

**SUMMARY REPORT  
OF  
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION  
ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE AND BANGLADESH:  
THE WAY FORWARD**

**Organised by**

**Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies**  
held at  
Sonargaon Hotel on 30 December 2002

A roundtable discussion on **Climate Change and Bangladesh: The Way Forward** was held on 30 December 2002 at Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka Bangladesh. The meeting was jointly organised by Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). The objectives of the meeting were to discuss present opportunities and future challenges of climate change in view of three broad thematic areas i.e. (i) *adaptation*, (ii) *mitigation* and (iii) *international negotiations*, and identify some recommendations for concrete actions in medium and long term. The summary of the roundtable discussion is given below.

**(i) Overview and Introduction**

*Dr. Saleemul Huq*, Director, Climate Change Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Chairman of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) introduced the objectives and agenda of the meeting and asked for individuals to give their frank opinions on what needs to be done. He mentioned that over the last 10 years environmental awareness has increased among the different government departments and non-government organizations through undertaking projects at national level and attending various international meetings. Preparation of National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) is one of the best examples where a large number of people have been consulted to identify environmental problems in the country. He mentioned that the next decade would be to work on climate change, which is important for the country. It will require participation from different groups including government departments, non-government organizations and private entrepreneurs. It will also require capacity building as climate change has both local and global dimension while on the environmental issues we act mainly on local and national scale.

At the international level, Bangladesh negotiates as a group (within the Group of 77 and China) in all major negotiations such as WTO, and played significant role. In the climate change negotiations, Bangladesh has and can play significant role as an individual country taking advantage of its vulnerability to climate change, which is recognized by the global community. It has also national level experts having recognition in climate change activities at global level. Strengthening of negotiation skills and strategy would help us in international negotiations. The country can work collectively with Least Developed Countries (LDCs) group as well as others (e.g. SAARC). There is major scope to improve and get funding as well.

*Dr. Atiq Rahman*, Executive Director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) highlighted challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh in the arena of climate change. Strengthening capacity in the international negotiations is necessary for Bangladesh and we should be very tactical about Buenos Aires

Plan of Action. Discontinuity problem of the delegates in the negotiation is improving and incorporation of experts from the non-government sector is a major shift in international negotiations reflects the openness of the government. Now the issue is wider integration incorporating different agencies and acting together in a coordinated fashion. Private sector is showing their interest to participate in the new opportunities created under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol.

He also stressed that Bangladesh has political commitment in climate change (as expressed by the Prime Minister herself at the opening of the LDC meeting on NAPAs in September 2002) but need positioning us and prepare strategy both in climate change adaptation, mitigation and international negotiations. Question is how? He expects that this roundtable discussion will generate some ideas around this question.

### ***(ii) Adaptation***

*Dr. Mizan R. Khan*, Policy Analyst, Sustainable Environmental Management Programme (SEMP) initiated discussion on adaptation to climate change. It is revealed from the discussion that Bangladesh is preparing project document for National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) as a follow up of COP7 and COP8 decisions. Implementation strategy of NAPA needs to be finalized by 15 April 2003 with one of the GEF implementing agencies. It is reported by the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment of Forest (MOEF) that NAPA will be implemented through UNDP. They also report that preparation of NAPA will take 18 months which will includes the following steps.

1. Methodology for Adaptation Assessment: it will be based on existing available methodology;
2. Prioritisation of Sectors
3. Detail Adaptation Analysis
4. Implementation Methodology and
5. Preparation of Sectoral Project Document

In order to integrate other ministries for the preparation of NAPA, Ministry of Planning might be included in the management team, and other stakeholders will be involved.

Assessment of vulnerability and adaptation should be based on country level or regional level climate change scenarios rather than on use of global scenarios. New PC based computer model of Hadley Centre, which will probably be installed soon in Bangladesh, will facilitate developing country level scenarios based on regional model. It is also important to link climate change-impacts-climate change in the analysis. Sharing information in a customized format is necessary in Bangladesh suggested by the participants.

In order to integrate other departments and agencies in the preparation of NAPA, *Mr. Marghub Morshed*, Ex-Secretary of MOEF and *Mr. Sabihuddin Ahmed*, Secretary of MOEF suggested reactivating the government's existing Inter-Ministerial Climate Change Committee.

### ***(iii) Mitigation***

*Dr. Izaj Hossain*, Professor of Chemical Engineering Department, BUET initiated discussion on mitigation potential and necessary legal and institution for enabling Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Projects in

Bangladesh. The CDM has dual objectives of which one, namely Sustainable Development (SD) has to be certified by the host government. Without government support CDM cannot be operationalized. The country has expertise to prepare sustainable development indicators and private sector is showing their willingness for investing in CDM projects. The necessary institutional and legal mechanism should be in place for attracting CDM projects as early as possible.

It was revealed from the discussion that the government has a vital role to play in CDM for which it needs to set up a Designated National Authority (DNA). The main role of the DNA would be to endorse CDM projects by ensuring contribution to sustainable development of the country. It was also reported that government has initiated a project towards setting up a Designated National Authority for facilitating CDM project activity in Bangladesh (with support from UNDP).

Capacity building both in government private sectors is necessary for obtaining fund from various international initiatives such as Prototype Carbon Fund (PCF), Community Development Carbon Fund (CCDF) and Bio Carbon Fund (BCF).

Three private sector groups (namely Rahimafrooz, Waste Concern and Grameen Shakti) have presented their initial work on CDM projects. They revealed that integration of and cooperation from other government departments/agencies would be required for removing existing barriers particularly policy for implementing CDM projects.

It was agreed that the Ministry of Environment would look into setting up the DNA as quickly as possible and that future consultations would be held with other relevant ministries and departments (e.g. Ministry of Energy) for removing barriers to CDM projects.

#### ***(iv) International Negotiations***

*Dr. Saleemul Huq* initiated the discussion and said that future international negotiations in the arena of climate change would concentrate on future commitments (second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol). The main issue would be (a) how to bring USA back on board and persuade it to take on mitigation targets?, (b) how to bring the big developing countries (e.g. China, India and Brazil) to reduce their emissions and (c) how to ensure that the principles of equity, right, justice and entitlement are integral to any future agreements. Strengthening negotiations skills and positioning ourselves with existing group like LDCs and vulnerable countries is absolutely essential for Bangladesh if we wish to get any substantially favourable outcomes from the international negotiations. To do this it will be necessary to find common interests with other groups (e.g. the LDCs) and prepare a strategy for building consensus.

It was noticed that institutional memory is very low, necessary prerequisite, in the international negotiations due to lack of continuity. Preparation of negotiation strategy and points through involving civil society will make position more concrete and will represent common people's needs.

General awareness has been increased but there is need for leadership, concerted and coordinated effort in environmental diplomacy and negotiations by the government (with the Environment and Foreign Ministries taking the lead). It was felt by the participants that negotiation is an art and not easy to learn. It needs building capacity. For this selected persons within the Foreign Ministry and Environment Ministry/Department should be designated and trained. The overall leadership of the negotiations should be placed in the hands of a skilled, senior diplomat who would be designated to lead the Bangladesh team at all climate change negotiations for at least five years (backed up by a technical team of experts from government and non-government sectors).

***(v) Conclusions and Action Points***

Mr Sabihuddin Ahmad, Secretary, MOEF made some concluding remarks while thanking the organisers for holding such an informative (and informal) round table discussion. He requested that such meetings be held on a regular basis to share information and bring each other up-to-date on latest developments in this fast changing field of climate change. He assured the cooperation of his ministry and department in this regard. The following were some of the conclusions and action points agreed during the course of the round table discussion.

- Reactivating existing Inter Ministerial Climate Change Committee
- Preparation of NAPA involving all stakeholders
- Setting up Institutional and legal framework for facilitating CDM in Bangladesh through Climate Cell, which will be established with the financial support from DFID.
- An institutional mechanism for international negotiation for keeping institutional memory
- Institutional capacity building and improve negotiating skills
- Sharing of all information on climate change (both within as well as outside government)
- Holding of regular such roundtable discussions on different aspects of climate change issue bringing together all relevant stakeholders, including government ministries and agencies, NGOs, private sector, researchers, academics and media.

## **Annex A: Prime Minister's Speech at NAPA Workshop**

Held on 18-21 September 2002 in Dhaka, Bangladesh  
LDC Expert Group on "Capacity Building  
for Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)

### ***Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim***

Mr. Chairperson  
My Cabinet Colleagues  
Hon'ble Members of Parliament  
Diplomats and Officials of Development Agencies  
Distinguished Foreign Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

### ***Assalamu Alaikum,***

We have assembled here this morning of a mid-Autumn day. The belated Summer still continue to radiate scorching heat in Bangladesh. We cannot afford to overlook this erratic behavior and whims of nature. These changes are occurring not only in Bangladesh, but worldwide. We are all concerned over this breakdown of balance in nature. As human beings we are no less responsible for these unnatural changes than nature itself. Should we fail to take cognizance of the issue and adopt ameliorative measures, calamity beckons us. Therefore, it has indeed been thoughtful of the LDC Expert Group to hold this Workshop to deliberate upon what can be done to face this climatic change. This endeavor will certainly contribute to capacity building for meeting the challenge. The initiative is timely as well, in the immediate aftermath of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We are indeed happy that Dhaka has been selected as the venue for this important event. The major share of responsibility for this human-induced climate change rests with the industrial world. The contribution of countries like ours is miniscule, but we have to pay a disproportionate price. Besides, the resources and technology needed to face the challenge is beyond our reach. A workshop of this kind would be beneficial to us all.

May I take this opportunity to extend to all the foreign participants, who have traveled from different corners of the globe, a warm and hearty welcome. I wish you a very pleasant and fruitful stay in Dhaka. On behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I thank all the sponsors and organizers of this event.

### **Distinguished Audience:**

You all know that global warming will have significant impact on the world as a whole. However, the effects will not be the same across the globe, because of geographic locations and different levels of development. While for some countries, the impact might be "life-style threatening," for others it is "life threatening." The group of least developed countries (LDCs) will face the worst effects, because of dependence of their economies on agriculture and natural resources. The small island states, their peoples and cultures are even at risk of being wiped out of the world map. While the LDCs contribute least to global warming, they are the worst victims and least able to adapt.

Let me take this opportunity to say a few words about Bangladesh. The intention is not to scare, but to sensitize you all. As the most densely populated, deltaic and low-lying country, Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to climate change. The IPCC Report has mentioned that half a meter sea-level rise will permanently inundate about 11% of our territory. Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a UNESCO-declared World Heritage Site, will be at stake. Keeping this threatening scenario in mind, it needs to be mentioned that per capita emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> in Bangladesh is a mere 0.2 ton against an average of 6 tons in the industrial world.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

Our people often witness the problems of floods and drought. Scientists have reached the conclusion that deforestation in the Himalayas exacerbates flooding in lower riparian Bangladesh. On the other hand, structural control of water upstream causes great loss to productivity of our agricultural land and exacerbate desertification in the western part of Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh with its limited resources is trying hard to meet the challenge, posed by climate change. We have signed and acceded to the Kyoto Protocol. The government has initiated a mass movement for afforestation, which has already contributed to enhance our forest cover. Besides, we have taken several climate-friendly initiatives, such as the building of power plants based on natural gas and converting our motor vehicles to CNG system. As a natural disaster-prone country, Bangladesh have developed a variety of coping mechanisms at formal and informal levels. This has greatly reduced the loss of life and property from such disasters. However, in recent years, the frequency of extreme climatic events, such as floods and cyclones have increased worldwide. This is causing great havoc particularly to the LDCs.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

For obvious reasons, both the Climate Convention and the Kyoto Protocol have emphasized on mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in the industrial countries. But non-mitigation of CO<sub>2</sub> by these countries further exposes the LDCs in particular to the adverse impacts of climate change. Public pressure on policy-makers for action needs to be strengthened in the industrial countries. We all have to appreciate that we have only one Earth to live in. Once some of its parts are affected by environmental disasters, other parts will not remain safe.

### **Distinguished Participants:**

You will appreciate that climate change impacts add additional complexities and burdens to planning for sustainable development. So we need to address these issues within the paradigm of sustainable development. Then the immediate concerns of poverty alleviation, safe and adequate water, health care, access to affordable and clean energy and adequate adaptation come to the fore. However, with limited resources, it's a real challenge for the LDC governments how to address simultaneously the issues of climate change and sustainable development.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Till recent times the LDC group could not make much headway in devising a collective strategy in climate negotiations. You are going to meet at COP-8 of the UNFCCC in Delhi next month. For the purpose, LDCs require more interactions and dialogue within themselves for working out a common strategy, before negotiating with larger groups. I can assure you all that Bangladesh remains ever ready to extend total cooperation to these efforts.

All these activities on the part of the LDCs obviously require capacity building at all levels - policy and institutional, human resources, research and development as well as technical levels. I am confident this Workshop will significantly contribute to this broader agenda of capacity building needs and provide guidance for the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action. I hope the LDC Expert Group will live up to its mandate of assisting the LDC governments in this task. I wish this workshop will fulfill its stated objectives, with active participation from you all. With these words, I declare this workshop open.

Allah Hafiz. Bangladesh Zindabad!

Annex B: List of Participants  
Roundtable on Climate Change and Bangladesh: The Way Forward  
Venue: Titas Room, Sonargaon Hotel  
30 December 2002 (3:00 – 5:30 PM)

SL.	Name of participants	Designation and Organization	Telephone
1.	Mr. Sabihuddin Ahmed	Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF)	8611676
2.	Mr. Marghub Morshed	Chairman, Telecommunication Regulatory Board	9890016
3.	Dr. Ijaz Hossain	Professor, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)	9665609 (off) 8110189 (res.)
4.	Dr. Anwar Ali	Chairman, Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO)	9113329
5.	Mr. Zabed Hossain	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	9881265
6.	Mr. Iftekher	Director, Waste Concern	9884774, 9873002
7.	Mr. A. H. Md. Maksood Sinha	Executive Director, Waste Concern	9884774, 9873002
8.	Ms. Rizwana Hassan	Director (Programme), BELA	8614283, 8618706
9.	Dr. Riaz Khan	Executive Director, CEIGS	8817648
10.	Mr. Reazuddin	Director (Technical), Department of Environment (DOE)	9115120
11.	Dr. Mahfuzul Haque	Senior Assistant Secretary, MOEF	8619621  8614880 (res.)
12.	Mr. Md. Zulfiqur Rahman	Director, MEA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	9554231
13.	Md. Shameem Ahsan	Director (SAARC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs	9559538
14.	Md. Akram Hossain	Director, Met. Dept.	8116634
15.	Mr. Syed Iqbal Ali	BEMP, DOE	011805575
16.	Dr. Mizan R. Khan	Policy Advisor, SEMP	
17.	Dr. Ibrahim	CMES	8111898  8619223 (res.)
18.	Mr. Enayetullah Khan	Holiday	9110886, 9122950
19.	Mr. Monawar Moin	Chief Executive Officer, Rahimafroz Batteries Ltd.	9113522
20.	Mr. Mujibur Rahman	General Manager, Grameen Shakti	9004081
21.	Md. Ataur Rahman	James Finlay Ltd.	0171821908
22.	Dr. A. Atiq Rahman	Executive Director, BCAS	8115829
23.	Dr. Saleemul Huq	Director, IIED, UK.	020-73882117
24.	Dr. M. I. Sharif	Fellow, BCAS	8115829
25.	Mr. Mozaharul Alam	Research Fellow, BCAS	8115829
26.	Mr. Nasimul Haque	Research Fellow, BCAS	8115829
27.	Mr. Khandaker Mainuddin	Research Fellow, BCAS	8115829
28.	Mr. Sarder Shafiqul Alam	Research Fellow, BCAS	8115829
29.	Mr. B. M. Faruque Ahmed	Senior Programme Officer, BCAS	8115829
30.	Dr. Aminul Islam	Sustainable Development Advisor, UNDP	8118600
31.	Mr. Abdus Sobhan	Director (Admin) DOE	9112489

<b>SL.</b>	<b>Name of participants</b>	<b>Designation and Organization</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
32.	Mr. Qamar Munir	MOEF	9135253
33.	Mr. Shaikh Mizanur Rahman	DOF	8819275
34.	Dr. K. B. Sajjadur Rasheed	Professor, University of Dhaka	8129727
35.	Mr. M. A. Shishir	Secretary, BCAS	0171862655
36.	Mr. Mizanur Rahman	Librarian, BCAS	8115829