



PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Bangladesh is vulnerable to sea level rise, repeated cyclones, deeper penetration of saline water, erratic rainfall, flood, drought, riverbank erosion and many more.



DR REZAUL KARIM

There is a limit to adaptation, after a certain point we just cannot adapt

It does not give a target. What should be the target as a whole by all the countries and what should be the target to be achieved by the Annex 1 countries? Those are the things that are not there. So are those things going to be achieved by COP 16? This is the tough part of the negotiations," he said.

The hard nut issue will still be mitigation at COP 16, he added saying, "Because if you see the points of these big four countries. I don't see how much they would like to agree to an emission cut. They are still talking about increasing their GDP growth, but not emission cut in direct terms."

"There is a limit to adaptation, after a certain point we just cannot adapt," he said.

Bangladesh needs to do some housekeeping, he said adding that housekeeping means assessing where the country stands, what is its situation, and what can be done.

The environment ministry is not the only responsible ministry for dealing with the climate change issue, the ministry of power and energy also has something to do on the issue, he said.

The talk about technology transfer needs to move from general to specific, he suggested adding, "We need to say what is needed for Bangladesh for technology transfer. But having participated in the debate on technology transfer at COP 15 this is known that technology transfer cannot flow by itself. It has to flow through some means. What are those means? Those are investment flows."

Both private and public sectors can create that investment flow for technology transfer, he said.

"We have to do some work on technology needs assessment. What are our needs? Bangladesh hasn't done anything yet. There are many other countries who have done their needs assessment," said Dr Rezaul.

He said the field of renewable energy is

a new field with a lot of potential, adding, "We have to take our right place in that renewable energy area. Why don't we find out how much potential we have in wind energy in the country?"

He went on to say, for that the government needs to carry out wind mapping. Energy efficiency, energy conservation, clean energy, this are the areas the government has to work on for technology transfer, he added.

Dr Ahsan Uddin Ahmed
Dr Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Global Change (CGC), said Bangladesh should have detailed micro and macro planning for climate smart development.

He also urged the government to ensure MRV (measurable, reportable and verifiable) implementation of different local level projects.

He said the Copenhagen Accord is not legally binding, and there will be more negotiations on the document in the coming months before COP 16.

Being one of the most vulnerable countries, Bangladesh probably can take the lead role in those negotiations, he suggested.

He also emphasised on strengthening 'local capacity', adding, "We must embrace climate smart development."

Dr Ahsan pointed out that the government already has a climate change



DR AHSAN UDDIN AHMED

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strategy and action plan prepared, and it also incorporated the climate change issue in its sixth five-year development plan.

"Now the government should plan the details," he said.

He also pointed out that the government has yet to let the world know what it actually has done on the issue.

The government already allocated money for social safety net for climate change victims, but it did not bring that out at Cop 15, he pointed out again.

In the last decade Bangladesh's main source for power generation was gas, he said, "But we have not brought that up as well."

Along with increasing the capacity within and outside the government, he emphasised on opening courses on climate change in public universities.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan
Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela), said, "Bangladesh has to take a lead role in climate negotiations for the protection of its territorial integrity."

There is no alternative to mitigation measures by major carbon emitters for protecting territorial integrity of vulnerable countries, she asserted.



SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN

The climate change is going to change the map of our country. So it is scary for us. It is a question of survival for us

At the same time, Bangladesh must learn to say no to any unacceptable provision in the climate accord, she said adding, the country faces the risk of losing 17 percent of its landmass and displacement of 20 million people as a consequence of the climate change impacts including rise of the sea level.

"The climate change is going to change the map of our country. So it is scary for us. It is a question of survival for us," Rizwana warned the roundtable.

At the national level, the government must monitor by who, when, and how the adaptive and mitigating actions are being carried out, she said.

"The government's adaptation and mitigation measures must be right based, and the vulnerable communities must be made aware that it is there right to be safe," she added.

The government should also declare the high risk areas 'critically vulnerable' to make the communities aware of the impending danger, she suggested.

She criticised the Copenhagen Accord saying, there is not a single word in the document about the displaced people.

Ziaul Haque Mukta
Ziaul Haque Mukta, coordinator of the Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihood, strongly opposed signing on to the Copenhagen Accord, saying the accord has no multilateral basis, and there is no

mention of mitigation target for developed countries.

It will be suicidal for Bangladesh to accept it by January 31, he said.

He said there had been a lot of weaknesses in the Bangladesh government's strategic and action plan for climate change, and the government reviewed it.

He was critical of Bangladesh's assessment of the funding it needs to tackle the impacts, and said the assessment was not done on the basis of a comprehensive groundwork.

He also suggested that the government should prepare a strategy for coming negotiations.

"Members of the Bangladesh delegation are mostly interested in going to the plenary session, as there is scope for delivering speeches there. But our representation at the meetings of contact groups and informal groups is also very vital," he said adding that the texts of the negotiations are prepared in the meetings of those groups.

He said the government should inform non-government organisations about its formal position regarding the climate change issue in the post Copenhagen situation, so the NGOs also can raise their voices, rendering strength to the government's position during international negotiations.

Bangladesh needs to arrive at a



ZIAUL HAQUE MUKTA

the government should prepare a strategy for coming negotiations

position considering the realities of the geopolitical factors, he said, adding that it should continue its negotiations in the international arena being in G-77, although China and India in the grouping pay more attention to their own interests, and not to the interests of the vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.

"Technical analysis for the negotiations and our demands must be stronger," he said.

Dr Sharmind Neelormi

Dr Sharmind Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University said for the first time in the UNFCCC process NGOs which work on women's issues are being invited and given official status of observers.

Thirty three percent of the registered participants at Cop 15 were female, she pointed out adding, but there was no mention of the gender issue in the accord.

"One thing I observed at Cop 15 is that population control is coming up as a major issue in relation to the climate change. I didn't observe it in earlier COPs. I could sense that there is a huge pressure from the North to water down the causes of climate change by giving emphasis on population control," she noted.

"I am clearly stating that since Bangladesh is a densely populated country, a majority of our population is getting affected by the climate change. But our population is not causing the climate change," she asserted.

"So if they impose population control on us, we should be very careful, because it will affect the lives of our women's



DR SHARMIND NEELORMI

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reproductive health, women are the stakeholders in population control," she said.

"So at the negotiations we should be very careful on that. And there are lots of disputes especially among the indigenous communities on REDD Plus and market based solution."

Expressing concerns about REDD Plus, she said, "We have lots of disputes about REDD Plus in the hill tracts and in the southern belt of the country where forests are situated. Whether or not we are accepting REDD Plus, what we think about the market based solution, which fund we will accept, we should form policies on those very carefully."

The Ministry for Women's and Children's Affairs must get better allocations in this area. There should be a monitoring cell to track how women are being benefited by the adaptation and mitigation projects, she said.

Mahfuz Anam, the editor and publisher of The Daily Star, who moderated the session, invited suggestions from the panel on what kind of a role the media might play to help the government battle climate change.

The panel suggested that the media should build up its capacity to discuss the issue, and it could tell the tales of the affected people as well.



Climate change threatens to change the map of Bangladesh. It is a question of survival.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Bangladesh faces the risk of losing 17 percent of its landmass and displacement of 20 million people as a consequence of climate change.

PHOTO: SK. ENAMUL HAQ