partnerships and cooperation of international migration into development policies and promoting coherence at all levels, Roundtable 4: International and regional labor mobility and its impact on development.



The WARBE DF representative put forward his recommendations as a speaker at first roundtable, which focused on the link between migration, and the post-2015 development agenda. WARBE DF urged a rights-based perspective, while highlighting its role in a new global migration and development framework. Undeniably, migration is recognized as a crucial part of development; however, it also carries the weight of undeniable challenges. At present, it is the migrant worker who must carry the burden of undignified working and living conditions. Unsound policies and practices can lead to social, economic, and environmental costs. To put differently, policies can foster unsustainable aspects of development.



One of the main achievements of the UNHLD is expressed by a global consensus in recognizing the need to incorporate migration in the post-development 2015 framework. Decisions to work towards an international migration agenda with the inclusion of development, and the respect for human rights has been put forward by a range for actors. Government, non-government, representatives of migration organizations, civil society, and the private sector, see the need to collaborate on the issue of international migration and development.

As for Bangladesh, the Ministry of Overseas Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment is experimenting with the recruitment of labor through a digitalized data bank, emphasizing skill matching with real demand. For the sake of pragmatism, WARBE believes that consultations about the UNHLD will need to be organized in a timely fashion. The formation of the GFMD took place after the first UNHLD. Similarly, the opportunity to invest in new approaches to international migration will require concrete actions. Hence, action oriented post-UNHLD consultations will aid in the conception of a holistic approach to development and migration.



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