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CHIEF ADVISER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

Message

I welcome the initiative of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Regional & International Networking Group (RING) for jointly organizing the Second International Workshop on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Dhaka.

The global scientific community has highlighted Bangladesh as one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As such it is vital that we try to strengthen our capacities to adapt to a fast-changing global environmental scenario.

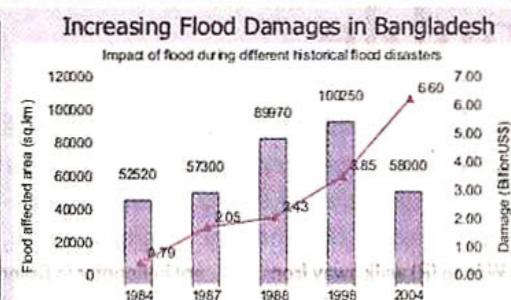
I wish the forthcoming workshop all success.

Fakhrudin Ahmed
Dr. Fakhrudin Ahmed

SCEPTICS ARE OUT
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announced this month that there is a 90 percent probability that human activities are causing global warming, bringing more droughts, heat waves and rising seas.

The report high credibility leaves no more excuse to the international community but to urgently act on climate change.

The IPCC is an international body grouping 2,500 scientists from 130 countries.



Flood damages are increasing. This will increase vastly as climate change impacts increase flooding and sea level rise.

Bangladesh: One of the most Vulnerable Countries to Climate Change Impacts

Climate change is a reality

Climate change is now a reality. The recent findings of the Fourth Assessment Report of the world scientific community, represented by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), demonstrates that human activities are responsible for global warming and global climate change. Climate change impacts have been already visible across the world in various forms. This is demonstrated through various recent extreme climatic events around the world such as prolonged floods and severe drought in South Asia and Africa, heat waves in Europe, devastating cyclones and tidal surges (Katrina and Rita) in Atlantic coasts. The 1990s was the warmest decade and the year 1998 was the warmest on record. The current century is expected to see warming quicker than at any time in the past 10,000 years due to many anthropogenic activities. It seems that we cannot prevent climate change and it will affect the basic elements of human life including food, water, health, fodders and fuel. Climate change will have adverse impacts on human, social and natural systems and sub-systems in different degrees. The developing and poor countries including Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable to the adversities of climate change due to their poor socio-economic development and lack of capacity to address the impacts.

Climate change impacts on Bangladesh

Bangladesh will face many of the impacts of climate change due to its geographical location, hydrological influence by monsoon rainfall and regional water flow patterns. The country faces too much water in monsoon causing floods and too little water in dry season. This situation will be aggravated in the warmer climate resulting in severe droughts and increasing floods. The maps show the current and projected areas under drought and additional likelihood of floods.

It is projected that the possible sea level rise will affect the country by inundating coastal areas of Bangladesh. These will dislodge millions of people from their homes, occupations and livelihoods. Salinity has already increased in the coastal zones. This is contributed by low flow of fresh water from the Ganges and ingress of salt water from Bay of Bengal. It is predicted that for 45cm of sea level rise about 10 percent of the country will be inundated. Further for a 1m sea level rise 21% of the country will go under salt water. This has affected the agriculture, mangroves including the Sunderbans and coastal ecosystem. The climate change and the possible sea level rise is likely to inundate the coastal wetlands, lowlands, accentuate coastal erosion, increase frequent and severe floods, create drainage and irrigation problems. The poor and marginal groups would be critically affected by the possible sea level rise and salinity in trusion in Bangladesh coastal zone. Sea level rise from the south and enhanced Himalayan snow and glacial melt from the north will inundate additional large parts of Bangladesh over today's flood affected areas.

Threats to increase poverty

Climate change and its associated events will affect the natural resources and common property resources such as fisheries, mangroves and forests, which provide livelihood supports for the common people and the poor. This will contribute to increase poverty. Climate change will affect the sectoral as well as regional developments and current disaster preparedness. Climate change impacts may affect achieving the MDGs, particularly the goal one i.e., eradicating poverty and hunger. Because, climate change is likely to directly impact the poor's livelihoods in many ways, their assets and resources base including their employment, income, access to water and natural resources and health. The poor in Bangladesh will face more food insecurity, water stress and health problems in the rapidly changing climate. The effort to reduce poverty under Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP) will be significantly undermined by the impacts of climate changes in Bangladesh.

The Second International CBA Workshop in Dhaka

Backgrounds, Themes and Objectives

Climate change is the greatest threat to mankind and Bangladesh has been identified by the world scientists as one of the most vulnerable and potentially one of the most severely impacted countries by the climate impacts including extreme weather events. To redress the impacts, the global community is looking for scientific leadership, solutions and appropriate processes. To contribute to this global discourse, the Second International Workshop on Community Based Adaptation (CBA) to Climate Change is being held in Bangladesh during 24-28 February 2007. The workshop includes three key components:

- (a) Field Visits
- (b) Technical Sessions and
- (c) High Level Panels and Concluding Sessions

The main workshop events are being held at the Radisson Hotel in Dhaka. The new scientific information on threats of climate change impacts and science of adaptation to climate change, community based adaptation experiences to climate variability and extreme weather events and future actions will be presented and discussed in the three-day workshop. The core themes of the workshop are:

- Signs of change, from local to global, understanding adaptation to climate change;
- Partnerships in adaptation;
- Adaptation practices in sectors and regions;
- Knowledge, education and awareness on climate change and
- Mainstreaming adaptation to climate change into development process.

The workshop aims to raise professional capacity in developing and implementing strategies, programmes and projects for adaptation to climate change. The outcomes of the workshop will also improve existing project activities, and help identifying new project ideas, providing a basis for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms needed to plan and implement adaptation. The proceedings of the workshop and reviewed papers will be published as a book.

The First Workshop on Community Based Adaptation

This is the second workshop on this subject. The first CBA workshop was held in Dhaka in January 2005. The scientific findings and exchange of experiences of that workshop were highly appreciated by the global community of climate change scientists, policy makers and practitioners. It was decided to hold the second follow up workshop focusing on field level experiences. The subject matter and outcomes of the workshop are becoming increasingly important in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other financial mechanisms. It is also a major concern in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientific deliberations. The global actors are also looking for response options.

The Second Workshop

Dr. C. S. Karim, Advisor to the Caretaker Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, senior level national and global policy makers, representative of British High Commission, European Commission, German Government and several other international bodies in Dhaka, the Vice Chairman of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and several lead authors of the IPCC will address the participants and audience of the workshop. About 50 scientific papers will be presented in various technical and plenary sessions. Structured discussions will be held to derive a set of key recommendations on adaptation to climate change. A high level panel will discuss the conclusions on 28 February 2007.

This workshop is being jointly organized by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), Dhaka, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), London, UK, and Regional and International Networking Group (RING).

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Message

Global emission of Green House Gases is approaching such an alarming level that it would eventually cause climate changes. Such a change would in its turn affect economic and other forms of human activities of many countries. Inspite of many initiatives taken by the global community the turn around in emission is yet to be visible. Concerted efforts are, therefore, essential to initiate proactive interventions aimed at retarding the progress of global pollution. We in Bangladesh are concerned because our country is widely believed to be one of the worst victims of climate changes.

In addition to the endeavors to understand the dynamics of climate changes and its impact on life, we have to evolve action plans on preparing ourselves to live with the harsh realities of climate changes. In the backdrop of the emerging situation, the "Second International Workshop on Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change" in Dhaka, Bangladesh during 24-28 February 2007 assumes enormous importance. I commend the joint endeavors and wisdom of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, International Institute for Environment and Development and International Networking Group of organizations working for Sustainable Development in selecting Bangladesh as the venue for this important event.

I understand that representatives from 40 countries are participating in the Workshop. It thus creates an opportunity to share knowledge leading to a set of pro-active plans and actions relevant to creation of awareness and evolution of needed interventions.

While welcoming the local and international participants and wishing its success, we look forward to the recommendations of this important and timely international event.

Feb. 25, 2007

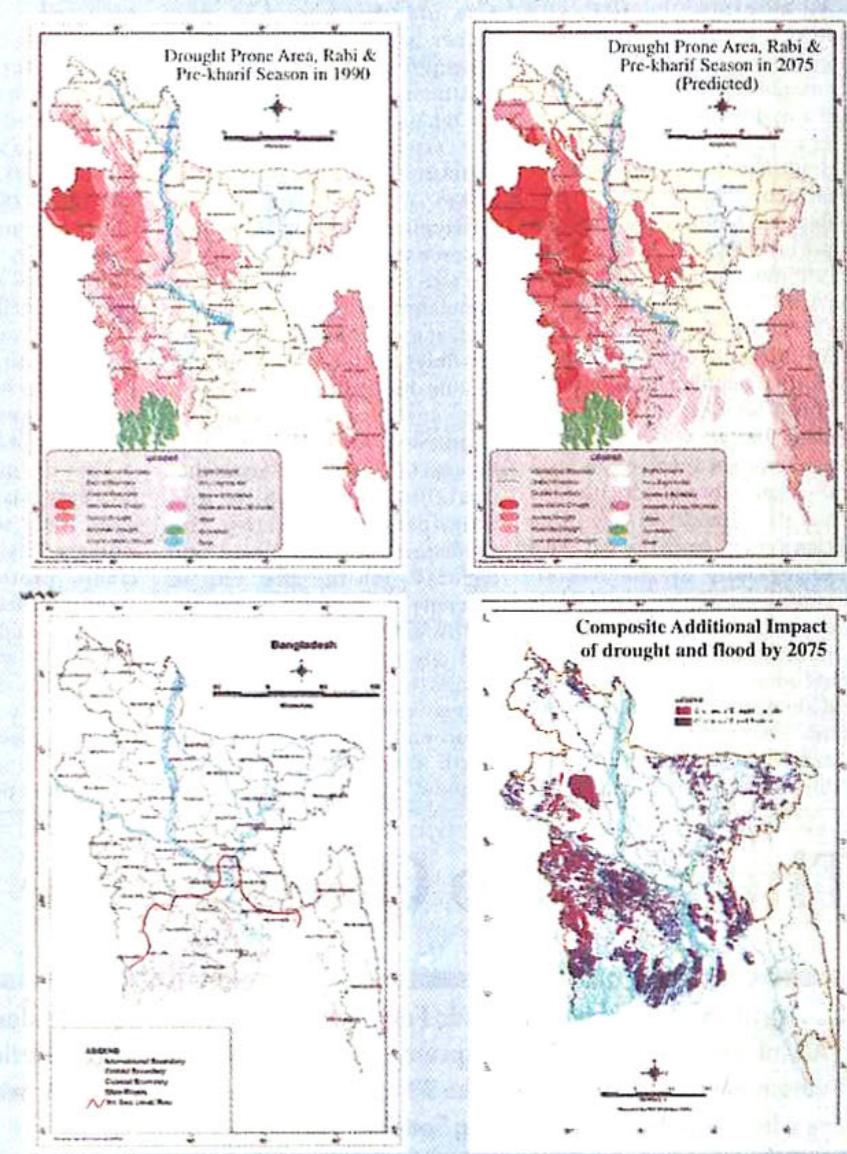
Dr C S Karim

The workshop is co-sponsored by a number of international development partners including British High Commission, Dhaka, Commonwealth Foundation, DEFRA and DFID, UK and a number of key international environment and development NGOs including Oxfam, Christian Aid, Red Cross International and Practical Action. The workshop is being facilitated and supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and their key associate agencies of the Government of Bangladesh.

Field Visits

The workshop is organized after a two-day field visits by the international and national participants. Over 120 experts and scientists on climate change, disaster preparedness and community adaptation as well as development partners and practitioners have visited different climate disaster affected zones of Bangladesh during 24-25 February. The experts and practitioners came from Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Australia, Europe, North America and Latin America. They visited the salinity affected coastal zone of Bangladesh, drought prone Northwestern Barind area and flood affected central parts of the country. The local partner NGOs from the respective areas facilitated the organization of the field visits.

The participants observed the field situations and sought views of community people and the vulnerable groups about their vulnerability, current coping and options for future adaptation in different geographic and climatic contexts. The technical and concluding session will combine field experience across the world with theories of adaptation and development processes.



The Red line shows inundation of lands for 1 metre sea level rise.

Additional predicted Drought and Flood increases by 2075 in addition to present (1990) flooded area coverage. Red areas present drought increases. Deep blue shows flood coverage increases from 1990 to 2075.

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