Summary/conclusions

1. On 9-10 November 2015, the 7th meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on the Silk Routes Region was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2. The Working Group meeting gathered 53 participants from 19 countries – Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Iran, Iraq, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Pakistan, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom – as well as the European Commission, the EU Delegation to Bangladesh, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the WARBE Development Foundation, a Bangladeshi NGO.

3. The first day of the meeting started with introductory remarks by Bangladesh (host), Turkey (Chair of the BP and the Working Group), Hungary (Co-Chair of the BP) and the European Commission. Bangladesh stressed the importance of pre-departure trainings and preparations for migrant workers with a view to increase their potential contributions to development of the home country as well as to enhance awareness of their rights. Turkey underlined that migration and development are interrelated processes, but the relationship between them is complex as development does not always lead to less migration. Turkey also highlighted the need for creative immigration policies that can reconcile the vast and mounting pressure for greater mobility with the stronger objections voiced in many receiving countries. The European Commission added that the EC has been a pioneer in recognising the links between migration and development and the contributions migration makes in receiving countries, not only in the countries of origin, although this perception is not always concurred by the EU countries.

4. Following the welcome addresses, an introductory presentation was delivered on the concepts, theories and the global debate on Migration and Development (M&D), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) by ICMPD. Some of the important points highlighted were:

   i. Initially focusing on migration from developing countries to developed countries based on an economic understanding of development, the current M&D approach is based on the human development approach, meaning mobility considered in terms of expanded capabilities. It puts attention on all forms of mobility: south-south, internal and forced migration. Migration is understood to have far more outreaching effects such as departure, arrival, family, remittance, diaspora, settlement and return.

   ii. The relationship between migration and broader development processes is reciprocal. Migration seems to reinforce already existing patterns and trends
of social, economic and political change – whether these are more negative or positive.

iii. M&D concepts need to account for the constraining or enabling political, institutional, economic, social and cultural context in which migration takes place - as well as the agency; the limited but real capacity of individuals to overcome constraints and potentially reshape the structural context.

5. The introductory presentation was followed by an expert led round table discussion on the key areas of M&D namely, policy coherence, economic factors of migration, social impacts of migration, ensuring migrants rights and diaspora engagement with participants from Bangladesh, the European Commission, Sweden and Switzerland.

i. Bangladesh referred to the Dhaka Declaration on Population Dynamics in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which calls upon States to ensure that migrants are agents of development and that migration is safe and orderly whilst adequate protection and assistance are extended to all migrants. Bangladesh underlined that migration specific indicators for the SDGs will come up early 2016 and that financing will be the biggest challenge to reach the targets. GFMD could help contribute to monitor the development on reaching the targets. In addition, Bangladesh highlighted the need to look more into the social costs and impacts of migration, in particular its impacts on household dynamics and communities.

ii. The European Commission highlighted the importance of engaging the human skills and knowledge of migrants for their countries of origin not only in case of return, but also whilst staying abroad for instance through teaching and training for short periods. It is important to use remittances for income generating activities. The Commission also expressed that migration is not a solution by itself, it is necessary to have the right migrants for the right jobs and with instruments in place to facilitate integration.

iii. As migration is the driver of human development, it is important to lower the costs of remittances, enhance financial literacy, portability of social benefits, recognition of qualifications and promotion of workers’ rights according to Sweden. Currently a global certification system on ethical recruitment is being developed by Sweden. Incorporating migration into labour market planning and policy is crucial.

iv. Switzerland presented the various challenges around mainstreaming migration into development cooperation, starting with ensuring policy coherence at intra government, multi-stakeholder and multilateral levels with clearly defined responsibilities. Making development assistance conditional on cooperation on returns and readmission was not always productive.

v. In the following discussion, India expressed that there was no adequate justification to support the linkage of remittances with development and proposed to look at the various contributions of migrants rather than focusing on remittances. Pakistan highlighted the need to fill the gaps as regards mobility between labour sending and receiving countries as this gap is currently being filled by smugglers. UNHCR reminded that the category of refugees should not be forgotten in the discussion on development.
6. In the next expert led discussion with Bangladesh, Iraq, and Pakistan on mainstreaming migration into development planning, IOM expert highlighted the need for an evidence based approach to link up different priority areas affected by migration and impacting upon migration. The biggest challenges in this process are ensuring commitment of different stakeholders and building trust among them and ensuring a common set of objectives as well as sufficient priority and resources to be accorded.

i. **Bangladesh** stressed the importance of removing sub-agents from the process of migration to reduce costs and promoted the idea of state-to-state cooperation. It is equally important to have a strong framework to govern the area of migration, in particular of the recruitment process. Despite numerous efforts and new initiatives there was still a need for an integrated approach in the country in mainstreaming migration into the planning and policy making of different sectors.

ii. **Iraq** underlined the significance of vocational training in the efforts to combat irregular migration with a view to provide perspectives to the young people.

iii. **Pakistan** referred to the negative competition among different recruiting agencies and countries and was interested to know more about the practices in Bangladesh in the classification of recruitment companies.

iv. In the following discussion, **India** referred to migration as a tool for development and the policy direction should be towards streamlining employment contracts, social benefits, recruitment practices and globally recognised certificates and similar initiatives to maximise the potential contributions of migration. Establishing mobility partnerships between countries of origin and destination, meeting labour supply and demand should be the aim.

7. The following session focused on **diaspora engagement** and contribution to the development of countries of origin and destination.

i. **Georgia** provided an account of their efforts for diaspora engagement, in particular the state’s role and responsibilities in reaching out to the diaspora, informing them and organising opportunities for their engagement and contributions. Georgia among other initiatives organises diaspora days, provides online information, promotes Sunday schools and diaspora organisations, sets up diaspora investment mechanisms, runs a diaspora internship programme and an online school as well as various projects such as for the temporary return of qualified nationals.

ii. The **WARBE Foundation** reflected on diaspora engagement from the view point of the diaspora as an NGO working with Bangladeshi migrants abroad, both regular and irregular. The NGO reported that there are many investments and businesses done even by short-term migrants in the Gulf countries, but in the name of 'kafil', or in Europe behind the scenes with local owners. According to WARBE, the mind-set of the governments has to change in order to tap the potential of the diaspora. Migration should not be about export of manpower as migrants are not commodities, but should be a choice.

iii. International organisations **ICMPD** and **IOM** reported on lessons learnt and good practices concerning diaspora engagement. It is crucial to know about the diaspora, who they are, but more importantly what their aspirations are. There are increasing demands on consular representatives to engage with diaspora and
such consular services are perceived more useful than diaspora days. A whole-
of-government approach and inter-agency cooperation is essential. Diaspora
does not contribute only in terms of skills or economic investment, but can be an
important factor of political influence and can provide with assistance and
humanitarian aid in times of a crisis.

8. On the second day, working groups discussed different issues of priority for the Silk Routes countries.
   i. In the first working group on *coordination at home*, migration profiles were
considered as a good tool to ensure inter-agency coordination and cooperation.
   ii. Second working group focused on *economics of migration*. Reducing costs of
migration, ensuring transparency in the recruitment process and other processes
in countries of origin and destination, improving the quality and scope of pre-
departure orientation and working on the certification of skills were the main
recommendations.
   iii. Third group discussed *social impact of migration*, in particular changing the
mind set of governments so that migrants are not considered as commodities and
conducting more research on the social impact for both countries of origin and
destination. In doing so, working with diasporas is crucial. This group proposed to
set up twinning like partnerships between the countries of the Budapest Process,
such as on diaspora engagement between Bangladesh as a country with large
diaspora groups abroad and Georgia as a country with extensive experience in the
area.
   iv. The theme of the fourth group was *rights based approach to M&D*. This group
concluded that it is important that migrants make informed decisions, that tools
are developed for structured, well-managed migration including provision of
adequate information, training and fair treatment. Furthermore, consular services
and other protection mechanisms need to be strengthened and opportunities
need to be created to come back in a humane manner. Portability of social
benefits should be regulated by bilateral agreements.

9. Following the working groups, in the next session Turkey, Sweden and Bangladesh
provided the outlook from the GFMD Troika in terms of priorities and areas to focus
upon. Whilst Sweden emphasised the need to focus on the positive effects of M&D,
Turkey stressed the inclusion of the private sector and empowerment of women to use
the potential of migration for development. Bangladesh stated that their priorities as
incoming Chair of the GFMD would be the economics of migration, social impact of
migration, choices for migration, migration governance and safety and security of
migrants.

10. In closing, the Chair summarised the following recommendations for action from the two
day discussions:
   i. Change the mind set of governments so that migrants are not perceived as
commodities or only as manpower. In parallel with this, more focus and research
are necessary on the social impact of migration, including its costs and benefits,
which are too often neglected in favour of the perceived economic benefits.
ii. Improve the decision making process for potential migrants to make informed decisions, and ensure the transparency in the different processes of migration, including recruitment, arrival, post-arrival and return.

iii. Improve the quality and scope of pre-departure orientation, enhance the skills of migrants and work on the certification of these skills.

iv. Lift barriers to migration through more information and less costs.

v. Enhance protection abroad through consular services and others, including the civil society.

vi. Create short-term opportunities for migrants to contribute to human development in their countries of origin during their stay abroad and develop opportunities for their reintegration and use of skills upon return.

vii. Ensure better and regular inter-agency coordination in the governance of migration and mainstreaming migration into development planning and international cooperation.

11. The Chair thanked all participating countries for their engagement and contributions and entrusted the Secretariat with the task of summarising discussions and conclusions as well as to circulate results.