

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY DOCUMENT



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Inaugural Address

I feel very happy to be with you all today in this workshop on National Conservation Strategy of Bangladesh. With this workshop we will move one more step on our road to progress. The successful completion of the first draft of the National Conservation Strategy for Bangladesh has been a significant task. I hope the deliberations of this workshop will serve us as guidelines for our sustainable development.

The timing of this workshop is opportune. We are now on the doorsteps of an era of hope in our history. After about a decade of darkness and repression the people have elected their own Government to build their future. Thus we are better equipped to face our problems. The intellectual exercise which we shall initiate today will, I am sure, help us to integrate this new fountain of strength in our development strategy and ensure that our future is not only brighter but also sustainable.

One of the main reasons for this workshop is that we as a nation in the comity of nations face an unforeseen degradation of the environment and depletion of the resources for development. Our problems are many and multiplying. The resources at our disposal are limited and diminishing. So we must look for the correct

others, are combining together to shrink the resource potentials and deplete the environment. Today, the very existence of the earth and the future of human achievements are in danger, due to the 'green house effect', 'ozone layer depletion', 'global warming' and 'sea level rise'. Our future is uncertain and the development potential is fraught with unsustainability.

We face a critical situation in Bangladesh. Our forests are fast depleting, land is losing fertility, water resources are endangered by salinity intrusion and pollution. Added to these are poverty, population explosion, illiteracy and diseases. Moreover natural calamities like flood, cyclones, tidal surges visit us almost regularly. On top of all these, Bangladesh suffers from serious environmental vulnerability due to its geographical location on the lower riparian of the major river systems and watersheds. All these facts and factors cut into our resource base, negate the development efforts and compound the process of environmental degradation and resource depletion.

Such impending dangers loom large on the national, regional and global horizon, warrant immediate and urgent action at all levels. The People's Government in Bangladesh has spearheaded concerted action and programmes to arrest resource depletion and environmental degradation. The Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, has already given a clarion call to the nation to plant at least one tree by each individual every year. The priority programme of our Government to provide the basic necessities like food, shelter, health and education to the people, would go a long way to improve the existing deplorable situation in the field of environment and resource sustainability. The Government is at work to adopt the Environment Policy and Environment Management Action Programme soon. The finalization of the National Conservation Strategy at this juncture, is of prime importance to give an overall sense of depth, direction and dynamism to the process of environmental up-gradation, resource conservation and sustainable development.

The scale and pace of global environmental degradation and resource depletion have been colossal and very rapid in recent decades. The destruction of forests, desertification of large tracts of land, pollution of rivers, seas and other water bodies, emission of toxic gases into the air, all these and

It hardly needs to be emphasized that problems of environmental protection, resource conservation and sustainable development are vast and multi-dimensional. These need all-pronged actions for mobilization of financial resources, human expertise and environmentally sound technology, on national, regional and global scale. As a developing country Bangladesh has always been on the front line to pledge its support and cooperation to the regional and global efforts for joint action in this field. In this perspective we attach great significance to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in 1992 in Brazil. We have attended some of the preparatory meetings of the UNCED held recently in Beijing, Tokyo, Geneva and Cairo and have reiterated our commitment to work with all nations for achieving the goal of sustainable development. We sincerely hope that the developing and developed nations agree on a united agenda to achieve a common future for mankind which is safe and sustainable.

What we are trying to do today is perhaps the most important thing that we need to do to help ourselves develop as a self-reliant and self-respecting nation. There is surely an urgency to assess our own capabilities, to conserve and harness our own resources, to restrain our extravagant and wasteful use of natural resources, to reduce risks to survival and above all, put future development and strategies on the right track of sustainability. Let us do that anew and with a firm commitment.

The compilation of the National Conservation Strategy for Bangladesh is the result of dedicated work of the personnel of the National Conservation Strategy project, implemented through financial and technical assistance of IUCN and NORAD. I offer my sincere thanks to them for their support, and to all others associated with this project.

Bangladesh Zindabad
Abdullah-Al-Noman
State Minister in-charge
Ministry of Environment and Forest

Address

by
Dr. Haroun Er Rashid
Additional Secretary in-charge
Ministry of Environment and Forest

This workshop to deliberate on National Conservation Strategy is a manifestation of our great concern for achieving sustainability in our development strategy. We care for both our present economic development and the possible need of resources for the future generation. We need to opt for a strategy and action plan that would foster present economic growth without impairing resource endowments for the decades to come. With the first draft of the National Conservation Strategy ready before us, we have taken a major step towards that end.

Bangladesh, being a developing country faces an ever mounting pressure on its resources. Existing endemic poverty, explosion of an already oversized population and other socio-economic ills have created serious environmental problems by depleting and shrinking the resource bases. We are one of the worst affected nations due to the adverse ramifications of global warming, sea level rise and depletion of ozone layer. All these have rendered present progress difficult and future strategies highly unsustainable. Thus, only enlightened interventions and judiciously worked out strategies can help us out of the multifarious problems faced by us.

The Government of Bangladesh has long since recognized the serious threats of current and impending environmental degradation and resource constraints. It has

therefore taken a series of major steps to arrest the process of such degradation. Large scale afforestation programmes are being implemented at the upazila and village level and also in the coastal areas as part of a people oriented social movement. The government has made afforestation a mandatory component in all possible development schemes. Penal provisions of the Forest Act have been made rigorous and use of fuelwood has been prohibited in brick burning. Game hunting, export of lizard skins and frogs have also been prohibited. A massive campaign to create public awareness on environment is going on. Environmental clearance has been made compulsory for all development projects and industries. Major areas of environmental concern and vulnerable ecosystems have been identified and appropriate schemes are being prepared under the National Environment Management Action Programme — NEMAP to mount specific action in relevant fields. Our efforts and concerns would most vividly be demonstrated in the forthcoming Environment Policy and Action Plan. In addition, we are also setting up standards for air, water, soil and sound quality along with monitoring mechanisms. Three major legislations — for overall environmental management, control of atomic radiation and pollution and protection of the maritime and coastal zones are at the final stage of scrutiny for adoption. The finalization and implementation of the National Conservation Strategy, would, we hope, be a significant step to arrest the whole process of environmental degradation and resource depletion.

An almost universal consensus has now been reached on the necessity of integrating environmental concerns into the development paradigm. The National Conservation Strategy would thus provide the much needed guidelines to the development agents, planners, managers, industrialists and educationists. It would offer us an implementable multi-disciplinary approach to sustainable development.

While a sound strategy for environmental management and protection is a prerequisite, this should embrace all facets of social, economic and cultural values of the people and should be backed by a strong political will, effective legislation and practical ways of on-the-ground implementation. As the strategy must necessarily cut across all development sectors, it would be necessary to develop skill and knowledge in order to address specific issues. It will also be essential to devise ways and means to involve the people and ensure their active participation. Therefore education, training and awareness building are integral components of the strategy. Concurrently continuing search should also be made for information and data gathering, which are vital



Dr. Haroun Er Rashid, Additional Secretary in-charge of Ministry of Environment and Forest

for effective management of any policy framework.

We would hope that the draft National Conservation Strategy would be substantially improved through enriching deliberations in course of this workshop. At the end, I am sure, we shall have a strategy document which will help overcome the gaps and constraints which impede sustainable development in the country. This would help planners to integrate all aspects of resource management and avoid wasteful environmental degradation that would be very costly and even impossible to correct. It would also help enhance the dimension of economic development, expand economic benefits and social opportunities. Hopefully it would also usher in an era of all-round improvement of resource management through the introduction of environmentally sound development techniques and affordable technologies.

Here it needs to be emphasized that preparation of the National Conservation Strategy is not an end in itself. We need to implement its recommendations with right earnestness. It will therefore be necessary to set up a mechanism for the next phase of the National Conservation Strategy. I hope we will get continued support of our development partners for implementing the recommendations in the different development sectors.

We in the Ministry of Environment and Forest would continue our endeavor to mobilize all possible resources for sustainable development. Let us all join our hands to work for a better today to realize our dream for a very best tomorrow.

Economic Planning for Sustainable Development

A conservation strategy at the national level is an essential element in any national effort to halt the degradation of the environment and improve its capacity for sustainable development. An Environment Policy has been drafted and is under active consideration of the Government. It has been followed, in logical sequence, by the Conservation Strategy. This, in turn will lead to the Action Programme for management of the environment.

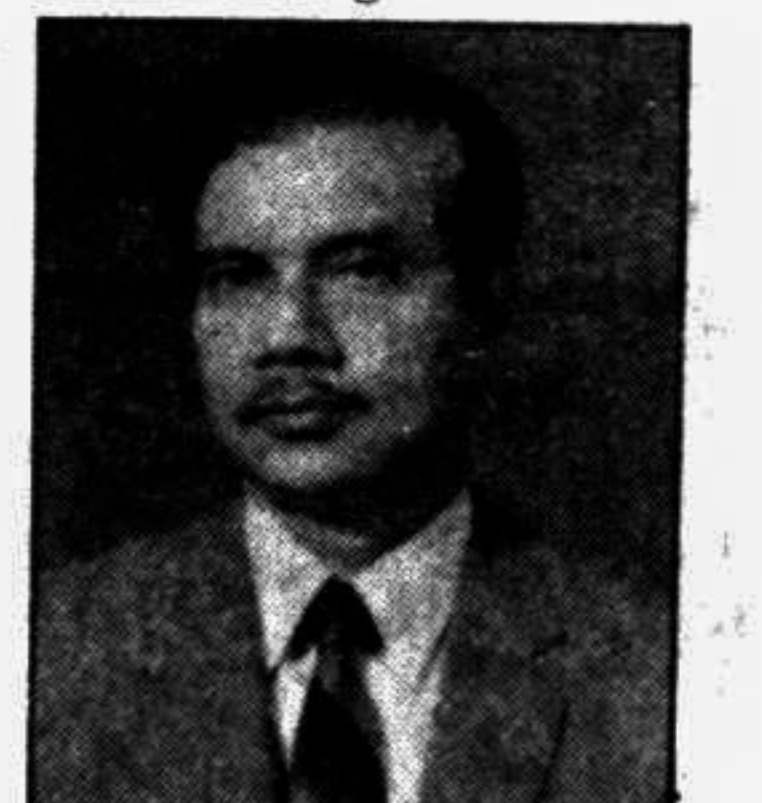
A Conservation Strategy is a strategy for sustainable development. This strategy is concerned not only with the quality and quantity of physical resources but also with the human factor, which utilizes these resources for socially acceptable economic development. The role of economists is therefore an important one when a conservation strategy is to be implemented. The national economic plan has to be re-arranged to accommodate the concerns of the Conservation Strategy. To quote from "Caring for the

Haroun Er Rashid
Resident Senior Advisor
National Conservation Strategy

World," which defines a strategy for sustainability: "An economy that is developing sustainably adapts and improves in knowledge, organization, technical efficiency, and wisdom; and it does this without consuming, coopting or diverting, beyond some point, an ever greater percentage of the matter and energy of the ecosystem, stopping at a scale at which the ecosystem can continue to function and renew itself year after year. Such an economy is therefore one in which the life of the ecosystems, their services, and consequently the economy, can be maintained for a long time."

The draft National Conservation Strategy report is concerned particularly with the natural environment. It analyzes the present status of the resources and brings forward issues relevant to conservation

for sustainable development. A review of the state of the environment makes it abundantly clear that the basic natural resources of Bangladesh are be-



ing over-exploited in many places and misused in some cases. Since this country is still heavily dependent on basic natural resources, and this dependence will be reduced only very slowly, it is impor-

tant that priority should be given to the sustainable development of land and water resources, in general, and to fisheries and forestry in particular. Forestry in this definition includes homestead horticulture and tree cover on land not being managed by the Government. Of almost equal importance are the problems of health and sanitation in both rural and urban areas.

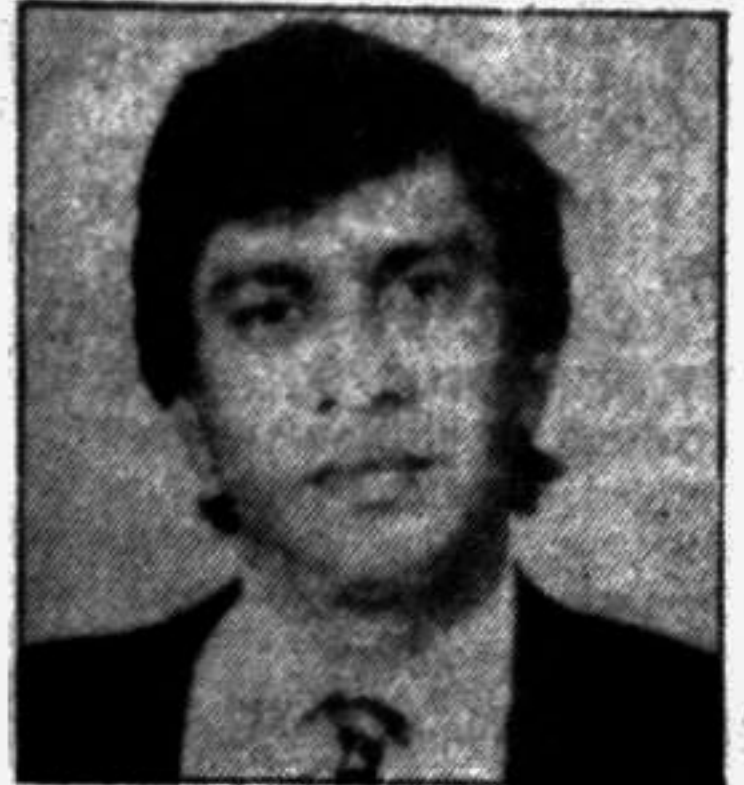
The report defines the strategy for eighteen sectors and sketches an implementation framework. Care has been taken to avoid duplication between the Implementation Strategies. Each Implementation Strategy can be implemented separately, but of course the best results will be obtained if they are implemented simultaneously. Though duplication has been avoided there are some deliberate overlaps between some of the sectoral implementation strategies because they provide the necessary link between related areas of concern.

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IUCN'S COLLABORATION IN DEVELOPING NCS FOR BANGLADESH

VITUS A FERNANDO
Head of Asia-Pacific Programme
IUCN

IUCN's collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh in developing the National Conservation Strategy was initiated in 1986 and this workshop marks the final activity of the NCS process. During the past five years, through a wide and an extensive consultative process, both with government and non-government agencies, we have produced this draft NCS document analysing development and conservation



issues, concerns, priorities for Bangladesh.

The NCS process has looked closely into the status of the natural resource base that supports the country's development. It examines the broad range of factors which lead to resource being used in an unsustainable manner. It proposes ways to bring resource use on line with population growth and the capacity of

these resources for renewal. However, in practical application conservation and development are yet thought of as conflicting and incompatible issues. Conservation is thought to concern itself only with land and natural resources not required by humanity, while development is thought of as a process that exploits scarce and vulnerable resources - and this is unfortunate. IUCN considers National Conservation Strategies, in both its development and implementation, as powerful instruments in eliminating this unfortunate divide.

The NCS argues for more growth and development but of a different kind — a kind that takes into consideration the realities of resource limitation and the fragility of dependent ecological processes. For development to succeed in the long term it must make natural resource use sustainable. This, we see as the role of conservation. This is argued for in the draft NCS.

Finally I would like to thank the Government of Norway and NORAD for their generous support during the past six years and for their partnership with IUCN in promoting sound environmental management in Bangladesh.

BARC'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF THE NCS

Dr M S U Chowdhury
Executive Vice Chairman
BARC

BARC's involvement in the preparation of the NCS for Bangladesh started in 1987 with the setting up of the NCS Secretariat at BARC, as focal point for the preparation of NCS. Since then BARC has been providing full support for the preparation of the NCS for Bangladesh.

Since preparation of NCS was a formidable task involving almost all important sectors of the economy, work started in phases. During NCS phase I, which was of six months' duration, a prospectus or workplan defining the status and trends in natural resources, the obstacles to sustainable use of these resources and areas requiring further analysis and action, was prepared.

During phase-II, background papers on different important sectors of the economy were prepared by renowned experts in respective sectors. A clear understanding of status of different resources, issues arising out of current use pattern and utilization options for sustainable development of these resources,

were obtained from these background papers. Using these background information, NCS secretariat located at BARC has compiled the first draft of NCS.

As Executive Vice Chairman of BARC, I am proud of BARC's involvement in the preparation of NCS from the beginning. But at the same time, I would like



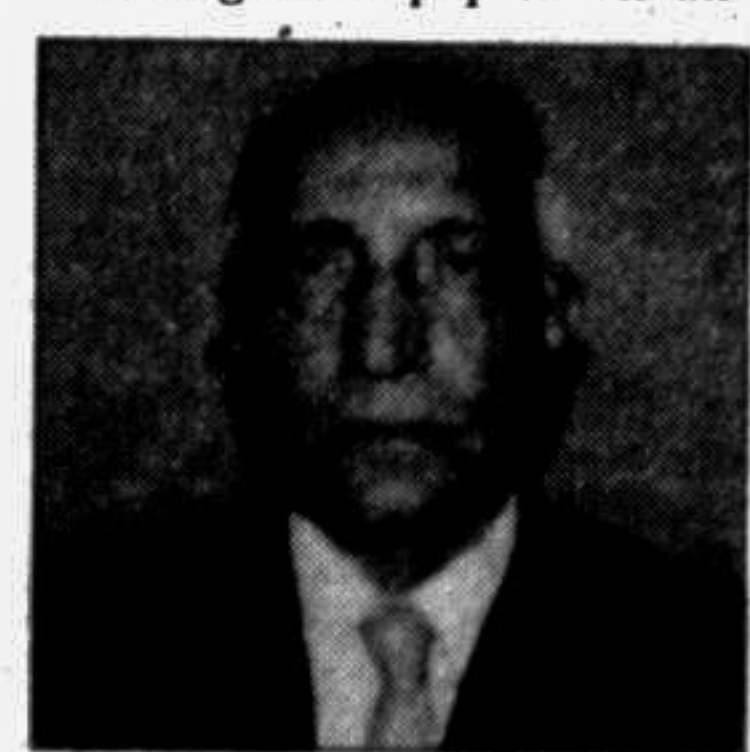
to clarify that the final NCS document will not be a document of BARC or Ministry of Environment and Forest, rather, it will be a national document. So it is now the responsibility of all associated with national resource management to improve the first draft by giving their valuable suggestions.

The compilation of the draft of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) for Bangladesh is the culmination of the work commencing in 1987 with the Government of Bangladesh signing a memorandum of understanding with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and National Resources (IUCN), Switzerland. During the NCS phase I which was of six months' duration a brief study was made to define the status and trends in use of national resources to develop a methodology for preparation of a National Conservation Strategy for Bangladesh phase II.

Phase II of NCS project commenced in October 1989 with the joining in the project of one Resident Senior Advisor of IUCN who was backed by a National Steering Committee to guide and oversee the implementation of the project.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DRAFT NCS DOCUMENT

An NCS Secretariat was established in Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council campus. Background papers on different



important sectors that are of relevance to enable and nonrenewable resources and that affect the environment

were prepared by renowned experts in the respective sectors. Information was also gathered from various other sources including personal communication.

The draft NCS document analyses the status and issues arising out of the present resource use in sectors: Human Resources, Land Resources, Agriculture, Forestry, Wildlife, Fisheries, Livestock, Genetic Diversity, Water Resources, Energy and Minerals, Human Settlements, Health and Sanitation, Industry, Rural Development, Transportation, Natural Hazards, Environmental Education and Awareness and International Dimension. The document, then, in the light of the issues

identified, describes the strategy for sustainable development and a summary for implementation.

We offer thanks to IUCN and NORAD for their technical and financial support for implementation of Phase I and II of NCS - Bangladesh. BARC provided venue for the NCS Secretariat and the Forestry Division of BARC has provided support constantly for successful implementation of the project. The support of BARC is acknowledged with thanks. We also offer thanks to all scientists, who have contributed before and at the National Workshop. We shall improve upon the draft drawing upon the inputs received, we express our sincere thanks to all.

A. M. Chowdhury
National Consultant
NCS — Project