



حوار أبوظبي بين الدول الآسيوية  
المرسلة والمستقبلة للعمال

Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian  
Labour-Sending and Receiving Countries

## **Abu Dhabi Dialogue Eighth Ministerial Consultation**

**31 January – 01 February 2026**

**Intercontinental Hotel, Festival City, Dubai, United Arab  
Emirates**

**Final Report to Ministers on the  
2024-2026 Chairmanship of the Sultanate of Oman**

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## Part 1: Progress Report

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### Oman's Chairmanship 2024-2026

The following document is the final report on the Government of the Sultanate of Oman's Chairmanship, updating Ministers of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Member States on the activities that have taken place since the Seventh Ministerial Consultation, which was held in Dubai between 10 – 11 February 2024. This report is intended to provide background information to Ministers, Senior Officials and Observers attending the Eighth Ministerial Consultation, to be held in Dubai from 31 January – 01 February 2026, and the Joint Declaration that was adopted by the assembled Ministers of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue during the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Consultation, which summarised the achievements of Pakistan's Chairmanship. Furthermore, the Declaration provided preliminary forward guidance on the programme of the ADD to be taken up under Oman's Chairmanship.

#### *ADD Advisory Committee*

The Dubai Declaration, adopted by the Fifth Ministerial Consultation, mandated the establishment of a Chair's Advisory Committee, intended to support the Chair in identifying thematic priorities and assist in decision making. Thus, as per the Terms of Reference of the committee, and under the direction of the Chair, the Advisory Committee was duly formed in June of 2024 with the membership of Oman as Chair-in-Office; Pakistan and UAE as members of the Troika; and the Kingdom of Bahrain and India as discretionary COD and COO governments.

The following priorities were identified in the Joint Declaration agreed upon during the Seventh Ministerial Consultation:

1. Climate Change and Labor Mobility in the Asia -GCC corridor
2. Labor Mobility and Skills for a Just Transition to Green Economy
3. Expatriate Gig Workers in the ADD Member States: Addressing Legal, Social, and Career Implications
4. Role of Skills and Diversity for Labour Productivity in ADD Member States

The Advisory Committee held its first meeting on the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, chaired by the Sultanate of Oman to review the identified priorities and discuss potential targeted research areas and themes that would contribute to the collective efforts of the ADD Member States in improving labour mobility governance and tackling more effectively emerging challenges and opportunities in an ever evolving labour market landscape.

8 priority research areas were identified with the help of subject matter experts from Observer organisations including:

- International Labour Organization
- International Organization for Migration
- International Organisation of Employers
- World Bank
- And the Executive Bureau - Council of Ministers of Labor and Social Affairs at GCC states

## *Abu Dhabi Dialogue Senior Officials' Meeting*

Senior Officials of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Member States met online on 30 September – 01 October 2025 to discuss interim progress in meeting the thematic priorities set by Ministers at the Seventh Ministerial Consultation. Over 120 participants representing member states, international organisations, civil society, and academics, attended the meeting.

Discussions of the thematic priorities were preceded by a business meeting, during which the Government of Oman in its capacity as Chair, provided opening remarks, followed by the delivery of brief on the Research Programme and Thematic Areas presented by the Permanent Secretariat. The summary report of the meeting can be found on the Abu Dhabi Dialogue website: [ADD 2025 SOM Summary Report Final.pdf](#)

The discussion of the four thematic priorities involved a summary overview of the eight research paper outlines, and the expected outcomes, presented by their respective authors from several International Organisations including ILO, IOM, IOE and the World Bank. Member States and other participants were provided with an opportunity to comment and ask questions on the outlines in order to shape the direction of the final papers, to be presented to Member States at the Eighth Ministerial Consultation in 2026.

## *Provisional ADD Thematic Agenda*

The following section provides a summary of the key features of the research agenda as proposed by the Senior Officials' Meeting:

### **Theme 1: Climate Change and Labor Mobility in the Asia -GCC corridor**

Research areas to examine the impact of climate change on labour migration patterns, including disruptions, adaptation, and resilience strategies:

- *Women, Climate Change and Labour Mobility in the Asia-GCC corridor:* The paper examined how climate-driven livelihood disruptions influence female migration trends and identified opportunities for gender-responsive Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs). It proposed a pilot model in the hospitality sector linking pre-departure training and green-skills certification with reintegration support on return.
- *Enhancing Circular Pathways in the GCC for Green Transition:* exploring how Member States could leverage green bonds to secure sustainable financing for migrant skill development and training programs

## Theme 2: Labour Mobility and Skills for a Just Transition to Green Economy

- Thematic areas intended to analyse the correlation between existing labour market policies and workers' ability to a Just Transition among various economic sectors and occupations:
- *Using Skills Mobility Partnerships to Support Skills Development and Climate Adaptation in the GCC:* on how Skills Mobility Partnerships can offer a solution and address Climate Adaptation and skills shortages. Using a case study in Controlled Environment Agriculture and Waste Management.
- *Inter-regional study on climate change, just transition and labour mobility:* how climate policies and green transitions reshape employment patterns, highlighting the need for inclusive social-protection systems and reskilling strategies to safeguard migrant workers.

## Theme 3: Expatriate Gig Workers in the ADD Member States: Addressing Legal, Social, and Career Implications

- Acknowledging the significant expansion of the gig and shared economy and its transformative effect on labour markets of the ADD member states, research areas investigate complexities of regulation, social protection, training and career management:
- *Virtual Labor Mobility in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Member States:* examines the emergence of virtual labour mobility as a new form of cross-border employment where workers remain in their countries of origin while serving foreign clients through digital platforms and remote contracts, as a potential model for economic inclusion and adaptation strategy.
- *On Understanding Expatriate Gig Workers in Abu Dhabi Dialogue Member States: Addressing Legal, Social and Career Implications:* mapping the expansion of digital-labour platforms across the region and analysis challenges related to worker classification, regulation, and social protection.

## Theme 4: Role of Skills and Diversity for Labour Productivity ADD Member States

- *The Promise of Global Skill Partnerships and the Need for Investment in Skills and International Worker Mobility Systems:* Global Skill Partnerships (GSPs) as a practical and equitable response to today's diverging demographic trends and persistent global skill shortages.
- *On Unlocking the Role of Skills and Diversity for Labour Productivity in ADD Member States:* research maps persistent shortages in advanced technical and green sectors and proposes actions such as credential recognition, inclusive immigration pathways, and stronger public-private training partnerships.

## **The Senior Officials' Meeting featured a dedicated session on the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration in preparation for the upcoming IMRF in 2026.**

The Permanent Secretariat proactively initiated a discussion with the relevant entities, inviting both the UN Economic Commissions for Arab States (ESCWA) and Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), respectively, to share the lessons learnt from the first IMRF and the regional reviews conducted to date. The latest regional review for Arab States was held in July 2024, while the last regional review for Asia and the Pacific was held in February of 2025. Both ESCWA and ESCAP offered an overview of these reviews and lessons learnt to identify practical steps ADD Member States can take to strengthen GCM implementation and pave the way for the ADD to potentially submit a regional report highlighting progress of its Member States in implementing the GCM ahead of the second IMRF in 2026.

The Ministerial Meeting should also feature a continuation to this discussion, where details of the IMRF format will be highlighted, while also advising Member States on their voluntary contributions and reporting to the upcoming IMRF.

## *International Engagement:*

During the chairmanship of Oman, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) has been actively involved in various international forums. One notable contribution of the ADD was its active participation in the Regional Reviews on the implementation of the GCM.

### **Asia-GCC Dialogue on Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM):**

#### **Enhancing Regular Pathways for Labour Mobility**

At the Asia–GCC Dialogue on the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration held in Kathmandu in June 2025, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) contributed by sharing its experience as a long-standing platform for cooperation between labour-sending and labour-receiving countries. The ADD highlighted its role in promoting safe, orderly, and well-governed labour mobility through shared responsibility, ethical recruitment, policy coherence, and protection of temporary contractual workers, while aligning labour market needs and generating mutual benefits across the Asia–GCC corridor.

The ADD also reflected on priorities adopted at its 7th Ministerial Consultation in February 2024, focusing on emerging drivers of change in the world of work, including climate change, the gig and platform economy, the green transition, skills development and recognition, and the development impact of remittances. It underscored cooperation as its core achievement, noting that the Dialogue has fostered trust, institutional partnerships, and sustained regional collaboration, while contributing in practice to the achievement of key Global Compact for Migration objectives, particularly those related to minimizing adverse drivers, ethical recruitment, skills development, remittances, and international cooperation.

### **2nd Edition of Enhancing Regular Pathways for Accelerating Climate Action in MENA**

#### **Skills Mobility Partnerships**

At this meeting, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) contributed by sharing its strategic approach to addressing the growing nexus between climate change and labour mobility in the Asia–GCC corridor. The ADD highlighted climate change as a central pillar of its upcoming research cycle, underscoring its role as a platform for exploring long-term, human-centred solutions that link labour mobility with resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and just transitions. It presented how the Dialogue had framed labour mobility not only as a response to climate pressures, but as a forward-looking policy tool that supports green economies, inclusive growth, gender-sensitive outcomes, and climate-resilient employment pathways.

The ADD also outlined concrete areas of work being advanced in partnership with international organisations, notably the IOM and the ILO. These included research on Skills Mobility Partnerships in climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and waste management; analysis of the gendered impacts of climate change on employment and labour mobility; and a broader examination of labour mobility, skills, and social protection as pillars of a just transition. Through these contributions, the ADD demonstrated how evidence-based research, skills development, social protection, and cooperation frameworks could help Member States anticipate labour market shifts, address skills gaps, protect workers, and transform labour mobility into a strategic solution for climate adaptation and sustainable development.

#### **Budapest Process**

## 37th Senior Officials Meeting

At the 37th Senior Officials' Meeting of the Budapest Process, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) contributed by sharing its experience in advancing a collaborative, human-centred approach to labour mobility based on shared responsibility between labour-sending and labour-receiving countries across the full migration cycle. The ADD highlighted concrete achievements in strengthening worker awareness through comprehensive orientation programmes, including a pilot project developed with the IOM that delivered tailored pre-departure and post-arrival curricula for workers from the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka migrating to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, ensuring access to accurate, practical, and empowering information.

The ADD also showcased its role as a platform for sustained knowledge-sharing and evidence-based policymaking, supported by partnerships with organisations such as the ILO, OECD, IOM, and the World Bank. It outlined progress in promoting skills development, skills recognition, and structured skills partnerships, as well as its work on ethical recruitment, including discussions on recruitment-agency ranking systems to enhance transparency and accountability. The ADD further presented its current research priorities—climate change and labour mobility, skills for the green economy, regulation of expatriate gig work, and productivity through skills and diversity—while reaffirming the importance it attaches to inter-regional cooperation, underscoring its engagement with the Budapest Process as a means to deepen partnerships and advance shared commitments to safe, orderly, and regular migration.

## Global Forum on Migration and Development

### Roundtable on:

“Regional Cooperation and Integration to Promote Safe and Regular Migration for Development”

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) showcased the Comprehensive Information and Orientation Programme (CIOP) as a practical model of regional cooperation. CIOP demonstrates how harmonised, end-to-end information and orientation—aligned between countries of origin and destination—can empower temporary contractual workers to make informed decisions, develop realistic expectations, understand their rights and obligations, recognise and avoid exploitative recruitment, and access available services. By streamlining information across the migration journey, CIOP strengthens worker preparedness, wellbeing, and productivity, delivering shared benefits for migrants, employers, and governments.

Developed through a collaborative process with IOM and multiple stakeholders, CIOP is grounded in comparative assessments across ADD corridors and translated into regional guides, background reports, and management systems for pre-employment (PEO), pre-departure (PDO), and post-arrival (PAO) orientations. These resources support Member States in closing information gaps and harmonising delivery, illustrating how regional integration can advance safe, regular, and development-oriented migration outcomes.

## Part 2: The Way Forward

### Overview of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda for the 8th Abu Dhabi Dialogue Ministerial Cycle is structured over two days, combining senior officials' technical discussions with high-level ministerial deliberations. Day 1, the Senior Officials' Meeting, focuses on governance and substantive preparation, including adoption of the agenda, review of the Chair's report, chairing arrangements, and preparations for the Ministerial Consultation. It then examines four thematic priorities through expert-led research presentations and discussions: climate change and labour mobility, skills and labour mobility for a just transition to a green economy, expatriate gig workers, and the role of skills and diversity in labour productivity, drawing on evidence and perspectives from IOM, ILO, the World Bank, IOE, GCC institutions, and private-sector partners.

Day 2, the Ministerial Consultation, opens with statements by the host country and Chair-in-Office, followed by presentations on regional innovations and two high-level panels. These panels address pathways to a just transition linking climate change, skills, and labour mobility, as well as the future of work in ADD member states, with a focus on gig work, skills pathways, and productivity. A dedicated session on the Global Compact for Migration highlights best practices from Asia and the Arab States, provides briefings on the upcoming IMRF 2026, and offers guidance to Member States on engagement and voluntary contributions.

The agenda concludes with ministerial interventions, allowing Member States to articulate priorities and positions, followed by the discussion and adoption of the 8th Joint Ministerial Declaration, an awards ceremony, and the handover of the ADD chairmanship to the incoming Chair.

## Proposed Abu Dhabi Dialogue Submission to the IMRF

As an outcome to the GCM Session, it is proposed that Ministers consider a short collective input to the International Migration Review Forum, highlighting the Abu Dhabi Dialogue as an effective 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.

## Chairmanship Handover

In adherence with the operating modality of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and recognizing the organizational transition in chairmanship, the upcoming Chairmanship should return to a Country of Origin. We call again on Member States from the Asian Labour Sending Countries to consider the possibility of Chairing the next cycle. The Secretariat remains on standby to answer any questions and lend its full support necessary to address this matter.

## Amendments to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue Chairing Arrangements

The Abu Dhabi Dialogue operating modality was initially discussed during the second Ministerial consultations and finally adopted by the third ministerial consultations in Kuwait in November 2014. It aimed to provide a structuring framework to organize the Abu Dhabi Dialogue chairing arrangements, as well as the provision of a support structure, through the establishment of the ADD Permanent Secretariat to be hosted by the government of the United Arab Emirates.

The Operating Modality was also meant to ensure the continuity of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and to ensure that it serves the priorities of both labour-sending and labour-receiving countries in a balanced manner. The current alternation of the chairmanship reflects this objective by ensuring inclusive representation, strategic guidance from all members, and shared ownership of the Dialogue, while encouraging member states to actively shape its agenda and direction. It also aimed to set out basic principles on its relationship with the international community and observe governmental and intergovernmental bodies.

As per the operating modality, the Chair-in-Office should, in principle, alternate between a labour-sending and a labour-receiving country. Countries interested in assuming the Chairmanship of the Dialogue shall communicate their intention to the quadruple, which comprised of the ADD chairing Troika (the former Chair, the Chair-in-Office, and the future Chair of the ADD and the UAE in its capacity as a hosting country of the permanent secretariat).

However, the operating modality doesn't identify who assumes the responsibility of identifying the future chair nor the means of governance arrangements to identify it. Thus, over the course of the ADD's existence since its establishment in 2008, the Troika composition has continued to face the challenge of identifying the future chair; furthermore, the permanent secretariat has been solely assuming this responsibility.

**In light of the foregoing challenge, the meeting is to consider the establishment of a sub-group comprised of ADD member states composed in a balanced manner to reflect both labour-sending and labour-receiving countries tasked with examining proposed governance options, assessing their implications, and outlining the respective advantages and disadvantages of each arrangement, with a view to informing evidence-based and inclusive recommendations for consideration by Ministers.**

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