

Bangladesh need of a comprehensive climate defense strategy
paper with political ownership

**Funding must be within existing channel,
within the frame of justice and reparation
and without any involvement of IFIs.**

1. Introduction

There was a climate change conference during March 2008 in Dhaka with the auspicious of UK government / DFID, which was participated by local stakeholders and different donor's representatives. Donor representatives has expressed in that meeting that they are going to create a multi donor trust fund in this regard. In this relation, it was decided to organize another one conference on 10th September in London to decide strategies and to form that multi trust fund. Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has prepared paper titled "Climate Change Strategy and Action for Bangladesh" for presentation in the conference. During May the draft paper shared with limited civil society members through a workshop, later it was supposed to publish in final form in the website of ministry of environment, but it was not.

EquityBD (Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh) feels that climate change impact is like a life and death situation for the people of Bangladesh. As according to the World Bank report there will be one third area of the country will be submerged under water and there will be 22 millions of people will be environment refugee. And there will be increase level of natural disasters like cyclone and floods, substantial level of decrease in crop production and increase level impacts el of health hazards too. Situation in the ground already indicating those catastrophes. This has been already jeopardizing life and livelihoods. Taking this in view equitybd tries to draw attentions especially in international level on the issue and draw positions within the frame work of equity, justice, human right and from the perspective of poor people of the country, tries to voice heard in different international events in cooperation with other regional and international campaign groups. The materials are available in the website www.equitybd.org. As continuation of the process equity first giving a critical analysis of the paper and then placing some specific demands in relation to this London conference.

2. The presentation was bias to consultancy and physical infrastructure and prepared in a little transparent and participatory process.

There was a paper title "Climate Change Strategy and Action for Bangladesh" prepared by government circulated during July 2008 and share the paper with NGOs and CSOs during the month in a session. It was said in the meeting that, the paper will be finalized based on the comments from the session, and final version will be published in web site of ministry of environment, but up to date it has not been published in neither any website nor in other medium. The paper should have been prepared in participatory way, at least in transparent way, so that general public could have a scope to participate and at least have been able to know what government is going to present.

In the section food security, poverty and health, there are no mention of the fact that if the government is going for boosting food production, then there are chances of industrialization and commercialization of agriculture, which has every chances of land alienation of small farmers, and dependency of farmers for inputs especially of seeds on companies, which will create more pauperization, government must tell strategies on how to minimize those impacts. In respect of health, there was no mention of the fact that by 2016 GoB has to go for IPR (intellectual property rights) regimes, it means companies and people have to pay royalties to companies especially to international companies, price of medicines will be arisen, government must outline the plan on how to tackle those situations.

In respect of disaster management revise approach of risk reduction has to be taken, as frequencies of disasters will increase, people's has to live with disaster, then the component has to be integrated in all activities, need to go for more on community based sustainable program rather than having institution support based programs (e.g., it is already raised an issue is that, instead of creating cyclone shelter which need maintenance cost, it is best to help coastal people to make their house as disaster proof, small two story building, so that there will be no need of institutional support to maintenance, moreover people are reluctant to go to the cyclone shelter as there is lack of conducive condition for females and older people, if there are cyclone proof small housing with families, then other families will feel interest to go there). Moreover there is a need of massive forestation in coastal area, which has to be community participatory rather than of an ownership of forest department. Now it is the challenge on re-orientation of the approach and its integration in all the development aspects, such indications are absent.

In third and four pillar, in infrastructure, research a knowledge management; it seems the report has given highest importance on these. Out of past experiences in the name of climate defense off course there is a need of embankment like infrastructure building, but climate defense is not only infrastructure building. Out of experiences from past development initiatives, there are always biasness of some government departments to do more constructions, and some time politicians gives importance to these too, as they gets corruption money. We are afraid that out of this climate strategy, some corrupted departments are again taking their unholy opportunities doing physical infrastructure without community participation and its impact in view of political sociology. The nation does not like to see another one flood action plan, on which people has benefited little although there are a lot of consultants who has got jobs and has been benefited.

In fifth pillar, government mentioned that it will follow mitigation and low carbon development, on which we do not agree, as according to the principles of right to development, Bangladesh has the full right to follow the development / industrial development taking the path of carbon emission. It does not mean that, Bangladesh will follow high carbon emitting technology, but to reduce poverty and to create employment Bangladesh still deserve the path of industrial development off course which should be appropriate. This is an unnecessary section, government has mentioned, might be to please donors. It should be noted a Bangladeshi emit only 0.02 tons of carbon per year while a US citizen emits annually 20 tons, a citizen of advance developing country like China, India emits annually around 10 tons of carbon.

The six pillars has mentioned about capacity building and institutional strengthening. There was no doubt on need of these, but this is to take the approach of total "reorientation and integration".

Like all those section, the indications which has given without any details, we found it was not so explicit that it is not the business as usual and a total “paradigm shift” in “reorientation and integration”, we fee this is indispensable. If a wider participatory approach could have been followed, might be paving the paper in this direction.

3. We have logical worries, that there might be trust fund where IFIs (international financial institutions) might be involved. Which we oppose.

In Bali UNFCCC conference (December 2007) it was agreed by all parties that there will be adaptation fund under the UN where in board, balance representation were agreed. But after that, World Bank (WB) has created a separate fund, G 8 Japan summit has expressed wish to support and strengthen this initiative WB climate fund. We oppose this initiative, as these is the IFIs, i.e., WB, IMF and Asian Development Bank (ADB)s who imposes policy conditionality which are responsible for climate catastrophic and pauperization in our countries, moreover still those IFIs investing in extraction industries, who are responsible for major carbon emissions too.

We heard that, there will be representation from those institutions in the conference; we apprehend that those institutions will be picked in the fund management; we vehemently oppose involvement of those IFIs on the fund management. As from the past experience, we believe that those IFIs will put neo liberal conditionality which is the major cause of pauperization and climate catastrophic in our countries.

We heard that, the paper has been drafted by the consultant who is occasionally involved with those IFIs for different consultancy work, so we believe that naturally they are not free from the interest of those IFIs.

4. Our specific demands : a comprehensive strategy with political ownership, funding through existing channel, no to the involvement of World Bank, immigration of environmental refugees have to be discussed and all climate funding have to based on polluter / exploiter pay principles.

So taking these in above we have following specific demands;

- (i) **A comprehensive climate defense strategy must with country political ownership.** GoB should prepare a comprehensive climate change strategy and action plan must be in a transparent and participatory way, especially with the participation from political level. The process has to be given importance as it will develop commitment and proper understanding of all the stakeholders on the issue. This should not be a mere matter of a single ministry, country top political post should give importance on this, as the climate defense activity need integration in all spheres of development activities.
- (ii) **First compensate the cyclone SIDR damages.** After SIDR cyclone (November 2007) there was a joint donor and government assessment, who asses \$ 3 billions damages from the cyclones. Donors should commit the assistance first, as still there is hue and cry in the affected area, people living under open sky, livelihood of the affected people yet to be restored. A un official assessment found that, so far government has received around \$ 600

millions assistance in this regard which in fact a little to recover the total damages.

- (iii) **No to separate body, fund through existing government and non government channel. No involvement of WB in the funding management.** We oppose any formation of separate body to manage this climate funding, as we are afraid that the structure will create beaurucrazy and there are chances of members to put conditionality in funding, as we have already expressed apprehension that IFIs, especially World Bank might join in the fund and thereby in the body. We propose to provide the money in existing government and non government channel, so that there will not be any extra bureaucracy.
- (iv) **Agenda on immigration of environmental refugee should be in the table.** We also propose to discuss the immigration issue of environmental refugees, as we see that in near future, Bangladesh hardly be able to accommodate all those displaced people. This could be within the framework of WTO Doha development mode 4, i.e., movement of natural person.
- (v) **Assistance must be within the frame of justice and reparation.** We propose the assistance has to be considered within the frame for justice and reparation, in taking the principles of polluter / exploiter pay principle. It should be considered as additional money of already committed GNI 0.7 % as assistance from developed countries. In any way there should not be any loan component in the funding.

Bengali version of the paper has been presented in a press conference in Dhaka dated 4th September 2008.

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