

MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS Lack of capacity building holds back implementation Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh cannot implement multilateral environmental agreements and take advantage of global assistance in this regard due to lack of capacity building at institutional level, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

To sensitise and enhance capacity building at different levels including public, private and academic, they laid emphasis on the training of journalists about the priority issue of changing global environment.

The discussion titled 'Role of media in sustainable environmental governance' was organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Bangladesh chapter of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) under the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) project at the National Press Club in the city.

"We have signed major environmental agreements including United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Diversity and UN Convention to Combat Desertification, but cannot implement those due to lack of our capacity," said Dr Ainun Nishat, IUCN country representative.

Although India has drawn a huge amount of money from Global Environment Facility for implementing the treaties, Bangladesh has failed to do anything in this regard, Dr Nishat said, adding that the World Bank and Asian Development Bank drew about \$50-60 million for Bangladesh.

"In stead of sending new representatives every year to environmental meetings, some experts should be given the job who will set up a depository of information on their return," he added.

Speaking as chief guest Mahbubul Alam, former adviser to the caretaker government, stressed the need for capacity building training at ministry level to work for global environmental issues.

Other discussants also noted that there is a lack of coordination in the government moves to follow up the signing of the treaties.

To equip the journalists properly for covering the environmental issues, environment experts and members of Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) proposed that training for journalists can be organised at Press Institute of Bangladesh and National Institute Mass Communication.

With Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir in the chair, NCSA Project Manager Monowar Islam presented a concept paper on the project.

Information Secretary Didarul Anwar, Joint Secretary (environment) Sirajuddin, BSS Chief Editor Jagul Ahmed Chowdhury, UNDP Programme Officer Mamunul H Khan, journalist Mahfuz Ullah and FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury also took part in the discussion.

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US Congressman Meeks supports anti-graft drive

BSS, New York

Congressman Gregory Meeks, an influential member of the House International Relations Committee, has extended his total support to the ongoing anti-corruption drive in Bangladesh led by the caretaker government.

Meeks, who was has been elected from the New York State, was talking to a delegation of expatriate Bangladeshis at a city hotel at Queens Village on Friday.

The delegation includes President of Expatriate Citizens' Committee Mahadev Sarkar, Professor Mebal Gomes and Ali Imam. Governor of New York State Elliot Spitzer was also present on the occasion.

Member of the Bangladesh Caucus, Gregory Meeks said the Bangladesh Army has been playing a commendable role in the UN peacekeeping missions. Praising the ongoing anti-corruption drive in Bangladesh, the Congressman said corruption and democracy could not go together.

"You need to uproot corruption if you want to give democracy a permanent shape," Meeks added.

He expressed the hope that a free and fair election will be held in Bangladesh in 2008. He said the United States would welcome the decisions of the people.

Governor Elliot Spitzer thanked the Bangladeshi community for the huge support extended by the American-Bangladeshis in the last US elections. He also expressed his desire to visit Bangladesh.

Bangladesh delegation told Meeks that the caretaker government had successfully tackled the floods in Bangladesh providing assistance to the thousands of flood-hit people besides carrying out the anti-corruption drive.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the rivers need to be dredged, but the government does not spend money on

নদী দূষন এখনই বন্ধ করার দাবীতে

সংবাদ সম্মেলন

তারিখ: ০৬ অক্টোবর ২০০৭

চূলাদেশ পরিবেশ আন্দোলন (বাপা)

ও জাতীয় নদী বন্ধ আন্দোলন

PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city yesterday. On his left is Dr Md Abdul Matin.

Protect rivers from pollution Speakers say at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the government to take steps to protect the rivers from pollution in order to ensure a healthy environment for the people.

Almost all the rivers in the country are being polluted, adversely affecting the environment, biodiversity and the climate, they said and urged all to come forward to combat the pollution of rivers.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said the rivers need to be dredged, but the government does not spend money on

such projects to protect the rivers.

Stressing the need for the government's active initiative to save 163 rivers, he also urged the business organisations to come forward to protect the rivers from pollution as part of their 'corporate social responsibility'.

Dr Md Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Parishash Andolok (Bapa), placed some recommendations while presenting the keynote paper.

The recommendations include putting an end to dumping of garbage into rivers, setting up effluent plants in all industrial

units and introducing cleaner production system.

The speakers also said that setting up latrines on the river should be stopped and using compressed natural gas (CNG) should be made compulsory for the water vessels and the rivers should be made free from illegal encroachment.

They called on the ministries concerned, Wasa, BIWTA, Water Development Board, city corporations and municipalities to formulate river-friendly policies.

The discussion was held at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium.

Palliative care service opens at BSMMU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Palliative care service for terminally ill patients should be incorporated into primary healthcare system in the country, Health Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matiur Rahman said yesterday.

The palliative care, which is almost absent in the country institutionally, should also be included in medical curriculum, he said as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of palliative care service at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The palliative care outpatient service was inaugurated in the country, marking the World Palliative Care Day yesterday.

Doctors and nurses should be especially trained on it and the service should be extended to village level gradually, the adviser said.

"Palliative care is the only realistic therapy in our socio-economic perspective, because it provides physical, mental and spiritual support to patients," said Dr Nezam Uddin Ahmed, project co-ordinator of Palliative Care Service, BSMMU.

Palliative care is not a new discipline in the world. Rather, there are around 8,000 palliative care centres across the globe and 1,500 of them are in South Asia, the speakers said.

Highlighting its importance in the developing countries, the speakers said the developing countries use only 10 percent of the total health resources globally, whereas 75 percent of patients with incurable disease are living in these countries.

BSMMU Vice Chancellor Prof Tahir presided over the session while Pro-Vice Chancellor MA Majid presented the vision of Palliative Care at BSMMU.

The discussants said the present global system and the multilateral institutions such as World Bank, IMF and World Trade Organisation (WTO) are working to destroy the industrial and financial base of the poor and developing countries.

Bangladesh should oppose it,

they said, making a strong case for supporting the countries facing threats from global climate change. Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to sea level rise due to global climate change, they added.

Former BNP MP Lt Gen (retd) Mahabubur Rahman, Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Party leader GM Kader and Awami League leader Mahmudur Rahman Manna took part in the discussion.

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