



BASUG celebrates its 10th Founding Anniversary

“Diaspora organisations need both countries of origin and host to collaborate and give input : BASUG has made this possible”

An international conference on the ‘Role and Contribution of Migrants and their Remittance in Sustainable Development’ including photo exhibition, screening documentary film and cultural function was held at a local hotel in the Hague in Netherlands on 31 October 2015. The programs were organised to celebrate the 10th founding of BASUG- Diaspora and Development.



(Photo above: Executive members of the BASUG chapters of The Netherlands, UK, Belgium, Germany and Bangladesh with the Chief Guest of the Day, Mr. Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, MP from Bangladesh-Photo-Afrin.)

Speakers in the conference emphasised on global partnership for sustainable development, how to cooperate and look for more valuable and qualified partners, to set goals and objectives and implement them. Continuance of organisation like BASUG is always a challenge – and everything necessary should be done to continue to carry on their work. Attention was drawn on the importance of remittance and their impact on the country and society. That remittance is not investigated in a positive way in the productive sector which can eventually generate production in a sustainable way was voiced by several speakers. Agro- based industry, agricultural aqua cultural, leather, medicine and ship building - these areas are still lacking proper financial support from home and abroad. Through this the economy of the country can benefit significantly. Lack of implementation of laws was noted which greatly discourages the senders to invest in a long term planning. BASUG was suggested to visit Malaysia and other Asian countries where the Bangladeshi migrants are currently living and sending their hard-earned money home. Suggestions were made to visit these migrant workers, exchange views and motivate them to invest in a proper manner through which not only the family but the country as a whole will benefit.



(Photo from left Mr. Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, MP, Ambassador Mr. Sheikh Mohammad Belal, Mr. Freirik Kampman of Dutch Foreign Ministry, Mr. Lothar Kleipass of German organisation ILD and Prof Gerd Junne of TNU)

Speakers mentioned that, today there was an estimated 250 million migrants around the world, these all having a huge contribution in terms of remittances to developing countries. However, it is essential that the negative image of migrants disappears since they are the ones to contribute to society by creating jobs by founding businesses. Hence BASUG engages with migrants in order to focus on positive aspects and their contribution to society.

Mr. Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, Member of Parliament of Bangladesh attended the program as the chief guest, while Mr. Sheikh Mohammad Belal, Ambassador of Bangladesh in the Netherlands was the special guest. Mr. Freirik Kampman, Policy Officer Migration and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Mr. Lothar Kleipass, Chief Executive of Interational Ländlicher Entwicklungsdienst (ILD), Germany and Mr. Bob van Dillen, Expert of CORDAID addressed the opening session as guest of honour. The opening session was chaired by the Chairman of BASUG, Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua.



(Photo: from left Mr. Ram Thapa, Mr. Bob van Dillen, Mr. Antony Otiemo Ong'ayo and Dr. Corazon Dee)

In the second session of the program, Professor Gerd Junne, Director of The Network University (TNU), Amsterdam and Advisor of BASUG, Mr. Ram Thapa, Honorary Consul General of Nepal in Germany, Dr. Corazon Dee, Senior Expert of PUM Netherlands and Chairperson ERCMOVE and Mr. Antony Otieno Ong'ayo, Lecturer in Utrecht University College and Researcher, International Development Studies, Department of Human Geography in Utrecht University delivered their presentations on the issue, while BASUG Advisor and Director Projects, Dr Ahmed Ziauddin moderated the session. Project Coordinator of BASUG Germany, Mr. AHM Abdul Hai gave vote of thanks at the end of the panel discussion. Mr. Sudhier Nannan, Secretary of BASUG presented the programs.

Member of Parliament

In his speech as chief guest, Member of the Parliament from Bangladesh, Mr. Obaidul Muktedir Chowdhury said, we need to work together and allow for migrants to work and invest their money since there is a lack of awareness and preparation. The expatriates send money to Bangladesh. But unfortunately the significant amount of remittance is not investment in the industry sector. Rather most of the money is spent to buy land, construct houses or to buy family products. But surely there are some examples of investing remittance in the productive sector to have long term impact on our economy. He hoped that BASUG would expand to other Asian countries and all over the world one day and that day was not far away.



(Partial view of the participants at the opening session on BASUG's 10th founding anniversary in the Hague)

Ambassador

Bangladesh Ambassador in the Netherlands, Mr Belal said, Netherlands has no highlands but they have high level of innovation. Bangladesh does not need thousand dollar loan, rather we need only the innovative ideas to cope up with the challenges. In these cases we need the partnership and transfer of knowledge with the Netherlands. According to the Ambassador, the expatriates are the most innovative and successful entrepreneurs.

Dutch Foreign Ministry

Mr Freirik Kampman, Policy Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Netherlands described the term Diaspora as being a natural bridge that BASUG is making in practice. He added, remittances are a grass root way of supporting countries of origin. In order to succeed in making better use of this, which BASUG is already doing, we need to work together in order to share knowledge and connections, Bangladesh can guide Netherlands in achieving this, he added.

Mr. Lothar Kleipass from ILD, Germany described BASUG as being a development organisation acting as a service to promote with partners in rural areas for the marginalized communities all over the world

Mr. Bob van Dillen, Expert of CORDAID said, in 2012, the GFMD started collaborating with BASUG. CORDAID truly values cooperation with migrants and Diaspora organisations and shares similar topics of concern with BASUG such as women entrepreneurship, health and education.

Chairman of BASUG, Mr Bikash Chowdhury Barua shared the experience of last 10 years of working in development fields with other stakeholders and exchange ideas and sought suggestions as to how to take the organisation forward and make more effective and successful. During the past 10 years BASUG, he added, has emerged as a professional Diaspora organisation and has been able to widen its network both at the national and international level and has drawn attention and appreciation from different quarters, both from the governments and the private sectors. But BASUG believes it has still a long way to go, he added.

CULTURAL PROGRAM

The conference was followed by an enchanting cultural program with Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan dance of Ms. Natalie Suppiah and classical music performance of Tabla by celebrated artist Mr. Niti Ranjan Biswas, Belgian music artist Mr. Hans Vermeersch and Bangladeshi Dutch singer, Ms. Deepika Nannan.

BASUG-SUE Workshop on Remittance in Dortmund, Germany held

The Bangladeshi Ambassador in Germany, Mr Muhammad Ali Sorcar said, if migration and remittance are well managed, they benefit both the country of source and country of destination. In this case, Germany and Bangladesh share common experience.



(Photo: BASUG Chairman, Bikash Chowdhury Barua is speaking at the workshop. On his left are Bangladesh Ambassador in Germany Mr Mohammad Ali Sorcar and Mayor of Dortmund City, Mr. Ullrich Sierau)

The Ambassador said this in his speech as Chief Guest in a day long workshop on “Remittance for Community Development and Financial Literacy” held on Saturday 13 February 2016 in Dortmund, Germany. Europe-based Diaspora organisation, BASUG in cooperation with the German development

organisation, Environment and Development Foundation (SUE-NRW) and the City Corporation of Dortmund organized the workshop.

The Ambassador of Bangladesh in Germany Mr. Muhammad Ali Sorcar and Honourable Mayor of Dortmund Mr. Ullrich Sierau attended the workshop as Chief Guest and Special Guest respectively, while Chairman of BASUG, Mr Bikash Chowdhury Barua was in the chair. In his speech, the Ambassador said, it has happened especially in recent years that Germany is welcoming migrants, who have been suffering from various difficulties in their own countries. This is an issue, which always causes misunderstanding of public emotions, for instance. But Germany has showed its outstanding leadership in Europe and beyond. In this consideration, Bangladesh has also similar tradition with Germany. Bangladesh is surrounded practically by two countries. One of them is India and another is Myanmar. Many of you know that there is one group of people in Myanmar, who are considered as stateless. These people are for almost three decades are persecuted by the military government of Myanmar and these people have no other place to go except Bangladesh. Even today 35 thousand members of those communities are officially living in Bangladesh. The unofficial figure is in hundreds of thousands. Bangladesh is still offering them refuge when they are persecuted in their own country.



In the opening session of the workshop, the City Mayor of Dortmund, Mr Ullrich Sierau appreciated the Europe-wide activities of BASUG and said, “Dortmund has the history of thousand years as a city of migrants and guest residents coming from different continents of the world. Dortmund is a multi-cultural and global city with the representation of different cultures, ethnicities and countries. Dortmund has also good cooperation with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal on various stages and aspects. The Technical University of Dortmund has partnership with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. There are also joint research projects and student exchange between Bangladesh and Dortmund, so Dortmund has actually a

In the panel discussion, Dr. M. M. Islam, Senior Researcher, Bonn University and Secretary, BASUG e.V. Germany presented the key-note paper on “Migration and Remittances for Sustainable Development: Context of Bangladesh”, the Commercial Counsellor of Bangladesh Embassy in Germany, Mr. Dr Syed Masum Ahmed Choudhury and Chief Executive of ILD, Germany Mr Lothar Kleipass discussed different aspects of remittance for development and financial literacy, while Dr Ahmed Ziauddin, President of BASUG e.V. moderated the session. The research report on the existing practices and the financial literacy of the Bangladeshi expatriates living in NRW was presented by Research Officer of Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Science Mr Khurshid Hasan. AHM Abdul Hai, Project Coordinator of BASUG Germany delivered vote of thanks. The workshop was jointly conducted by BASUG Secretary Mr Sudhier Nannan and former journalist of Deutsche Welle Ms Marina Joarder.

A documentary film made by BASUG on this issue was screened in the workshop which focussed on the concrete projects in sectors that could make a significant contribution to local development such as water purification, solar energy, building schools and colleges, cold storage, setting up fisheries, leather factories etc and stimulate local entrepreneurship including women, with the support of the Diasporas.

Among others, GIZ Trainer Mr Rafiqul Islam, Chief Executive Officer of ISANGO Mr Arnold Bwele, Coordinator of For Kids Sake in Germany Mr Thomas Stuckenberg, President of German-Bangladesh Cultural Association – Mainz and Convenor of Bangabandhu Foundation Mr Younus Ali Khan, Official of State Bank of India in Frankfurt and noted economist Ms Rokeya Sultana Rothe, MiGlobe Consultants Mr Armel Djine and Kevin Ndeme-Nguba Matuke, Student of Heidelberg University Ms Fahmida Yasmin Tania and Student of Dortmund University Mr Manobendra Sarker took part in the open discussion.

Golden Book Signing Ceremony

On the occasion the Ambassador Mr Muhammad Ali Sorcar also attended the signature ceremony in the Golden Book preserved in the city hall, while the City Mayor Mr Sierau, members of the city council and other noted citizens of Dortmund were present.

In the side line of the workshop, the charity organization working for Bangladeshi orphans For Kids Sake exhibited its handicrafts, activities and leaflets. Forum for Social Innovation (FSI) and MiGlobe also extended their cooperation and exhibited information materials on the development policies in their stand.

GFMD 2016 : BCSCC's next meeting on 5 March in Dhaka

Bangladesh Civil Society Coordination Committee (BCSCC) for the 2016 Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) will hold its launching program on 5th of March 2016 at Nascent Gardenia (5th Floor), Dhaka, Bangladesh. BCSCC has been formed by the leading civil society organisations in Bangladesh to support make the GFMD 2016 in Dhaka a success. Professor Abrar Chowdhury of RMRRU has been made the Chair of the committee while Mr. Saiful Islam of WARBE, who is also a member of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of GFMD has been made co-Chair of the committee.



The founding members of the Committee are: Ain O Salishi Kendro, Bangladesh Obivashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA), BASUG Bangladesh, BRAC, BCWWF, INAFI, IMA Research Foundation, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Ovibhasi Kormi Unnayan Program (OKUP), Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) and WARBE Development Foundation. BASUG-Bangladesh is being represented in the BCSCC by its Country Coordinator, Mr. Biman Barua Chowdhury and Research fellow, Ms. Shahitaz Akhter.

BASUG is also a member of the International Steering Committee (ISC) and a member of the Task Force of GFMD 2016. BASUG has taken active part in all the GFMDs since the beginning from 2007 in Brussels. In 2015 GFMD in Turkey Chairman of BASUG, Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua took part in the civil society days session as panel member while, BASUG Director of Projects and advisor, Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin was a panel member in another session at the government days in Istanbul.

Global Forum on Remittances and Development 2015 in Milan : BASUG organises Knowledge Sharing Discussion

BASUG organised a Knowledge Sharing Discussion on ““Diaspora Investment in Rural Development: Bangladesh and Global Experience” at the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFRD) in Milan, Italy. The four-day GFRD was organized by IFAD and the World Bank celebrating the first International Day of Family Remittance from 16-19 June 2015. Supported by Oxfam Novib, the Knowledge Sharing Discussion, held on 19 June 2015 at Centro Congressi Stella Polare in Milan drew stakeholders from different countries. BASUG and Oxfam Novib jointly set up a Stall at the Fair which drew appreciations from the participants at the GFRD. BASUG Country Coordinator in Italy, Mr M M Haque Raju and BASUG members was at the Stall to give answers to the queries on the organisations and its activities. The program of the day included opening and two separate sessions. Experts from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe were invited as speakers.



The opening session was addressed by Chairman of BASUG, Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua and Program Officer of Oxfam Novib, Mr. Ismail Awil. The two separate sessions were moderated by Mr. Hubert Boirard, Country Programme Manager, Asia and the Pacific Division, IFAD and Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin, Advisor & Director Projects of BASUG.

The program got huge media coverage by the London-based Bangladeshi TV channels. The event news was telecast by at least 4 TV channels from London. A sizeable number of Bangladeshi diaspora living in Milan and Italy also attended the program. Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Central Bank from Dhaka attended the program and handed over crests to the speakers at the end of the sessions. In his inaugural speech Chairman of BASUG, Bikash Chowdhury gave a brief description of the objective of the knowledge sharing program.



(Photo left: BASUG booth at the Milan Remittance Forum. BASUG Director Projects Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin and Italy Country Coordinator Mr. M M Haque Raju are seen at the booth)

Key note papers were presented by Dr. Daniel Gonzales, Program Director of Avina foundation, Mr. Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Director of Africa Limited and co-founder of AFFORD, UK, Dr. Md. Mafizur Rahman, Economic Counsellor of Bangladesh Embassy in Italy & Permanent Representative to IFAD

& FAO & Mr. Ashrafal Alam, Deputy General Manager, SME and Special Program Department of Bangladesh Central Bank, Dhaka. BASUG has been an active participant of the Global Forum on Remittances and Development (GFRD) from the very beginning, an initiative that brings all major stakeholders and

practitioners of remittances and development sectors. It provides an opportunity to all including BASUG to share knowledge, ideas, experiences and exchange notes. The Global Forum is a platform to learn about new innovations and liaise. This time BASUG organized this side event Workshop on “Diaspora Investment in Rural Development: Bangladesh and Global Experience” with high potential and hugely important issue of Diaspora Investment and Rural Development (DIRD) in Bangladesh. DIRD is very relevant to many other participating countries.

Bangladesh receives \$827m in remittance in Feb

Bangladesh received US\$827.36 million in remittance during the first 19 days of the current month, according to a report reaching here from Dhaka. Bangladesh Bank statistics show that four state-owned commercial banks--Rupali, Agrani, Sonali and Janata -received \$255.36 million from expatriate Bangladeshis while four state-owned specialised banks got \$8.57 million.

The maximum remittance came through private commercial banks as they received \$555.87 million while the nine foreign banks commercial banks, (IBBL) led the \$201.41 million, (NBL) with \$36.80 million, Agrani Bank received \$11.90 million, Janata Bank \$7.56 million. Among other positions in earning (\$31.19mn), Pubali (\$28.36mn), Bank (\$18.55mn), Trust (\$16.84mn) and



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\$7.56 million. Among the private Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited remittance earning as it received followed by National Bank Limited million. Of the state-owned banks, \$99.62 million, Sonali Bank \$77.49 million and Rupali Bank 11.90 million. Among private banks which are in leading remittance include Uttara Bank Bank (\$30.95mn), Dutch-Bangla Bank Asia (\$19.67mn), Prime Bank Bank (\$16.56mn), AB Bank BRAC Bank (\$15.66mn).

As in previous days, the NRB banks showed a poor performance in receiving remittance although the government allowed the establishment of these banks with high hopes in this regard. Of the three NRB banks, NRB Bank received \$0.15 million while NRB Commercial Bank \$0.16 million and NRB Global Bank \$0.06 million in remittance from non-resident Bangladeshis during the period.



WORKSHOP

“Clean Clothes: Improve Occupational Safety & Health Compliances of Readymade Garments workers in Bangladesh”

&
Cultural Program

Organised by : BASUG – Diaspora and Development
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