

Integrated Coastal Zone Management: A process initiated

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THE coastal zone in Bangladesh has been delineated previously in various ways. Natural system processes that govern opportunities and vulnerabilities of the coastal zone of Bangladesh are: tidal fluctuations; salinity; cyclone and storm surge risk. Based on these criteria, the coastal zone of Bangladesh is officially delineated as: 19 districts Bagerhat, Barguna, Barisal, Bholia, Chandpur, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Feni, Gopalganj, Jessore, Jhalkati, Khulna, Lakshmpur, Narail, Noakhali, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Satkhira and Sharatpur and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The population is 35.1 million, of which 49 per cent are women. Poverty is relatively high: 52 per cent are poor and 24 per cent extreme poor. Per capita GDP in 1999-2000 was Taka 18,198; with 14 districts below average per capita GDP.

Most disaster prone zone: The coast is prone to natural disasters, such as cyclones, storm surges, and floods. In combination with erosion, arsenic, water logging, water and soil salinity and various forms of pollution, these disasters have made coastal dwellers vulnerable. The coast faces the risk of continued and increased inundation from sea level rise.

A critical ecosystem: The coastal zone contains several ecosystems that have important conservation values. A portion of the world's largest productive mangrove forest, the Sundarbans is a World Heritage Site. There are several ECAs located here like Cox's Bazar, Sonadia and St Martin's Island.

Fast growing population: The present scenario of over-exploitation of natural resources, conflicting land use, unsustainable resource management is simply half of the picture. The coastal popula-

tion is projected to grow to 41.8 million in 2015 and 57.9 million in 2050. In 2015, 28 percent (11.6 million) of estimated population would be urban-dwellers. The density of population would be 886 per sq km. The size of the labour force would be 22.1 million, an increase of 4.5 million from the present labour force. In 2050, a huge 44 percent will live in urban areas. Size of the labour force would be 30.7 million.

Huge potentials: The coastal zone contains distinctive development opportunities that can be instrumental in reducing the vulnerability and poverty of coastal communities. Some of these are untapped; others have significant expansion potentials. The zone has a diversity of natural resources, including marine fisheries, shrimp, livestock, forest, salt, beach minerals, onshore and off shore natural gas. It has sites of existing and potential infrastructures like seaports, land ports, EPZs, industrial complexes and tourism sites. The EEZ has hardly been exploited for both aquatic and non-aquatic resources. Potentials of tide, wind and solar energies can be used for economic development of remote islands.

Relatively higher literacy rate and lower gender disparity among coastal population provide as positive strength for poverty reduction efforts.

From management to integrated management: The development for area specific programmes in coastal Bangladesh is not new and was attempted through a number of initiatives since 80's. The Government of Bangladesh expressed its support to ICZM through a Policy Note, prepared jointly by several ministries. This Note is the basis for the subsequent approach to coastal development and identified improvement of inter- and intra-departmental co-ordination as one

The process of integrated coastal zone management has been initiated in Bangladesh. The responsibility to carry this forward remains on our shoulder. In the past, we have made attempts but did not move forward. The driving force is not vulnerabilities that the coast faces but opportunities the coast offers. Both poverty reduction and conservation of nature can be achieved by addressing and harnessing opportunities of the coast.



of the key challenges.

Importance of special coastal zone management: The development for area specific programmes in coastal Bangladesh is not new and was attempted through a number of initiatives since 80's. The Government of Bangladesh expressed its support to ICZM through a Policy Note, prepared jointly by several ministries. This Note is the basis for the subsequent approach to coastal development and identified improvement of inter- and intra-departmental co-ordination as one

2002, though limited activities were initiated since January 2000. The Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) is the lead Ministry and the Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO) is the lead agency. The Governments of the Netherlands, U.K. and Bangladesh finance this set-up.

Initiating multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial setup: A Programme Development Office (PDO) was formally established in

It has a two-tier steering mechanism consisting of an Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee and an Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee (TC). The in-house team of the PDO is comprised of deputed experts from different Ministries/agencies, professionals from WARPO and a team of consultants.

Three task forces exist, related to Policy & Strategy; Livelihood; and Knowledge Management. Focal points at >30 departments and organisations maintain the operational contacts. The whole set-up is multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial in nature.

The PDO is expected to deliver three key outputs: Coastal Zone Policy (CZPo), Coastal Development Strategy (CDS) and a 'priority investment programme (PIP)' which are backed by supporting outputs in relation to coastal livelihoods, enabling institutional environment and the knowledge base.

Preparatory activities: The project has already made extensive preparations in understanding livelihoods in the coastal zone with a

final publication on people and livelihoods; in understanding of the institutional environment stated in several reports and in creating a knowledge base including a 'Profile of the Coastal Zone of Bangladesh'. These preparatory activities are now being extensively used in the formulation of key documents: CZPo, CDS and PIP.

Policy (CZPo) awaiting approval: Before embarking on drafting a coastal zone policy, a number of supporting analyses were done on national policy documents, their status of implementation and the process of policy and strategy formulation.

Drawing lessons from these, a first outline of the CZPo was drafted and discussed in October, 2002. An elaborated outline was discussed in March 2003 with a group of key national experts. A preliminary draft was presented and discussed at a national workshop in May, 2003. Based on workshop discussions, a new draft CZPo was produced. During September/October 2003, a consultation on the draft CZPo was completed in all 19 coastal districts.

The CZPo elaborates on policy statements addressing eight objectives, indicative mechanism for future co-ordination and implementation, proposal for a multi-agency 'Programme Co-ordination Unit' and establishing a 'Coastal Development Fund'. The draft is awaiting approval of the government.

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Coastal Development Strategy supporting CZPo:

Based on the CZPo, a start of the drafting of the CDS has been made. The emphasis is on participatory formulation, both at national and at regional/local levels. A final draft of the CDS is expected in June 2005. However, extensive consultations are planned during October '04 - March '05.

Investment to support CDS:

Although CZPo and CDS provide a framework, investments are crucial for coastal development. A portfolio of investment projects, in the form of concept notes, is being formulated in participation of more than one agency together. Two such concept papers are in the final stage of formulation.

The critical issue remains regarding commitment of investments. By supporting the ICZM process, the government has already made political commitment. It is time for a long-term financial commitment. One cannot and should not depend only on development partners to manage our coast though there exists interest and support among development partners.

Carrying the process forward: In conclusion, the process of inte-

grated coastal zone management has been initiated in Bangladesh. The responsibility to carry this forward remains on our shoulder. In the past, we have made attempts but did not move forward. Now, we are more committed. Many countries in the world, including all our neighbours, have adopted ICZM as an approach for coastal development. The driving force is not vulnerabilities that the coast faces but opportunities the coast offers. Both poverty reduction and conservation of nature can be achieved by addressing and harnessing opportunities of the coast.

Dr. M. Rafiqul Islam is Team Leader, PDO-ICZMP.

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