

# GREEN ECONOMY : DOES IT INCLUDE YOU?



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## Going green to overcome economic crises

DR. MD. MIZANUR RAHMAN

ACCORDING to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) a green economy is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. A green economy focuses on economical growth and employment reducing carbon emissions and pollution, accelerating sustainable development with minimum utilisation of natural resources and conserving ecosystem services. Ecosystems or biodiversity finance and natural capital are the two major components of a green economy. It directly values ecological services and treats natural resources as natural capital. It is a component of the ecosystem in which it resides.

### Green steps towards green economy

"Our Common Future" and the concept of sustainability got world attention through the Rio Earth

Summit-1992, and reaffirmed at Johannesburg Earth Summit-2002. That Summit urged the nations to form and elaborate national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005. Sustainable development has been widely accepted as resting on the three pillars of the sustainability: economic growth, social development and environmental protection. The biggest step of Copenhagen climate summit-2009 was to stimulate the green economy through increasing the price of carbon dioxide pollution. The Seoul Conference-2005 accepted the concept of environmentally sustainable economic growth (Green Growth) for the Asia and Pacific. This Conference endorsed Go Green as a powerful policy to promote 'win-win' approaches reducing the conflict between current pathways for the achievement of two important Millennium Development Goals: poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. The Astana Conference-2010 promoted innovative approaches and building partnership to achieve sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

Key messages of this conference were to reinforce policies to reduce poverty as an integral part of sustainability policies including the promotion of access to income generating opportunities and community empowerment, and break a vicious cycle of poverty and environmental degradation; and to raise green fund.

Rio+20 Earth Summit will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 20-22, 2012 focusing on two themes: (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable

### Green economic crisis in Bangladesh

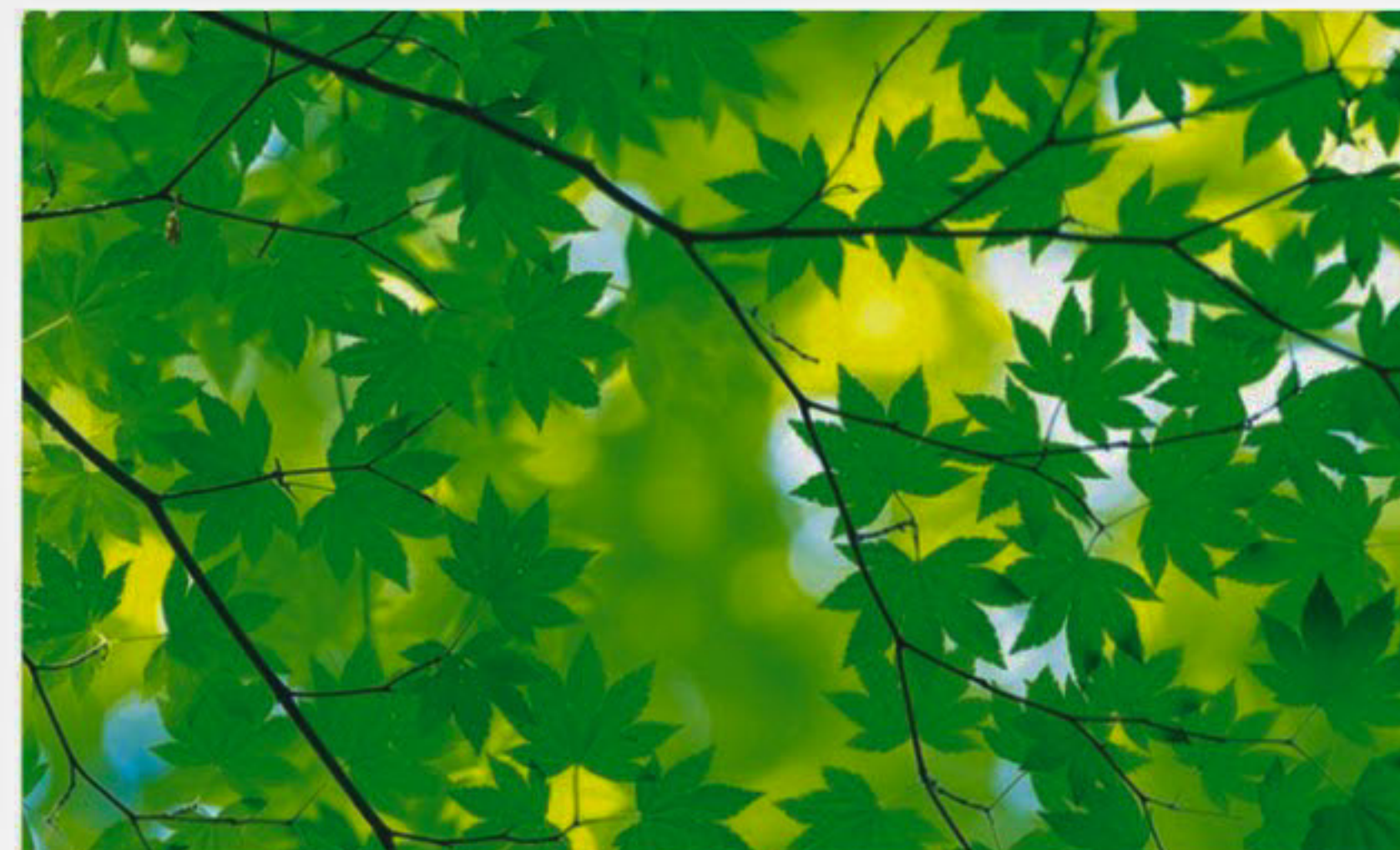
Gradual environmental degradation, climate change and diminishing natural resources created an extra threat to sustainability in this region. The past concept of "grow first, clean up later" cannot go far in a country like Bangladesh which has very limited natural resources and a rapidly growing population directly dependent on natural resources. Environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources in Bangladesh have been occurring faster than the past few

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development. Bretton Woods Institutions are raising Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and The Clean Technology Fund (CTF). These institutions have adopted the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) and the Scaling up Renewable Energy Programme in Low Income Countries (SREP) to boost up green economy.

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity study is a giant step to implement the "Convention on Biodiversity" drawing attention to the global economic benefits of biodiversity, highlighting the growing costs of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and urging the experts from the fields of science, economics and policy to work together to move forward.

decades due to over-population and poverty. It has been accelerated by deforestation, habitat destruction and biodiversity loss. Due to over-population and limited lands, the forest resources are overexploited. The existing natural forests are decreasing at a rate varying from 2.1% /yr to 3.3% /yr. The consequences of the habitat destruction are: deforestation, decreasing vegetation coverage, soil degradation, loss of species richness, increasing rarity, loss of genetic diversity, loss of evolutionary potential, changes in water cycles and water tables, conversion of mixed stands into pure stands, destruction of natural regeneration, climate change, loss of ecosystem services, disruption of livelihoods of indigenous people, social instabilities, economic losses, loss of forest productivity, decreas-



ing forest non-wood products; and increasing of environmental refugees.

The gradually increasing anthropogenic disturbances in the natural forests have made the system inhospitable for the natural regeneration causing a net loss of biodiversity. It's an irony of fate that all our natural forests have become critically fragmented to the point where they are considered unlikely to maintain minimum level of green coverage. The cities have become urban mayhem losing living ambience. At least 25% forest cover is essential for a nation to maintain the minimum level of biodiversity and to ensure ecological services.

Agricultural production in Bangladesh has been increased tremendously over the last few decades through abuse of high-yielding varieties, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Abuses of chemical fertilizer and pesticide have led to contamination of water, loss of diversity and deterioration of soil quality. Various health problems are associated with covert consumption of agrochemicals including pesticides. Agrochemical based conventional agriculture also caused increasing vulnerability of crops to insect and pest attacks, loss of aquatic life, declining yields, and deterioration of animal and human

health.

In Bangladesh, chemicals like calcium carbide are widely used for ripening fruit. It reacts with water and produces acetylene gas, which is similar to ethylene, the fruit's natural ripening agent. Calcium carbide-treated fruits are acutely hazardous causing many diseases. The formalin is frequently used in perishable food items like fish, dressed chicken, fruits, vegetables etc. to keep them look fresh to the buyers. It is highly toxic to all animals, regardless of method of intake. According to FAO, unsafe food represents a major threat to public health in Bangladesh. Every year millions of citizens suffer from various diseases following the consumption of unsafe food.

There is no exact information about the extent and gravity of the environmental degradation of the water resources in Bangladesh. Pollutions affect almost all people but the poor and the vulnerable are the worst affected. There is a positive correlation between water pollution and the incidence of water-borne diseases. Right now air pollution in Dhaka city is higher than Mexico City killing thousands of people prematurely each year. Millions of people have been suffering from pulmonary, respiratory

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## Colour your world **GREEN**

Cityscape aspires to introduce the first commercial LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) building in Bangladesh. Targeting for the highest rating of Platinum Certification authorized by the USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council), Cityscape hopes to lead the green revolution in Bangladesh to create a place of functionality and beauty.

Let's follow this example and start this World Environment Day to do our own parts to enhance the environment in any way we can.

