

International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR)- 2012

13 October 2012



Directorate of Disaster Management
Disaster Management and Relief Division
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

step UP Women & Girls
The *in*Visible Force of Resilience



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA

28 Ashwin 1419
13 October 2012

Message

I welcome the initiative taken by Disaster Management and Relief Ministry to celebrate the "International Day for Disaster Reduction-2012" in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the globe.

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. As a result, Bangladesh has to face various natural calamities like tidal surge, cyclone, mountain rain, heavy rainfall, drought and others. It causes loss of lives and properties as well as leaves negative impact in our economy. In the recent time we have faced the turbulent cyclones like Ayila and Sidr in the wake of global warming and climate change. It has greatly damaged bio-diversities of the coastal area and increased salinity which is endangering environment.

Our people are naturally painstaking and diligent. They have survived in this land by facing the natural calamity. Yet woman, child and the old are vulnerable to natural hazards. Almost half of our total population is woman. They take the helm of family despite adverse situation like disaster, and proceed. Therefore, this year theme "Women & Girls: The invisible Force of Resilience" is appropriate, I think.

I wish the "International Day for Disaster Reduction-2012" a success.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Z Rahman
Md. Zillur Rahman

Empowering Women and Girls towards a Resilient Nation

For geographical location and geophysical configuration combined with its topography and dense population made Bangladesh more susceptible to natural hazard events which often resulting in disasters with a high loss of life and economic damages. Bangladesh frequently experiences multiple natural hazards including floods, cyclones, droughts, salinity, water-logging, river and coastal erosion, hailstorms, tornados, tidal surge, landslides. Impact of climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of disasters and is affecting the lives and livelihood of millions. Earthquake related risks are increasing with densely populated urban centers with unsafe structures and limited resources to disaster response. Despite the reduction of the national poverty headcount rate from 40 percent to 31.5 percent in 2010 according to the latest 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), still some 57 million people lives in chronic poverty. The economic impact of disasters usually consists of direct damage e.g. infrastructure, crops, housing, and indirect damage e.g. loss of revenues, unemployment and enduring poverty. It is therefore increasingly becomes a major issue of urgent concern for the government, development partners and communities as well.

Acknowledging the contribution of women & girls in disaster management

This year the theme of International Day for Disaster Reduction is "Women and Girls: The (In)Visible Force of Resilience" that focuses the unique opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the millions of women and girls who make their communities more resilient to disasters and climate risks. In Bangladesh this theme has been transformed as "*Durjog Shohonshii Desh Gori, Shohayok Shokti Balika O' Nari*" which is the call to reap the benefits of and protect the development investments of women and girls for a safer tomorrow. The 2012 IDDR theme draws attention to the fact that women's contributions to protect and rebuild their communities before and after disasters are often unrecognized and thus needs special attention to include them in all spheres of disaster management initiatives.

Along with the effort of other key stakeholders, the recently converted Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (Earlier Disaster Management & Relief Division), is leading the observation of IDDR and supporting for effectively communicate the theme among the mass audience to ensure wider participation. Particular emphasize has been given to provide women and girls with all the technical support and skills to communicate and information they need to become participants, decision makers and implementers in the disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation process.

Recent Progress in Disaster Management

With the years of experience in risk mitigation, learning and sharing of knowledge within country, regional and international cooperation, Bangladesh acquired distinctive capabilities in reducing risks, casualties and devastation in the course of disasters management history of the country. The government is firmly committed to secure provisions for strengthening disaster management and risk mitigation, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into national policies, planning, and institutional development, incorporating in educational curriculum and text book, and development processes.

In line with the paradigm shift from conventional response and relief to a more holistic and comprehensive disaster risk reduction the revised Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD) has been approved by the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) in 2010, which outlined disaster and climate risk reduction tasks for the ministries, agencies, committees, civil society organizations, and citizens. National Plan for Disaster Management (2010-2015) has been approved to streamline disaster response and recovery for the protection of most vulnerable specially women, children and the poor. Already the Cyclone Shelter Construction, Maintenance and Management Guideline 2011 have been endorsed. A Draft National Disaster Management Policy has been formulated.

Very recently the Disaster Management Act 2012 has been endorsed by the Parliament on 12th September 2012 and later published in the official gazette on 24th September 2012 which is a significant achievement for the country in twenty years efforts of the government and civil society actors. By enacting the Disaster Management Act the government called for all the citizens to be responsible enough to hold own accountability in the face of disasters and become more compassionate to the disaster tormented people and community as well.

The MoDMR becomes instrumental to mainstreaming and professionalizing of DRR & CCA into 13 government ministries and department successfully. The dynamic leadership of the Ministry able to implement a range of various DRR & CCA related programme and projects including development of rural infrastructure, food and cash support for the vulnerable community and destitute people under various safety net programme, employment generation programme for the poor, incorporating DRR & CCA into the school text curriculum, construction and renovation of various multi-purpose flood and cyclone shelter, purchasing of heavy equipment for earthquake search and rescue operations, piloting of disaster resilient habitat, construction of barrack house for the landless, network widening of mobile based sms & IVR related early warning system all over the country which is accessible through all the existing mobile operators, around 600,000 people are provided with better access to safe drinking water in the saline intrusion post-Aila cyclone affected area etc. Along with the government effort over the years, the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) has become one of the flagship initiatives of the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief for the reduction of disaster and climate change risks. CDMP has been playing very pro-active role by all spheres of government to consolidate the disaster management paradigm shift from relief and rehabilitation to that of prevention, mitigation and better preparedness and response at all level with all hazards approach.

Gender Mainstreaming in Disaster Management

The experience shows that sustaining re-current disaster impacts and the capacities of the mass people as well as local community are by far the most concrete strength of disaster management in Bangladesh. This indeed reflects the reality in Bangladesh also that women and girls are the immense power to confront and cope with the risks of disasters and the effects of climate change. While instituting gender sensitive disaster risk reduction is addressed in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) - the current global disaster risk reduction framework - the 2011 Mid-Term Review of the HFA found it is rarely taken into account the role of women and girls when planning any activities in disaster management. This perspective must be reversed to give women and girls the credit and acknowledgment that are due to them. However, for the first time this year initiative has been taken to adequately reflect gender concerns and progress in the HFA report from Bangladesh.

At institutional level, one third of the portions of 50,000 CPP (Cyclone Preparedness Programme) volunteers are women who are working in remote areas to build greater awareness and preparedness on disaster. The government has taken initiatives to create a pool of 62,000 Urban Volunteers and one third of it will be women force. Initiative has been taken for mainstreaming of gender concern in disaster management with the support of Department of Women Affairs under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to develop the Risk Reduction Action Plan which is already in progress.

Way Forward

Women and girls are 52% of the world's population and are among the most affected by disasters. Their experience, knowledge and expertise are critical to disaster risk reduction strategies and processes. In this current and future landscape of increased disasters and vulnerability, it is clear that governments, community, humanitarian agencies and the wider international community must be better organized to empower women and girls to be better prepared to combat disasters effectively. Given the considerable benefits, both social and economic, women and girls focused disaster risk reduction initiatives deserves greater attention and resources. We should strive to build institutional mechanisms for women's participation in decision-making processes. Our efforts must shift to emphasize transformative action to secure the future of today's generation in partnership with women and girls along with men. In our society, women and girls are the pillars of resilience-they are the first responder in most cases and to prepare their families for a disaster and the first to put communities back together in the disaster aftermath. Hence time has come to recognize the catalytic role playing by women and girls which needs to be upheld towards empowering them in a stronger force.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

28 Ashwin 1419
13 October 2012

Message

I am happy to learn that the "International Day for Disaster Reduction" is being observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world on 13 October 2012.

Disasters affect the women and men equally but due to social limitation the vulnerability of women is more during disaster. In this context, this year the theme of the day is "Women and Girls - the Invisible Force of Resilience" is very much time befitting.

We enacted the Standing Orders on Disaster in 1997 and revised it in 2010 to make it more time-befitting. The government also adopted National Plan for Disaster Management 2010-2015; Cyclone Shelter Construction, Maintenance and Management Policy, 2011. We had taken initiative to formulate Disaster Management Act during our last tenure. But BNP-Jamaat alliance government didn't continue that effort. During our current tenure, we formulated Disaster Management Act, 2012.

I hope that women's participation will be strengthened and wider awareness will be raised in disaster risk reduction initiatives by observing International Day for Disaster Reduction.

I wish all the programmes of the day a grand success.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina
Sheikh Hasina



Minister
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

13 October 2012

Message

Today on the 13th of October 2012, Bangladesh as a nation is celebrating the International Day for Disaster Reduction - IDDR along with other countries of the world. The global theme of this year is "Women and Girls: the invisible Force of Resilience". In Bangladesh this theme is "দুর্যোগ সহনশীল দেশ গড়ি, সহায়ক শক্তি বালিকা ও নারী"।

In reality, women and girls are the pillars of resilience - they are the first to prepare their families for a disaster and the first to put communities back together in the aftermath. The efforts of women and girls of our country to protect and rebuild communities before and after disasters are not often recognized; hence initiative has been taken to recognize the catalytic role playing by women and girls which will be upheld towards empowering them in a stronger force.

Bangladesh is immensely vulnerable to adverse natural and man-made hazards and extreme events, including the devastating potential impacts of climate change. Millions of lives and livelihood of our citizens are in threat due to reoccurring and devastating cyclones, storm surges, floods, droughts, saline intrusion and water logging. Adding to this, our highly dense population in the urban centers is most vulnerable to the risks associated with earthquakes. Yet, we strive to build our resilience and we have achieved notable progress in reducing the disaster related loss of lives, livelihoods and properties.

Today the global communities acknowledged our efforts to become a disaster resilient country, transforming our relief oriented disaster management system to a comprehensive disaster risk reduction approach. Under the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP II) and Directorate of Disaster Management have taken numerous initiatives to mainstream disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation all over the country. Alongside with changing policies and practices, we have invested considerable resources in community resilience and our efforts continue in assessing risks and hazards, developing contingency planning, piloting and scaling up innovative yet effective initiatives and raising awareness of all strata of our society.

While our achievements are commendable, our challenges are numerous. I ask my fellow countrymen, government stakeholders, development partners, the civil society, NGOs and the private sector to join hands in government's efforts for ensuring national disaster resilience. The International Day for Disaster Reduction has provided us with an opportunity to recall the days of sorrows & sufferings and step up for disaster risk reduction with new energy.

I reiterate government's firm commitment to a disaster resilient country for our future generations

Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali
Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali
MP



Secretary
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

13 October 2012

Message

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in collaboration with Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) and NGOs have taken various programmes to observe the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) on 13 October 2012. This year the world is celebrating the day with the theme "Women and Girls - the invisible Force of Resilience". In Bangladesh this theme is "দুর্যোগ সহনশীল দেশ গড়ি, সহায়ক শক্তি বালিকা ও নারী"।

It is the most widely observed day for raising awareness about disaster risk reduction, creating social demand, and mobilizing the public to get involved and take ownership of the processes towards resilience.

This year's theme is duly focused on to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of millions of women and girls who consistently making their communities more resilient to disasters and climate risks and thus bringing benefits of and protect their development investments. From experiences it has been evident that usually disaster impacts are often not distributed uniformly within a population, due to existing socio-economic conditions, cultural beliefs and traditional practices. Gender differences are often most significant in the aftermath of disaster as in most cases they are most vulnerable and the mortality rate is higher than those of man. However, women and girls in reality represents an immense source of potential and power to combat the increased disaster risks that needs equal emphasis and particular attention while addressing the gender dimensions in any given situation. We would also intend to move beyond the perception of women and girls as victims.

This year for the first time observation of IDDR day upgraded 'B' category event from 'C' category at national level putting particular importance and significance of observing the day with more wider participation where the honourable Prime Minister is inaugurating the day observance nationwide. In addition to its regular interventions, Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief is also undertaking a nation-wide campaign in schools to increase awareness on disasters including earthquake. Earthquake preparedness and evacuation drills also being conducted simultaneously in primary and secondary schools around the country.

The Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) has been working towards strengthening national capacity for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation under the auspicious of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. The systematic and comprehensive approach includes assessment, prediction of risks, contingency plans for future disaster and innovative and sustainable programmes for reducing risk of vulnerable communities. This approach for disaster risk reduction requires continued and committed support from not only the government led initiatives but also the people of the country, NGOs, civil society and the media.

Finally, I reiterate government's firm commitment in working together towards making the nation and communities disaster resilient.

Dr. M. Aslam Alam
Dr. M. Aslam Alam