

Climate Change as if Development Mattered

A Perspective on Developing Bangladesh Strategy

Policy Brief

Bangladesh tops the country list of climate change vulnerability according to the international scientific countries because of its geophysical location and hydro-geological and socio-economical characters. Given the spatial distribution agro-ecological diversity in Bangladesh, the climate change is expected to have multi-faced effects on nature and people of Bangladesh.

The climate change undermines the hard-earned development gains of the last several decades and also threatens the sustainability of Bangladesh's achievement in terms of development. The climate change puts Bangladesh to find out a strategy a comprehensive strategy to mitigate its causes, to enable her to adapt to its effects, to mobilize financial resources, and to augment clean technology for sustainable development. Given the poverty dimension, economic growth, technological development and nation's capacity to adapt, climate change is therefore a development issue. A national response in this regard, must have to travel beyond the usual of disaster management, risk reduction, adaptation to climate variability and natural hazards. This has to be integrated into the national development strategy, with emphasis on right to development and justice, with people at the centre, and driven by, and centered on, livelihood.



Photo: Paul James Gomes

Identification of the risk environments are the priority concerns to policy makers. This is because; identification of the risk environments serves as the building blocks of climate change policies. The building blocks of climate change should stand on four pillars: natural infrastructure (e.g., physiology, proximity to the sea, landscape and terrain, watersheds, land

type characteristics etc.), socioeconomic infrastructure (e.g., socio-economic profile of major livelihood groups, poverty dimension and distribution etc.), physical infrastructure (e.g., roads and highways, health care centres, urban centers, village growth centers, industries and factories, school buildings etc.) and institutional infrastructure (e.g., community organizations, Local Government Institutes, arrangements of government wings etc.).

Financing is required while implementing identified actions, options and measures under a formulated policy. A clear policy on financing mechanism is essential. Before that, it is essential to define the cost of adaptation and mitigation clearly and identify what should be called as adaptation or mitigation and how they should be handled. There are three issues that determine how the finance mechanism would work efficiently: the first issue is primarily how we define adaptation or mitigation cost. The second issue is how the money would be raised and who should be paying. The third issue is the mechanism of financing: how the funds will be allocated, who will get it and how it will be distributed.

There is no robust estimate of how much financing would be required for Bangladesh and on what time scale. However, there are some global estimates of available adaptation financing which might be possible to tack for Bangladesh. Many organizations estimated the annual funding required for global adaptation. According to the UNFCCC the requirement is: \$28bn-\$67bn by 2030. The UNDP estimates this should be \$86bn by 2015 while according to Oxfam the requirement is at least \$50bn. The Bangladesh Government has also taken a positive initiative to finance climate change adaptation of its own. The amount is 300 Crore BDT (approx. US\$43 million) which should be in operation from 2008-2009 financial year. A committee is formed by the government to initiate and control the activities of the fund. The convener of the committee is the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF). A separate committee headed by the Secretary of Finance will manage the fund. About 66 percent of the fund will be utilized during a specific financial year while the rest 34 percent will be deposited for interest. However there are criticisms of this fund which include: *mechanism of fund management* (i.e., lack of clear management structure, role, responsibilities); *fund discussion modalities* (i.e., no clear direction of who will get the fund, and how much he will get); *scope of fund coverage* (i.e., the thematic areas of funding, how many sectors would be covered by funding) and *criteria for fund eligibility* (i.e., on what type of

project the fund will be disbursed, what type of organization will get it).

The next few paragraphs suggest what issues should be considered and prioritised during formulation of a climate change policy in Bangladesh.

Mitigation, adaptation and technology transfer

Mitigation is first, mitigation is must. The global communities have already committed a net warming exceeding 2.4°C, even if the rise in emission 'peaks' by 2015. The developed countries would take the responsibilities of mitigation while a LDC country like Bangladesh who emits one fifth of one percent of global CO₂, has no mere responsibilities in mitigation. In this Bangladesh has to raise its voice in international community to keep pressure on the developed countries as well as the newly industrialized countries for initiating mitigation process. Adaptation is also very important too. For developing countries like Bangladesh, adaptation is a must measure to fight climate change enhanced vulnerabilities of poor.

Bangladesh has to present a robust estimate of how much is needed for her adaptation at present and in future. The climate change action plans developed at the lowest tier of government machineries participated and formulated initially by the affected communities should be basis of this calculation. It also has to count how many years Bangladesh in planning for, and by the time how much its financial state might change. For example, by 2030 Bangladesh is going to declared a middle income nation, which might change many of the well being indicators and uphold the standard of living, which eventually might need additional financing.

Bangladesh is on a developing curve while the effects of climate change might incur severe damage to its strides. Bangladesh has to make its position strong to the global communities for repaying her loss which should be calculated on the basis of a combination of monetary analysis, time loss and opportunity cost.

Bangladesh should also look forward to Technology Transfer (TT). Present experience demonstrates a lack of capacity of Bangladesh as a country to grab the opportunities of TT mechanisms like Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Lack of updated information and ensuring of climate change awareness in all level only can bring Bangladesh the capacity to grab the opportunities remaining in TT that are already well used by India and China. Learning from these two big countries also could be of immense help for the country.

Policy formulation process

The complementarily of current policy regime in relation to adapting to climate change should be analyzed in order to define which aspects of adaptation are already in place. This would not only advance national (also regional and local) development processes, but also would reduce vulnerability of people to climate change. The work load in this respect might be significantly reduced if there is a separate national adaptation policyz. Implementation of the NAPA is necessary in this course.

The analysis of current policies, that would identify the current policy gaps, should create the channel of adopting new policies. These new policies should be based on the participatory mechanism and developed at the community level and run under community stewardship. Since climate change would affect the poor the most, adjusting poverty alleviation policies and programmes to accommodate the increasing needs of adaptation in Bangladesh is a must.



Photo: Paul James Gomes

Formulated policies of climate change should cover all aspects including: adaptation finance, TT, development planning etc. The policy must be livelihoods driven as climate change will affect people's livelihoods. Therefore the action plan and implementation of climate change policies should concur with people's opinion who the most affected or going to be most affected. The policies formulated also should be flexible over time and over space, as

Bangladesh, despite of a small country show huge variation in ecological characters and being a developing country demonstrates changing situation over short period of time. Therefore temporal and spatial adjustment of policy and the process of adjustment should also be in the policy formulation agenda.

Institutionalization of climate change

As mentioned earlier, a micro-level climate change risk reduction plan should be developed by the communities, i.e., bottom most tiers of the local level government and the vulnerable communities that already are and would be the most vulnerable to climate change effects. The process should initiate local level action ensuring the participation of grassroots people, NGOs, civil societies, academic and research institutes etc.

Raising awareness among all level has been proves as an effecting tool to supplement the community movement to adapt with climate change. In order to create general awareness among general stakeholders and allow everyone in a community to respond in her/his own way, it appears extremely important to inform every member of a community in a vulnerable area. Forecasting, information dissemination etc should therefore be a part of the climate change adaptation policy from Bangladesh supported by

a good amount of allowance for financing such activities.

It has been marked out in several literatures that the level of awareness on climate change is rather low and inadequate in Bangladesh though it is a prerequisite for good adaptation. The information like expected change in a particular location, expected impacts, possible ways to deal with the changes might occur can improve a community's response to climate change and enhance its activities to develop resilience. Therefore raising awareness on climate change issues must be of top priority in all action plan and policy formulated for Bangladesh. Specific issues of awareness raising like usage of media, community movements, fairs etc. should be developed from the community level and encouraged by the government.

Stakeholders at various levels with different responsibilities and mandates might be properly oriented to conceptual and multi-faceted issues such as sustainable development, globalization, gender etc. as without it might not be possible for them to analyze risks and challenges associated with development processes in relation to above mentioned issues. It is therefore necessary to provide orientation training for the professionals, especially those designing and carrying out development activities at the grass-roots.

Skill development trainings should be mandatory for key professionals, especially those designing small to large-scale development projects and developing plans on behalf of their respective Ministries/Divisions/Directorates/Departments. The planning people at the local through to central levels of the relevant government agencies need to be oriented and trained on climate risk management. Having proper training, it is expected that the professionals will be able to appreciate and conduct participatory climate risk assessments with communities at all levels and develop risk reduction action plans as necessary. Capacity enhancing training involves hands on sessions on participatory planning, sustainable development, and interpretation of climatic risk reduction into concrete enabling activities.

The policy of livelihoods development

A community centered approach should be taken to develop policies which should address development as well. Which means adaptation should be integrated into development planning process to ensure that adaptation needs are incorporated across sectoral plans, mainstreamed into national and local strategies, and backed up with the budgets needed. "Poor people also have right to development" should be basis of the national policy formulation of Bangladesh where climate change issues should be incorporated.

The policy action plan should also promote appropriate technologies such as resilient crop varieties, irrigation schemes, and renewable energy sources, so that they are available and affordable for low-income communities of Bangladesh. Also an action plan of shielding communities

financially though different activities i.e., social-protection scheme, guaranty of employments etc. should be formulated with the participation of affected people. Protection of existing infrastructure and introduction of ecological management is also of outmost importance.

Demonstrated good practices at vulnerable community levels, state levels and global level should be implemented and replicated for other regions of the country. Because of many social drawbacks, there can be different adaptive measures/practices in different parts of a country. Many of such adaptive measures/practices could be replicated elsewhere within the country, even outside the country where similar vulnerability exists. It is therefore necessary to investigate current and past adaptive responses and



Photo: Reza

copying strategies of various vulnerable groups to climate-related risks and initiate demonstration of good practices for wider acceptance and replication.

Financing mechanism

It's been believed by the economists that climate change is the greatest market failure of the history of mankind. Climate is natural, therefore a common property. For this reason, climate change related economic does not follow the prevailing market mechanism. Therefore, it should be understood that, the rich countries which are polluting should start paying for adaptation for the LDC and also start paying for mitigation within their countries. Bangladesh should make its position clear in favor of this logic in all negotiations and raise its voice.

Additional finance for adaptation must not come out of existing aid commitments. Development is essential to enable poor people to adapt successfully, but it is still hugely under-funded: donors must live up to the commitment of providing 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in order to eradicate poverty. Adaptation finance cannot be rebranded or diverted from aid commitments, and must be reported systematically and transparently. In line with the 'polluter pays' principle, it is owed not as *aid* from rich country to poor country, but as *compensatory finance* from high-emissions countries to those most vulnerable to the impacts. There are many innovative mechanisms for raising this finance independently from aid, which deserve full consideration.

Often normal development activities are mixed up with adap-

tation activities. It should be remembered that money is given to Bangladesh for damages inflicted on the country. Therefore it is compensation and based on the principle that it never can be loan. Loans may be acceptable for normal development activities. But in a world of climate change, many of the "normal" activities at the time climate change in future will have to be climate-resilient to be of practical use and would thus be "adaptation" in today's language. Such activities should therefore be also candidates for grants, not loans. In any case, this means that in future, a fine balance may have to be kept between loan and grant as they apply to "normal" development activities in the future with climate change.

It should be well understood that the adaptation funding that is generated every year globally is not adequate, in fact far less than it is needed. Bangladesh government has taken a positive step in internal resource mobilization, as a moderate fund on climate change adaptation has already been created (see above). Now Annex I countries and multina-



Photo: Paul James Comes

tional donors have committed to support adaptation financing worldwide. Bangladesh also has the opportunity to ensure a funding. A very careful technical and economic analysis needs to be made in this case. Bangladesh must be able to carefully analyze and take decision regarding each proposal. She has to make sure that these funding support her normal development activities as well as special preparation of adapting climate change.

There exist a few inter-sectoral policy conflicts, which might be counterproductive towards implementing adaptation and financing mechanism. It is recommended to establish an appropriate institutional regime, supplemented by the creation of a policy and regulatory regime. It is also recommended that the proposed Climate Change Policy should be housed and implemented under a supra-ministerial institutional platform, in order to facilitate its smooth functioning and to avoid unnecessary confusion. The proposed institution must be adequately empowered so that it can operate in cooperation with other relevant sectoral ministries. To facilitate its functions, it may invite designated ministerial focal points to ensure coordination and cooperation among relevant line ministries.

A coordinated and synergistic development approach to form

such a clear climate change policy based on the issues described earlier is much needed. As experienced in Bangladesh, lack of coordination among developing agencies and stakeholders often counteract adaptation processes and leads to unnecessary tension between institutions and actors. The already inadequate financing we have cannot be dealt in such uncertainties, as this may vanquish the opportunity of development though the financing available. Both horizontal and vertical coordination need to be ensured among institutions and actors (even groups) working at various levels and tiers. The most intriguing question at this point is, who would mainstream climate risk management (in all development sectors and agencies) and which organization should be given the responsibility to coordinate all the activities and practices involving both development and adaptation (climate risk reduction)? How the government would manage the financial flow and who would manage it?

For better harmonization and condition among the development partners, development of a partnership is a priority concern. This partnership should share a common long-term view of climate change given that they provided with adequate information. The role playing of institution is also an important mechanism for both government and non-government level. A National Focal Point, based on the Prime Minister's Office could coordinate with experts advisory group while decision making. In fact this national focal point might provide the national coordination, harmonization and alignment in climate change programs throughout the country. This national focal point might be an expert of climate change adaptation and financing, supplemented by the advisory group of course. This focal point may be the head of a national climate change board with thematic leaders on climate change coordinating the development agencies on respective thematic issues. Therefore Bangladesh would sense a national ownership of the all climate change effects annihilation related activities.

From the perspective of Bangladesh, it is important to ensure two things: First, any targets that are adopted universally combine both climate and development objectives; and second, that the Bangladesh becomes an advocate for both goals rather than being relegated to the sole and exclusive advocacy of developmental goals. a continued engagement in negotiations and development of scientific background for adaptation should be recognized as activities which would eventually facilitate institutional adaptation in the long run. Negotiating team should be backed up by latest science and information on country-wide impacts.

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