

## Press release

### **Threadbare discussion in Australia on linking diaspora to Bangladesh's development**

*Canberra, 19 December 2020:*

Bangladeshi expatriates' potentials to contribute to Bangladesh's developmental journey and challenges in making such contribution was discussed at a round-table held in Canberra as the Bangladesh High Commission Canberra observed International Migrants Day 2020 on 19 December 2020.

The round-table discussion, moderated by High Commissioner Sufiur Rahman was held with the theme "*Reimagining human mobility: Linking diaspora to development of Bangladesh*". The High Commissioner set the context of Bangladesh diaspora in Australia and New Zealand who were highly skilled and qualified unlike contractual labours from in the Middle East, Malaysia and other regions. He highlighted the crucial importance of the human capacity development and technology and knowledge transfer to sustain the growth trajectory of Bangladesh in the post COVID recovery and post -LDC period. Social capital like good business and organizational practices, networks are no less important to financial contribution, he added. He also touched upon the room for greater skilling of Bangladeshi workers so as to earn higher wages abroad and to enhance remittance which has not grown as fast as other similarly situated countries.

A roundtable discussion was held after a keynote presentation by a distinguished member of the Bangladesh diaspora. He focused on potentials for Bangladesh diaspora to get networked in Australia and create a lobby for their own causes and on matters of importance for Bangladesh. He made specific recommendations on realizing prospects of social remittance from Bangladesh diaspora for the development of Bangladesh.

The panelists underscored the keenness of the permanent migrants to take part in the human capacity development through knowledge transfer to Bangladesh. They sought facilitation of the Government of Bangladesh to institutionalize a system for structured knowledge and technology transfer. They also stressed on the difficulties faced by the diaspora member as they tried to engage, return or invest in Bangladesh. They pointed out present Ministry centric inadequate and disjointed

efforts to address matters related to the diaspora and recommended a Government-wide approach to bring in necessary changes in the environment. Else members of the diaspora would not be confident and hence efforts to attract invest will not yield result. The participants opined that the young second-third generation diaspora members had much higher potentials and should be encouraged to get linked with Bangladesh and its development process. They asked for necessary policy environment.

The program was held for over two and a half hours and was attended by 70 guests. The roundtable agreed to have follow up discussions to prioritise the doable ideas and to concretise implementation aspects within the next two-three months.

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