

The Daily Star, 09 March 2018

Political commitment has to be there

Says UNHCR representative in Dhaka on refugee issue, calls for addressing conflicts that trigger the crisis

Staff Correspondent

The UN refugee agency chief in Bangladesh has called for addressing the conflicts that trigger refugee crisis and create heavy burdens on the host countries.

“We need to address the issues that trigger displacement. Political commitment [of the UN members] has to be there,” said Andrew Mbogori, representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh.

He said the agency faced some situations when it felt helpless in addressing refugee crisis.

“We can only go to the member states to say we have done this and this much needs to be done,” Andrew said at a discussion at the BIISS auditorium in the capital.

The foreign ministry and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) jointly organised the programme on Global Compacts for Migration and Refugees.

The discussants observed that the world is going through a critical period of time when many conflicts in various parts, including Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and Libya, have created huge refugee crisis. But many countries denied hosting refugees.

They also said rising number of people were moving from one country to another for socio-economic and political reasons, but they often faced exploitation amid lack of any comprehensive global mechanism to ensure their protection.

However, much of the discussion focused on the Rohingya crisis that has created huge pressure on Bangladesh, and on the fact that the UN has so far not been able to take effective measures against Myanmar from where some 700,000 Rohingyas fled atrocities since August 25 last year.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University said, “There is clear evidence of genocide in Rakhine. Even if 10 people are killed, it is genocide.”

The UN has not been able to take Myanmar to court yet, he added.

UNHCR Representative Andrew said although the Rohingya refugees created huge pressure on Bangladesh, the country expressed solidarity with them despite its own challenges.

He said the UN agency has been working on a global compact on refugees, including a mechanism to share the burden of refugees equitably.

Mia Seppo, UN coordinator in Bangladesh, said the international community is committed to ensuring human rights for people across the world, and has been continuously raising voice for ensuring rights of Rohingyas.

“We are calling for unfettered humanitarian access to Rakhine, for the UNHCR to be the lead agency in the repatriation of Rohingyas and for implementation of the Rakhine commission's recommendations,” she said.

Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque said a proposal from Bangladesh on a Global Compact for Migrants to the UN in 2016 resulted in adoption of New York Declaration for Migrants and Refugees.

While the UNHCR is mandated to protect the refugees' rights, there is no global body to look after the rights of migrants, irrespective of their legal status, he said.

He hoped for ratification of Global Compact for Migrants in December this year.

Shahidul said the UN members would determine if the compact would be legally-binding or not.

Gervais Appave, special adviser to the director general of International Organization for Migration, said although human migration had been disorderly over the years, migration governance has now become increasingly important.

Ethical and fair recruitment is one of the key factors for the wellbeing and rights of the migrants globally, he added.

BIISS Director General Maj Gen AKM Abdur Rahman also spoke at the programme, attended by UN officials, diplomats from home and abroad, academics and civil society members.

The Independent, 09 March 2018

Rohingya crisis

UN helpless, can't aid refugees, says UNHCR rep

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations (UN) finds itself in a helpless situation when it cannot help refugees and that the global body needs to do more, the UN representative of high commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh yesterday said with regard to any possible actions against Myanmar for its treatment of the Rohingya community.

“We are in a situation where we are helpless. We can't help refugees. We need to do more,” Andrew Mbogori told a discussion on ‘Global Compacts for Migration and Refugee’ organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium.

Placing emphasis on political commitment of the member states, he said that the UN needs to see the issues that triggers refugee crisis-- a situation that ‘haunts’ them.

On the role of the global body, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh Mia Seppo, who was present at the programme, said that the global body is an organisation of member states and

that it functions in accordance with the desire of its members. Describing the activities of the United Nations Security Council as endless, she reiterated the UN's call upon the Myanmar government to fully implement the recommendations of the Annan Commission for a long-term solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis and said the UN is ready to support any efforts in this regard.

The UN continues to speak boldly with regard to the issue and I think the international community is still committed, Seppo said, demanding unfettered access of international organisations to the affected areas in Rakhine.

She also voiced her opinion in favour of involving the UNHCR, the refugee agency of the global body, with the process of repatriation of the Rohingyas.

Moderated by Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Professor Imtiaz Ahmed of the international relations department of Dhaka University, Gervais Appave, special adviser of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) director general, and BISS Director General Maj Gen Abdur Rahman.

Prof Imtiaz said that migration is and always has been disorderly and chaotic and emphasis needs to be placed to minimise the disorder as much as possible.

He expressed his optimism that the compacts on migration and refugee will help mitigate the sufferings of the migrants and refugees across the world.

He reminded the audience that only about 3.2 per cent of the world's population are migrants.

Appave said that the objectives of the two compacts, which were initiated at a summit of the world leaders at the United Nations in September, 2016, are to benefit the migrants.

And, he said that the concept of the global compact on migration was floated by Bangladesh.

UNHCR representative Mbogori said that there is still time for making any change to the compact on refugees.

In his closing remarks, Foreign Secretary Haque said that there is 'too much of a rift' between the developed countries and developing countries with regards to the issues affecting the migrants.

The prime objective of the compact on migration is to put in place a mechanism, either binding or semi-binding, to regulate migration for the betterment of the migrants, he said.

The New Age, 09 March 2018

Need for country-specific solutions stressed

Diplomatic Correspondent



Guests attend a discussion on ‘global compact on migration and global compact on refugees’ organised by the foreign ministry and the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies at BISS auditorium in Dhaka on Thursday. — New Age photo

Foreign and local experts on Thursday stressed the need for creating an environment that would free people from fears of violence, which might force them to flee the country leading to refugee crisis.

International communities, including the UN and its member-states, would require demonstrating political commitment and playing role for durable country-specific solutions to migration and refugee crisis, they said at a discussion on global compacts on migration and refugees.

Foreign secretary M Shahidul Haque, while moderating the discussion, raised question about the authorities of the UN on making the zero-draft on global compacts on migration and refugees non-binding for the member states.

‘Who has given the UN authority to say it is non-binding by putting it in the zero-draft [circulated among the UN member-states],’ he said, ‘it has been done deliberately.’

Professor Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University stressed the need for creating a society free from fear in order to stop situations that instigated migration and refugee crisis.

‘People live in fear...Sons of rich people are also going away,’ he said, ‘how will fear go away unless and until [international] instruments are enforced and implemented.’

International community should work for ensuring predictability and fairness in the process of migration, said Gervais Appave, senior policy adviser to the director general of International Organisation for Migration.

Political commitment has to be there among the UN member-states at agreeing and ensuring basic services to the refugees including their livelihood and durable country-specific solutions of the refugee crisis, said UNHCR representative in Dhaka Andrew Mbogori, adding that they needed to focus on issues that trigger displacement. He stressed the need for creating an obligation of sharing burden among the originating and receiving country of migrants and refugees. Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies organised the discussion.

Adama Dieng, a special advisor to the UN secretary general on prevention of genocide, said in a separate meeting with foreign minister AH Mahmood Ali, in Dhaka, that the UN Security Council should play stronger role for ensuring accountability and justice and addressing the root causes of the Rohingya problem, according to a foreign ministry press release.

Foreign minister Ali said the international community needed to impress upon Myanmar authorities to take necessary measures so that the forcibly displaced nationals of the country could return to their homes in safety, security and dignity.

Referring to the bilateral arrangement of return between Bangladesh and Myanmar, Ali stressed on the need for creating conducive environment in the Rakhine State of Myanmar.

Adama Dieng was visiting Dhaka on his way to the Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar to interact with the forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Myanmar.

The Financial Express, 09 March 2018

BD hopeful of global support to resolve Rohingya crisis

"We will continue our fight for establishing rights of all migrant people," he said in his presidential remarks at a discussion on 'Global Compacts for Migration and Refugee' jointly organised by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium in the city.

Special Policy Adviser to the Director General of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Gervais Appave, UNHCR representative Andrew Mbogori and Dhaka University Professor of International Relations Department Dr Imtiaz Ahmed spoke at the event, among others.

The foreign secretary highlighted the country's initiatives in proposing a 'Global Compact' for migrants in the United Nations and said the diplomatic efforts of Bangladesh resulted in adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

In his speech, Gervais said the drivers of global migration are multi-dimension that include, among others, security challenges and regional instability, deteriorating economic and social environment, poverty and unemployment and climate change, which threaten livelihoods.

He emphasised on cooperation among states and proper border management that can help, to a great extent, to resolve various problems emanating from international migration and border crossing.

Gervais expressed the hope that the ongoing intergovernmental negotiation would be successful in the adoption of the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a Global Compact on Refugees by 2018'.

In his speech, Andrew lauded Bangladesh for its generous solidarity to international refugees and hosting over 1.2 million people from neighbouring Myanmar.

The UNHCR is working to ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, he said, underscoring the need for intensifying international help to ease the pressure of the hosting countries.

Prof Imtiaz said migration did never happen in an orderly manner in human history. It was always chaotic and desperately, he added.

He said nowadays everyone wants to go away for the lack of certainty in their current position.

The Daily Observer, 09 March 2018

BD to continue its fight to solve Rohingya issue: FS

Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh will continue its fight to put an end to Rohingya crisis, said Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary Md Shahidul Haque.

He said this while delivering his speech in a national consultation programme on 'Global Compact on Migration and Global Compact on Refugees' hosted by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) in the city on Thursday.

The foreign secretary who also chaired the programme mentioned Bangladesh's initiatives in proposing a Global Compact for migrants in the UN and also diplomatic efforts of Bangladesh resulted in adoption of the New York declaration for refugees and migrants. He hoped that the international community would help Bangladesh resolve the problem of Rohingyas coming from Myanmar which is a major challenge for Bangladesh.

Gervais Appave, Special Policy Advisor to the Directorate-General, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Andrew Mbogori, Representative of UNHCR and Professor Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, Department of International Relations of the Dhaka University were, among others, present at the meeting.

The BIISS Directorate General Major General AKM Abdur Rahman delivered his welcome speech.

Ambassadors, officials from different ministries, academia, researchers and representatives from different organisations participated in the consultation programme.

Gervais Appave said cooperation among states through proper management can help resolve various problems emanating from international migration and border crossing.

He hoped that the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations will be successful in the adoption of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a Global Compact on Refugees by 2018.

Andrew Mbogori noted that the UNHCR is working to ensure that everyone has the rights to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state.

He mentioned different activities of the UNHCR, including protection, shelter, advocacy, health, safeguarding individuals and global needs assessment.

যুগান্তর, ০৯ মার্চ ২০১৮

রোহিঙ্গা ইস্যুতে নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের ভূমিকা প্রশ্নবিদ্ধ

যুগান্তর রিপোর্ট

অভিবাসী ও উদ্বাস্তু সংকট চলছে বিশ্বজুড়েই। এ সমস্যার সমাধান মিলছে না। রোহিঙ্গা ইস্যুতে জাতিসংঘ শুরু থেকেই সোচ্চার। কিন্তু জাতিসংঘের সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বডি নিরাপত্তা পরিষদকে প্রশ্নবিদ্ধ ভূমিকায় দেখা যাচ্ছে। ভূ-রাজনৈতিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি, আঞ্চলিক মতপার্থক্য ও স্বার্থসংশ্লিষ্ট নানা ইস্যুতে এ ক্ষেত্রে ঐকমত্যে পৌঁছানো সম্ভব হচ্ছে না। ফলে জাতিসংঘ (ইউএনএইচসিআর) এখানে অসহায়। রোহিঙ্গা সমস্যার আশু সমাধানসহ সংকটে থাকা বিশ্বের সব অভিবাসী ও উদ্বাস্তুকে স্বাভাবিক জীবনে ফেরানোর মাধ্যমে বিশ্ব শান্তি প্রতিষ্ঠায় নিরাপত্তা পরিষদই পারে কার্যকর ভূমিকা রাখতে। মানবতার প্রশ্নে বিশ্বের সব দেশ ও সংস্থা এবং মানবতাবাদীদের ঐক্যবদ্ধ চাপ এবং একসঙ্গে কাজ করে যাওয়ার পরামর্শ দিয়েছেন অভিবাসন ও উদ্বাস্তু বিষয়ক বিশেষজ্ঞরা।

বৃহস্পতিবার পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয় আয়োজিত ‘গ্লোবাল কমপ্যাক্টস ফর মাইগ্রেশন অ্যান্ড রিফিউজি’ শীর্ষক সংলাপে তারা এসব কথা বলেন। রাজধানীর ইস্কাটনের বাংলাদেশ ইন্সটিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অ্যান্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ মিলনায়তনে এ সংলাপের আয়োজন করা হয়। পররাষ্ট্র সচিব শহিদুল হকের সভাপতিত্বে অনুষ্ঠিত সংলাপে প্যানেল আলোচকের বক্তব্য দেন আইএমওর মহাপরিচালকের বিশেষ উপদেষ্টা গারভিস এপান্ডি, ইউএনএইচসিআরের বাংলাদেশ প্রতিনিধি অ্যান্ড্রিউ অ্যান্সোগোরি, বিআইআইএসএসের মহাপরিচালক মেজর জেনারেল একেএম আবদুর রহমান-এনডিসি পিএসসি, ঢাবির আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগের অধ্যাপক ড. ইমতিয়াজ আহমেদ। বক্তব্য দেন বাংলাদেশে জাতিসংঘের আবাসিক প্রতিনিধি মিয়ো শিন্দো, সাবেক পররাষ্ট্র সচিব শমসের মবিন চৌধুরী, অভিবাসন বিশেষজ্ঞ আসিফ মুনির প্রমুখ।

নয়া দিগন্ত, ০৯ মার্চ ২০১৮

রোহিঙ্গাদের মানবাধিকার রক্ষায় বিশ্ব সম্প্রদায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ : জাতিসঙ্ঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়ক

কূটনৈতিক প্রতিবেদক

জাতিসঙ্ঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়ক মিয়া সিপ্লো বলেছেন, রোহিঙ্গাদের মানবাধিকার রক্ষা ও তাদের ওপর নৃশংসতার সাথে দায়ীদের জবাবদিহিতার আওতায় আনতে আন্তর্জাতিক সম্প্রদায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। বসনিয়ার ঘটনা এ ধরনের প্রতিশ্রুতি বাস্তবায়নের একটি দৃষ্টান্ত। রোহিঙ্গা ইস্যুতে জাতিসঙ্ঘ সোচ্চার ভূমিকা পালন করছে।

অভিবাসন ও উদ্বাস্তু বিষয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক চুক্তির ওপর রাজধানীতে আয়োজিত এক আলোচনা সভায় তিনি এ কথা বলেন। গতকাল বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অ্যান্ড স্ট্রাটিজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস) মিলনায়তনে পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয় ও বিআইআইএসএস যৌথভাবে এই আলোচনার আয়োজন করে।

মিয়া সিপ্লো বলেন, রোহিঙ্গা ইস্যুতে জাতিসঙ্ঘ মহাসচিব, মানবাধিকার বিষয়ক হাইকমিশনার ও স্পেশাল রিপোর্টাররা পরিষ্কার অবস্থানের কথা জানিয়েছেন। জাতিসঙ্ঘের উর্ধ্বতন অনেক কর্মকর্তাই বাংলাদেশ সফর করে রোহিঙ্গাদের অবস্থা দেখে গেছেন, তাদের বক্তব্য তুলে ধরেছেন।

তিনি বলেন, রাখাইন পরিস্থিতি সম্পর্কে ধারণা পেতে মিয়ানমারে অবস্থিত জাতিসঙ্ঘ মিশনের সাথে সমন্বয়ের মাধ্যমে আমরা কাজ করছি। রাখাইনে অবাধে মানবিক সহায়তার প্রবেশাধিকারের ব্যাপারে মিয়ানমারের প্রতি আমাদের আহ্বান অব্যাহত থাকবে। রোহিঙ্গা প্রত্যাবাসনে জাতিসঙ্ঘের উদ্বাস্তুবিষয়ক সংস্থা ইউএনএইচসিআরের ভূমিকা যেন থাকে সেটা চাই আমরা। এ সংক্রান্ত আলোচনায় বাংলাদেশ বেশ এগিয়ে আছে।

রাখাইন সঙ্কট সমাধানে কফি আনান কমিশনের প্রতিবেদনের সুপারিশগুলো বাস্তবায়নের ওপর গুরুত্বারোপ করে জাতিসঙ্ঘের আবাসিক সমন্বয়ক বলেন, এ জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সহযোগিতা দিতে আমরা প্রস্তুত রয়েছি।

অনুষ্ঠানে আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসন সংস্থার (আইওএম) মহাপরিচালকের বিশেষ উপদেষ্টা জারভেইস অ্যাপোভ, ইউএনএইচসিআরের প্রতিনিধি এডিভু অ্যামবগোরি ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগের অধ্যাপক ইমতিয়াজ আহমেদ বক্তব্য রাখেন। এতে স্বাগত বক্তব্য দেন বিআইআইএসআসের মহাপরিচালক মেজর জেনারেল আবদুর রহমান। সভাপতিত্ব করেন পররাষ্ট্র সচিব শহীদুল হক।

পররাষ্ট্র সচিব বলেন, মিয়ানমার থেকে বলপ্রয়োগে বাস্তুচ্যুত জনগোষ্ঠীর একটি বড় অংশ বাংলাদেশে এসেছে। এটি আমাদের জন্য একটি বিরূপ চ্যালেঞ্জ। এ চ্যালেঞ্জ মোকাবেলায় বিশ্ব সম্প্রদায়ের সহযোগিতা প্রয়োজন।