



Exposed and exploited: Addressing the climate migration modern slavery nexus in Bangladesh

When

Date: 18th February 2025

Time: 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM (UK time) / 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (Bangladesh Time)

Where: Online and in-person (only for Dhaka based participants)

The event brite registration will only be for online participation

About the event

Climate change is driving irreversible loss and damage in Bangladesh, with disasters devastating lives, livelihoods, and entire communities. Floods, cyclones, and salinity intrusion are wiping out crops, destroying homes, and leaving people with no means to rebuild. For many, migration has become an unavoidable response - a last resort for those who can no longer sustain themselves in their hometowns. However, rather than providing stability, migration often pushes people into deeper vulnerability, exposing them to exploitative labour conditions, modern slavery, and human trafficking.

Through our research, we have investigated the nexus between climate change, migration, and vulnerability to modern slavery, focusing on two regions of Bangladesh that are experiencing climate-induced displacement - one in southern coastal area and another northern region of Bangladesh - each experiencing different types of climate risks. Our study examined how climate change is disrupting livelihoods, the factors that drive households to migrate, and why some people migrate while others remain trapped in deteriorating conditions. We also analysed how migration decisions, both internal and international, are shaped by climate risks, economic loss, inadequate social protection, and governance gaps, leaving migrants vulnerable to exploitation. The findings provide new evidence on the extent to which migrants are exposed to modern slavery, within country and at international destinations.

At this event, we will share key insights from our research, including a breakdown of climate-related economic and non-economic losses, migration trends, and real-life testimonies of migrants caught in exploitative labour systems. We will also discuss practical solutions, exploring how governments, civil society, and international organisations can strengthen social protection, ensure safe migration pathways, and leverage climate finance, including the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), to break the link between climate-induced migration and modern slavery.

At its core, this issue is one of climate justice. The communities most affected by climate change are often those least responsible for it, yet they bear the greatest burden, both in terms of direct economic losses and the social and human costs of displacement. This event will bring together policymakers, civil society leaders, labour rights advocates, and climate and migration experts to explore urgent solutions. Discussions will focus on how to design resilience building strategies, protect migrants from exploitation, and ensure that climate finance mechanisms address the realities of displacement and forced labour.

The conversation will be about working toward solutions that protect both the livelihoods and dignity of those affected. Join us as we unpack the findings, discuss concrete policy recommendations, and chart a path toward more just, sustainable, and rights-based responses to climate-induced migration.

Objectives of the event

The event aims to:

- Share new evidence on the links between climate change, migration and vulnerability to modern slavery, highlighting key drivers, risks, and policy gaps.
- Explore how climate related economic and non-economic losses and damages are forcing migration and increasing exposure to exploitative labour conditions.
- Discuss strategies to strengthen social protection systems, climate resilience, and legal protections for climate affected migrants.
- Identify how international funding mechanisms, including the FRLD, can support solutions that protect vulnerable populations.
- Foster dialogue between policymakers, labour rights organisations, civil society, and international agencies to drive collaborative action.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the event, we expect increased awareness among policymakers, practitioners, and advocates about the urgent need to address the nexus between migration, modern slavery, and climate change. The discussions will lead to concrete policy recommendations on strengthening labour rights, improving migration governance, and integrating climate resilience into protection mechanisms. Stakeholders will be encouraged to commit to advancing safer migration pathways, expanding access to social protection, and enhancing climate finance allocations for vulnerable communities. Additionally, the event aims to foster stronger collaboration between governments, international organizations, and civil society to ensure follow-up actions that drive meaningful change beyond the discussion..