



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية
المرسلة والمستقبلة للعمالة
Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian
Labour-Sending and Receiving Countries

Abu Dhabi Dialogue

Eighth Ministerial Consultation

31 January - 1 February 2026

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Eighth Joint Declaration

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegations from **Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Vietnam** to the Eighth Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, convened in Dubai on the 1st of February 2026,

Extending our appreciation to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman for its capable leadership of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue over the preceding two years, including its guidance of the thematic priorities and the related programme of work underpinning this Consultation,

Extend our welcome and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Philippines for accepting the responsibility of the ADD Chair for the next two years, and we look forward to a period of constructive engagement and shared progress under its chairmanship.

And expressing our sincere appreciation to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its generous support and efforts undertaken to organise and host this successful Ministerial Consultation,

Acknowledging the important role played by the members of the Advisory Committee in reviewing, refining, and further elaborating the outcomes of the thematic priorities identified at the Seventh Ministerial Consultation,

Recognizing with appreciation the contributions of the researchers and their respective organisations in supporting the analysis and development of the thematic papers, as well as the experts who facilitated the associated consultations and information-gathering processes.

Recommending the Chair's Report to the Eighth Ministerial Consultation for consideration by relevant stakeholders

Taking into account the guiding interventions and strategic directions shared by Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations during this Consultation, and committing to ensuring that the thematic agenda of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue reflects the priorities



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articulated, while also recognising the valuable contributions made throughout this Consultation by representatives of observer governments and government-affiliated entities, intergovernmental and inter-state organisations, State-led Regional Consultative Processes, local authorities, civil society, the private sector, youth, and international organisations.

Recognising that labour mobility in the Asia–GCC corridor is undergoing significant change, as labour demand in the GCC is evolving at a pace quicker than existing mobility and skills systems can respond, resulting in skills mismatches that constrain growth, while many youth and professionals face economic and climate-related pressures and increasing expectations for higher-quality migration outcomes. These dynamics are further shaped by demographic change, evolving employment relationships, rapid digitalisation and AI-driven transformation of work, and current economic pressures, including rising inflation and labour costs. In this context, we recognize that addressing this challenge requires shared efforts and mutual investments in both origin and destination countries.

Taking note of the significant labour market reforms undertaken by several Origin and Destination countries within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in recent years during the “Innovations from the Region” session, including measures to enhance labour mobility and its positive implications on labour market governance, recruitment practices, and employment relationships across the ADD corridor.

We further had the pleasure to hear outcomes of the extensive research papers conducted by subject matter experts from several partner international organisations.

On Climate Change and Labor Mobility in the Asia -GCC corridor

We recognized that climate change is already undermining women’s livelihoods in South Asia—particularly in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka—where women are disproportionately employed in climate-sensitive sectors and continue to face structural barriers, including limited access to land, finance, skills, and social protection. We observed that, as climate dynamics continue to develop, migration is increasingly used as an adaptation strategy; however, many women continue to migrate through low-skilled, irregular, and insecure pathways.

We further noted that destination countries, particularly in the GCC, continue to identify labour and skills needs driven by rising demand in the hospitality sector as well as in green and digital occupations. We emphasized that climate-smart, gender-responsive skills mobility partnerships can contribute to addressing these challenges by linking skills development and recognition with safe and regular migration pathways, thereby generating mutual benefits for workers, employers, and both origin and destination countries.



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We explored the Gulf Cooperation Council’s accelerating green transition by exploring the evolving green economic landscape, the resulting demand for specialized skills, and the ways in which existing migration frameworks may fall short in addressing these emerging labour needs. With particular interest, we discussed the proposed regional roadmap centered on a shared Green Talent Pool to enable skills development and intra-GCC mobility across the ADD corridor. Building on this analysis, we assessed how a regional green bond could serve as a strategic financing tool to support the ADD member state’s green transition by investing in human capital development. Issuing a wide green bond could mobilize sustainable finance to fund skills training in countries of origin, through jointly designed programmes with destination countries, de-risk green employment for employers, and build the institutional and digital infrastructure required to manage a shared Green Talent Pool—thereby aligning climate objectives with workforce development and long-term economic diversification.

On Labour Mobility and Skills for a Just Transition to Green Economy

We noted evidence showing that climate change is already reshaping labour markets and labour mobility across the ADD corridor, redefining occupational risks, affecting productivity, and requiring the development of existing decent work and social protection methodologies—particularly in climate-exposed sectors. For many climate-vulnerable origin countries, labour mobility and remittances are increasingly serving as important mechanisms for income diversification and climate adaptation, while destination countries continue to rely on migrant workers to sustain key sectors and meet emerging labour demand, including in green and climate-resilient industries.

In this context, we affirmed that advancing a just transition requires more coherent and anticipatory approaches that integrate climate action, skills development, and labour mobility governance. We emphasized the importance of extending just transition frameworks to migrant workers, strengthening occupational safety and health protections, expanding access to inclusive skills development and recognition systems, and enhancing bilateral, regional, and inter-regional cooperation through the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to support safe, regular, and organised labour mobility pathways that contribute to climate resilience, economic transformation, and shared prosperity across the ADD corridor.

We explored emerging approaches that link workforce development with climate adaptation and economic resilience, particularly in sectors critical to ADD member states’ long-term sustainability, such as controlled environment agriculture and waste management. We took note of evidence showing that the success of investments in food security, circular economy initiatives, and waste-to-energy infrastructure depends not only on capital and technology, but also on the availability of technicians with specialized operational and environmental skills. We recognized that addressing skills gaps in these



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climate-relevant sectors is essential to safeguarding the performance, productivity, and resilience of major public and private investments across the region. We encourage collaborative approaches to skills development that benefit both origin and destination countries.

We further recognized evidence that skills gaps generate significant hidden costs for employers and governments, including productivity losses, repeated recruitment, and reliance on short-term external expertise. Addressing these inefficiencies through structured skills partnerships, targeted skills development, and predictable workforce pipelines was noted as critical to protecting the returns on large-scale public and private investments in climate-relevant sectors.

On, Expatriate Gig Workers in the ADD Member States: Addressing Legal, Social, and Career Implications

We recognized that virtual labour mobility is emerging as an important complement to physical labour mobility within the Abu Dhabi Dialogue region, enabled by digital connectivity and the increasing tradability of services. It was emphasized that ADD Member States play complementary roles as both suppliers and users of remote work, creating opportunities to better align labour supply and demand while easing pressures associated with physical migration.

We emphasized that infrastructure readiness, relevant digital skills, and clear regulatory frameworks are essential to expanding virtual labour mobility in an inclusive manner. The discussion noted that the Abu Dhabi Dialogue can facilitate shared learning and pilot initiatives to support Member States in developing more structured approaches to virtual labour mobility, thereby expanding employment opportunities—particularly for women and youth—while complementing existing labour mobility pathways.

We gathered employers' perspectives and noted the rapid expansion of the gig economy across the Abu Dhabi Dialogue corridor, driven by digital platforms, evolving business models, and changing worker preferences. We recognized that gig and platform work is playing an increasingly important role in enhancing business flexibility, facilitating access to specialised skills, and expanding labour market participation, particularly for women and youth. At the same time, we observed that inconsistent definitions, limited data availability, and fragmented regulatory approaches continue to constrain effective policymaking and cross-country comparability.

We further acknowledged that existing labour, social protection, and labour mobility frameworks remain largely oriented toward traditional employment relationships and are not yet fully aligned with the realities of gig work, particularly for foreign workers. We noted that consideration remain related to expanding access to social protection systems



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to cover certain risks, and gaps in accessing skills development opportunities, which present compliance and sustainability challenges for both workers and businesses. In this context, we recognized the need for clearer worker classification, strengthened data collection, and more adaptive social protection frameworks that take into account the cross-border nature of platform work, labour mobility, and skills frameworks to support the sustainable growth of the gig economy across the ADD corridor

On Unlocking the Role of Skills and Diversity for Labour Productivity in ADD Member States

We acknowledged that skills development and workforce diversity are increasingly central to labour productivity, economic diversification, and sustainable growth across ADD Member States. We took note that, despite sustained investments in education, training, and migration systems, persistent skills mismatches, fragmented skills classification and recognition frameworks, and uneven access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities continue to limit productivity gains—particularly in advanced, green, and digital sectors.

We further took stock of labour mobility patterns within the ADD corridor, which reflect a complementary workforce model whereby migrant workers meet critical technical and specialist needs while affirming that migrant workers are development partners in both origin and destination countries. In this context, we highlighted the value of advancing skills verification and recognition, deepening public–private partnerships, and promoting more inclusive and adaptive skills and mobility frameworks—particularly for women, youth, and small and medium-sized enterprises—to better align labour supply and demand and support resilient, future-ready labour markets across the ADD corridor, such as the Global Skill Partnership program, which has been implemented in several ADD countries, including India, Indonesia and the Philippines. We encourage further bilateral and regional cooperation to build on this experience.

The Promise of Global Skill Partnerships and the Need for Investment in Skills and International Worker Mobility Systems:

We discussed the global demographic and labour market context and explored Global Skill Partnerships as a practical response to skills shortages and demographic imbalances. We recognized that well-managed labour mobility, supported by investment in skills development, can promote shared prosperity while reducing risks such as irregular migration and skills mismatch.

We further acknowledged the growing and sustained demand for workers and took note of evidence indicating that labour demand in GCC countries is projected to increase significantly over the coming decades, which underscores the importance of forward-



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looking partnerships that align skills development, certification, and legal mobility pathways.

In this context, we recognized the potential of Global Skill Partnerships and other cooperative models to strengthen regional and international collaboration, including through mutual recognition of skills and qualifications, enhance workforce preparedness, and ensure that labour mobility contributes to development outcomes, decent work, and mutual benefit across Abu Dhabi Dialogue member states

GCM Session – Highlighting Best Practices in Implementation

We expressed our appreciation to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, (ESCAP) as well as to the United Nations Network on Migration, for their continued engagement and valuable contributions to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and we welcomed their participation in supporting regional reflection and preparedness for the Second International Migration Review Forum in 2026.

We took note of progress made in advancing the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including through regional and national review processes, voluntary reporting, and strengthened cooperation with United Nations partners. We acknowledged that the ADD corridor remains central to global labour mobility, economic transformation, and remittance flows, while also facing evolving challenges linked to conflict, displacement, labour market needs, and climate change.

In this context, we reaffirmed the importance of leveraging the Abu Dhabi Dialogue as a platform for regional learning, coordination, and collective input into the IMRF 2026. We emphasized the value of enhancing data, expanding regular and skills-responsive migration pathways, strengthening protection and inclusion for all migrant workers, including those in domestic work and non-traditional sectors, and aligning labour mobility with sustainable development and climate adaptation objectives. We further encouraged Member States to actively engage in the IMRF process, including through voluntary reporting, peer exchange, and partnerships, to articulate shared priorities and contribute to a coherent regional perspective.

While also commissioning the Permanent Secretariat, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, to develop a brief submission reflecting Abu Dhabi Dialogue's effectiveness as a platform for regional learning, coordination, strengthening protection and inclusion for migrant workers, and aligning labour mobility with sustainable development and climate adaptation and objectives pertaining to facilitating partnerships and cooperation. Additionally, reaffirming our commitment towards *cooperation and constructive dialogue, grounded in the principle of shared responsibility between countries of origin and destination*



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as the foundation for achieving mutually beneficial migration outcomes, and drawing on the outcomes of these substantive and in-depth discussions, which identified both key gaps and significant opportunities for enhanced cooperation, we recommend that the ADD incoming Chair , Permanent Secretariat, and in collaboration with esteemed partner International Organizations and the Advisory Committee—develop a two-year, pragmatic, and forward-looking research and policy agenda in this regard.

This agenda should aim to focus on transforming labour mobility into a strategic instrument for development, workforce readiness, and economic resilience in the Asia–GCC corridor, anchored in remittances, digitalisation, and skills intelligence, and implemented through bilateral and/or regional cooperation, with particular emphasis on the following themes:

Theme 1: AI, Digitalisation, and Technology for Smarter Labour Mobility Governance

1st thematic focus: AI and Data Analytics for Skills Intelligence and Labour Mobility

Intending to explore the potential of artificial intelligence and data analytics to assess their applicability in developing smarter skills systems, improving skills matching and recognition, and supporting more efficient and forward-looking labour mobility governance across the Abu Dhabi Dialogue corridor.

2nd thematic focus: Digitalisation and Technology for Smarter Labour Inspection and Compliance

Seeking to examining the role of digitalisation in strengthening labour inspection and compliance systems, through more efficient, risk-based, and coordinated labour market administration across the Abu Dhabi Dialogue corridor.

Theme 2: Remittances as a Strategic Tool for Development and Workforce Skills' Transformation

The policy workstream on Leveraging Remittances for Development, seeks to map feasible and policy-relevant approaches to more effectively harness remittances flows in support of development across the countries of origin within the ADD Corridor, it recognises the importance of respecting migrants' choices regarding how remittances are used, while reinforcing the principle of shared responsibility among ADD member states in creating enabling environments that maximise their developmental impact. It will also explore opportunities for collaborative action, including efforts to reduce remittance transfer costs and expand migrants' and their families' access to formal financial services.



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Theme 3: Evolving Labour Market Frameworks and Labour Mobility Dynamics in the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Corridor

With a view to reviewing recent developments in the legislative frameworks governing labour markets and employment policies across the Abu Dhabi Dialogue corridor, and examining their interaction with labour mobility patterns, recruitment practices, and workforce allocation, in support of greater alignment, enhanced mutual understanding, and effective cooperation between countries of origin and destination.

Theme 4: Connecting Education-to-Work Systems and Labour Mobility through Multilateral Development Bank Partnerships

Designed to explore the role of National Financial Institutions and Multilateral Development Bank-supported education, skills, and employment reform programmes developed in consultation with labour-sending countries in strengthening education-to-work linkages and contributing to more effective and orderly labour mobility outcomes across the Abu Dhabi Dialogue corridor, in alignment with existing bilateral and regional frameworks. The theme will also examine opportunities for workforce skills transformation, including the development of mutually beneficial partnerships that align skills development, certification systems, and legal mobility pathways, ensuring that education and training systems are better connected to labour market demands in both origin and destination countries.

In addition to the above thematic priorities, we commission the secretariat, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, to deliver a plan for the establishment of a sub-group to develop proposals for consideration by the next Ministerial consultations on more effective Charing Arrangements.

Finally, we look forward to working closely together with our international and regional partners to further the outcomes of our shared goals.