



Bridging Climate Action and Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh

Climate change can hinder the achievement of SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduce a holistic and integrated framework that spans across social, economic and environmental dimensions. While the 17 goals with 169 targets range from tackling poverty to creating meaningful global partnerships – which are all equally important issues – the goals need to be prioritised according to country-specific needs.

Goal 13 is specifically assigned for climate change – “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts,” climate change is a cross-cutting issue and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggests that the impacts of climate change can potentially affect all of the SDGs.

This is particularly true in the context of Bangladesh – a country that has repeatedly been cited as one of the most climate-vulnerable nations. In Bangladesh, some of the changes induced by climate change include rise in the sea level, intensified natural disasters, degraded natural resources and displacement of its population. The aftermath of these impacts spread across most social, economic and environmental sectors making it intrinsically linked to the achievement of all the other SDGs.

Illustrated below are some of the areas where climate change connects with the other SDGs in Bangladesh.



Climate variability could cause reduction of long-term rice production by 7.4 per cent per year over the years 2005 to 2050.

A net loss amounting to USD 26 million in agriculture GDP (gross domestic product) over the same period.



Lower crop yields could result in at least 15 per cent net increase in poverty.

Climate change can trigger displacement, forcing people to move to urban slums and end up in poverty traps.



Climatic disasters (e.g. floods, cyclones) are often followed by water stress and waterborne diseases.

Victims who survive such disasters suffer mental trauma.



Damaged roads and infrastructures force children to drop out of schools.

Cyclone Sidr destroyed 74 primary schools and damaged another 8,817. An estimated 103,664 children were affected by this loss.



- Women remain more vulnerable to climatic disasters. For example, death ratio between women and men in cyclone Sidr was 5:1.
- Climate change will affect natural resources and rural women are usually in charge of going the extra distance for collecting resources for the household.



- Salinity intrusion in the coastal area impacts access to freshwater. Disasters also destroy existing drinking water and sanitation facilities.



- Energy is essential for development. Exploiting fossil fuels for energy will release greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, which will contribute towards climate change.



- Bangladesh is highly dependent on agriculture and fisheries, loss in these sectors results in overall GDP loss.
- Salinity intrusion threatens the jobs of agriculture labourers as well as the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.



- Innovations such as renewable energy solutions could be major tools for mitigating climate change.



- Climate change will disproportionately affect marginal groups, making their situation worse, and increasing inequality within the citizens of Bangladesh.



- Migrants who move to cities will exert stress on urban infrastructure and services. Also climatic situations such as heavy rainfall and heatwaves will affect urban systems.



- Bangladesh is growing economically, which means increased industrialisation. This will result in extensive use of fossil fuels and will lead to environmental degradation.



- As the sea surface temperature rises due to climate change, the composition of the water bodies in Bangladesh will see changes and lead to loss of species.
- Salinity intrusion will impact both fresh water and marine fisheries.



- Sundarbans – the largest mangrove forest in the world is a natural carbon dioxide sink. It also serves as a natural barrier to tropical storms. Sundarban-based ecosystem services will be impacted by climate change.



- By building effective, inclusive and accountable institutions at all levels, it will be possible to establish good governance within various institutions in Bangladesh. A study conducted by Bhuiyan (2015)¹ denoted the lack of good governance as one of the key barriers for climate adaptation.

¹ Bhuiyan, S. (2015) Adapting to climate change in Bangladesh: Good governance barriers. *South Asia Research*. 35 (3). pp. 349–367.

The Paris Agreement and the SDGs: Connecting the dots

On a global scale, it is important to acknowledge that climate change and sustainable development agendas are no longer parallel streams of actions. They are both fundamental for building a low-carbon and climate-resilient sustainable future. As such, international and regional cooperation is essential to connect the two agendas in order to accelerate holistic development in the future.

UNFCCC states that the Conference of Parties (COP) shall:

“seek and utilize, where appropriate, the services and cooperation of, and information provided by, competent international organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies”

At a national level, coordinating might be a challenge since the different agendas will fall under separate ministries and institutions. Countries should design an integrated approach during the planning, budgetary and monitoring processes. In Bangladesh the Planning Commission under the Government of Bangladesh has developed a document that maps all the SDGs and their respective targets under different government ministries, to ensure that ministries in charge can initiate actions necessary to fulfill the targets, and in situations of overlap, ministries can coordinate amongst themselves to reach decisions that are mutually beneficial.

Implementing the SDGs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) simultaneously can ensure maximum utilisation of the scarce resources, catalyse technology development, and enhance capacities and skills. It is also important to note that improved governance and a transparency framework to ensure accountability when allocating funds for both agendas will allow better utilisation of resources.

Key messages: Steps towards a sustainable future

1. Improved understanding and awareness

The quality of scientific research surrounding this subject matter needs to be enhanced, which will require an increase in resource allocation for both public and private sectors. More investment is essential to improve the data availability situation. The education sector needs to be enriched with materials that will ensure awareness amongst the youth. The system should include separate modules focused on environment issues from a primary level.

2. Policy integration

The issue of ‘loss and damage’ is a new, yet extremely important concept for Bangladesh. It deals with circumstances when both mitigation and adaptation have failed to prevent climate-induced incidents from causing losses and damages. It is important to enhance understanding of climate policies on a global scale and utilise this knowledge to develop more inclusive and climate-sensitive national plans and policies. Climate change must be integrated into the institutional mechanisms.

3. Capacity building

Finance, innovation and partnership are the three key areas that need to be enhanced in implementing the SDG 13. NGO mapping is another major task to be undertaken to allocate resources efficiently and formulate partnerships for better implementation of actions to achieve the SDGs.

About the Event

A seminar titled “Understanding Climate Change from SDG Perspective” was jointly organised by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh on 22 May 2017, at the Bronze Room of The Westin Dhaka. Dr Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary), General Economics Division, Planning Commission was present as the Chief Guest at the event. Dr Saleemul Huq, Director, ICCCAD made the keynote presentation; where Dr Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University; Ms Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation and Core Group Member of the SDG Platform; and Dr A Atiq Rahman, Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) were the Panel Discussants. The session was chaired by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Convenor, Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

Citizen’s Platform Briefs

Citizen’s Platform Brief 1: টেকসই উন্নয়ন অভীষ্ট অর্জনে সুশাসন ও গণতন্ত্র মূল চাবিকাঠি

Citizen’s Platform Brief 2: টেকসই উন্নয়নে বেসরকারি খাতের অংশগ্রহণ জরুরি

Citizen’s Platform Brief 3: SDG Priorities for Bangladesh

Citizen’s Platform Brief 4: CSOs in SDG Implementation in Bangladesh

Citizen’s Platform Brief 5: Aligning SDG 4 and 7th Five Year Plan in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges

About the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

The **Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh** is a civil society initiative, taken at the national front, to contribute to the implementation of globally adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Platform was formally launched in June 2016, at the initiative of a group of individuals; the objective has been to track the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh and enhance accountability in its implementation process. The concept of the Platform was inspired by the participatory and multi-stakeholder approach promoted as a vital element for success in the attainment of all the SDGs. The Platform currently includes 63 Partner Organisations working on SDG issues across the country.



www.bdplatform4sdgs.net



BDPlatform4SDGs



BDPlatform4SDGs

সচিবালয়: সেন্টার ফর পলিসি ডায়ালগ (সিপিডি), ঢাকা

ফোন: (+৮৮ ০২) ৯১৪১৭৩৪, ৯১৪১৭০৩, ৯১২৬৪০২ ওয়েব: www.bdplatform4sdgs.net ই-মেইল: bdplatform4sdgs@gmail.com

Secretariat at: **Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka**

Telephone: (+88 02) 9141734, 9141703, 9126402 Web: www.bdplatform4sdgs.net E-mail: bdplatform4sdgs@gmail.com