



SDG VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS: MIGRANTS AND URBAN POOR

New Delhi, Friday, 14 February 2025

As reported by

Fr. Francis Bosco SDB,

Incharge of Migrants, SPCSA, India and Lead CSO for the event

—

Voluntary National Review on Migrants and Urban Poor in India: A Comprehensive Discussion at the UN Building, Delhi

February 14, 2025, marked a significant milestone in India's commitment to addressing migration and urban poverty, as the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on Migrants and Urban Poor took place at the UN Building in Delhi. The event, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), saw participation from 40 attendees online and in person, including representatives from 30 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), UN officials, and officers from NITI Aayog.

Setting the Stage: Inaugural Address

The discussion commenced at 10:30 AM with a warm welcome by Mr. Sanjay Awasthi, Head of Office, IOM India. He was followed by Mr. Allen, UNRC, who provided an insightful overview of India's participation in the VNR process, highlighting significant milestones in 2017, 2020, and 2025. Mrs. Deepika Naruka from the UNRC Office shed light on the crucial issues of smuggling and trafficking, emphasizing the need for strategic interventions. Mrs. Parul Agarwala, UN Habitat, raised concerns about the inadequacy of comprehensive data on migrants, setting the context for the discussions ahead.

Diverse Perspectives: Opening Remarks by CSOs

The lead CSOs played a crucial role in framing the discussion with their expertise and on-ground experience. Fr. Francis Bosco, Director of Migrants, India, Mr. Benoy, Director, CMID, and Mrs. Divya, Work and Free Organization, emphasized the pressing challenges faced by migrants and the need for inclusive policies to address their vulnerabilities effectively.

Insights on Migration: Presentations and Key Discussions

At 11:15 AM, Mr. Amit Chowdhury, IOM, delivered a presentation that outlined different migration types, associated challenges, and the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers. His session provided a data-driven understanding of internal migration patterns and labor-related issues.

Following this, at 11:30 AM, **Fr. Francis Bosco** presented on four critical themes impacting migrants:

- Affordable Housing in Cities – The necessity of affordable and inclusive housing policies for low-income migrants.
- Social Protection – Strengthening access to healthcare, education, and financial support mechanisms.
- Women Migrants – Addressing gender-based challenges, including workplace safety, wage disparity, and access to social services.
- Safe, Orderly, and Responsible Internal Migration – Policy recommendations for dignified migration pathways.

The second session was moderated by Mrs. Deepika Naruka from UNODC, ensuring a robust and interactive discussion. Mr. Benoy further elaborated on key concerns related to internal migration, focusing on:

- Continuation of temporary programs introduced during and post-COVID.
- Technological transformation in payment systems and remittances.
- Portability of entitlements, ensuring migrant workers can access social security benefits regardless of their movement.

The concluding session, moderated by Mrs. Parul Agarwala, UN Habitat, featured Mrs. Divya highlighting essential policy concerns such as:

- Registration of Migrants – The need for systematic registration mechanisms to ensure necessary support structures.
- Inclusive Urban Policies – Strengthening urban governance to accommodate migrant needs.
- Awareness on One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) – Promoting outreach efforts to ensure migrants benefit from ONORC schemes.
- Best Practices:
 - CMID Mobile Clinic – Providing essential healthcare services to migrants.
 - Safe in India Initiative – Ensuring workplace safety for automobile industry migrant workers in Gurgaon.

Way Forward

Throughout the event, participants—both online and in-room—actively contributed, offering suggestions and recommendations for future policies. Mr. Alok Kumar, IOM concluded the session by thanking all attendees for their meaningful engagement. Thanks to all the Salesians, staff, volunteers, partners of Don Bosco for migrants, India participated in this event.

In a significant step forward, all participants were encouraged to submit written recommendations, which will be compiled into a final report for NITI Aayog. This report will guide strategic and policy implementation at both the central and state levels, fostering an inclusive and equitable future for migrants and urban poor communities in India.

Fr. Francis Bosco

db4m@dbyarforum.org

New Delhi

14 February, 2025

Cc:

- SPCSA Secretary, New Delhi, SDB South Asia Secretariat.
- Provincial InCharge for Young at Risk and Migrants Ministry, South Asia.
- Don Bosco South Asia Portal - Reports online Public Access.
- Director DBYarForum, India.
- DB4Migrants Archives, India.