

Recommendations of the Hearing Panel



Regional Climate Poverty Hearing Coastal Region of Bangladesh

14 November 2009, Saturday
Shaheed Hadis Park, Khulna, Bangladesh

Coastal Area Campaign Group
Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL)

Climate Poverty Hearing
Coastal Region of Bangladesh

Date & Time
November 14, 2009 Saturday
3:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Venue
Shaheed Hadis Park
Khulna, Bangladesh

Conducted by
Gouranga Nandy
Bureau Correspondent
Daily Kaler Kantha

Interpretation
Hasan Mehedi
Humanitywatch
Mohammad Alam Shumon
Oxfram Bangladesh Team

Organized by
Uttaran
Khulna, Bangladesh

Supported by
Coastal Campaign Group
Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL)

Declaration of the Recommendations

After listening to the testimonies of people from different areas, who are experiencing the impacts of climate Change of the Coastal Region of Bangladesh, we, the Hearing Panel members, Economist and Columnist Professor Anowarul Kadir, Politician and Environmentalist Advocate Feroz Ahmed, Khulna University Professor Manirul Islam, Khulna Press Club President AK Hiru and Lawyer and Humanist Advocate Syeda Sabiha, are declaring the recommendations of this Climate Hearing organized at Shaheed Hadis Park, Khulna by



the Coastal Area Campaign Group of Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) today on Saturday, 14 November, 2009.

Sharbanu Khatun from Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira District, Amir Hossain from Taltoli Upazila of Barguna District, Murshida Khatun from Koyra Upazila of Khulna District, Chittaranjan Roy from Dacope Upazila Khulna District and Robin Munda from Indigenous Munda Communities have given their testimonies in front of thousands people including civil society representatives, local government representatives, journalists, politicians and policy maker. Honourable mayor of Khulna City Corporation Talukdar Abdul Khaleque and Member of Parliament Nazrul Islam Manju were also present.

The hearing panel is convinced about the adverse effects of climate change on the lives and livelihood of ordinary people of coastal region. All climate witnesses testified following facts :

1. The Coastal region of Bangladesh is formed by 13 districts namely Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar, encompassing three agro-ecological zones.
2. In terms of natural resources and economic wealth, this It one of the richest regions of Bangladesh. Most of the fish and a large portion of food consumed in the country is produced in this region. Along with world's longest sea beach, the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world is situated in this region.
3. More than 40 million people live in this region. A large portion of them are farmer, sea-going fishermen, forest people, indigenous community members and day labourers who are mostly dependant on the weather and natural resources;
4. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries of the world affected by the impacts of climate change. Due to geophysical characteristics, coastal region of Bangladesh is more vulnerable than other regions;
5. According to the statement of the testimony givers, frequent depression in the sea, storm, cyclone, storm and tidal surges including recent Sidr and Aila devastated the lives and livelihoods of coastal people especially the fishing folks and the people dependent on the forest. They have lost their traditional livelihoods for depletion of the largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans;
6. Severe scarcity of fresh drinking water has become a daily difficulty for people due to increasing saline intrusion. Sea level rising caused the expansion water logged areas, collapsing embankments and flooding of cultivable lands

turning the area into barren land. Thousands of people become Climate Refugee and forced to migrate in nearby cities and in the neighbouring countries illegally;

7. Seasonal change and irregular precipitation hampered the agricultural production seriously, causing intense food crisis and destroying any progress in the essential sectors of human development such as education and health; and
8. Unplanned infrastructure, unethical shrimp farming and unwise development initiatives of the state under suggestion and assistance of international financial institutions (IFIs) and donor countries and lack of embankment management contributed to increased risk to live and livelihood of the people in the region.

We are also convinced that,

1. Profit driven production and marketing, unplanned industrialization, unhealthy food habit and overall excessive uses of fossil fuel by the developed countries are the major causes of greenhouse gases emission in the atmosphere which is beyond the capacity of the earth;
2. Excessive emission of greenhouse gasses is the major cause of climate change and the developed countries have significant liabilities and responsibilities for adverse affect of climate change. The developed countries should bare these responsibilities both legally and ethically;
3. The people of Bangladesh, especially people from the coastal areas have been leading a zero-carbon or carbon negative life, rather than emission of excessive greenhouse gasses.; and
4. We, the panel members, have decided that these affected population have the rights to complain and accused the developed countries for these sufferings;

From the testimonies presented to us, we, the panel members of this Climate Hearing, strongly urge the authorities, nationally and internationally, to implement the following recommendations:

1. Necessary measures of the developed and industrialised countries to reduce excessive emission of greenhouse gasses to a tolerable rate; which are highly responsible for climate change,
2. Immediate actions of the developed countries for compensating the affected people of coastal people of Bangladesh for their livelihoods already have been damaged and will be affected in near future. It must be classified as Compensation, not loan or grant;
3. Allowing the Climate Refugees as legal migrants to developed countries as their localities are destroyed by adverse climate events and become unfit for living;
4. Prohibiting involvement of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the Climate Change related funds;
5. Free transfer of environment-friendly sustainable industrial and agricultural technologies to Bangladesh for empowering the poor people to adapt with climate change. Aggression of Transnational Companies (TNCs) capital in the name of sustainable agriculture and environment-friendly technology might be protested; and
6. Commitment of reducing carbon emission and compensation might not be progressive, but mandatory and legally applicable.

We also recommend for:

7. Immediate reconstruction of the collapsed embankments of coastal districts namely Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola and Noakhali so that

the cyclone Aila affected people can go back to their home;

8. Continuing food, drinking water and medical support and enhancing supports in agriculture and other formal-informal sectors of livelihoods to the cyclone Aila affected people to recover their normal lives and livelihoods;
9. Increasing the height of the embankments to protect intrusion of raised high-tide in the cultivable lands. Development of an Embankment Management Policy and its strict implementation is essential for lives and livelihoods of the coastal people;
10. Establishment of an autonomous body under supervision of Bangladesh government to collect, manage and implement Climate Change Adaptation Fund with active participation of representatives of civil society, non-government organizations and community representatives;
11. Shrimp farming should be regulated as well as a extra tax must be imposed on shrimp farming to recover from environmental degradation done to the area by this industry;
12. Exemplary penalty must be imposed on unauthorised cut, crossed pipe setting or any damage of the embankment, through amendment of the Embankment Protection Act of Pakistan regime;
13. Redesigning and reactivating the recently closed Coastal Development Board;
14. Evaluating the development initiatives and construction of high infrastructures under suggestion and assistance of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) or Multinational Companies (MNCs) before implementation;
15. Establishment of forest and indigenous peoples traditional rights on collection and management of Sundarbans

mangrove forests natural resources along with prohibiting trade base collection;

16. Allocation of special supports to the fishermen for risk reduction and rehabilitation;
17. Production and distribution of saline and natural calamity tolerant seeds for sustainable agriculture in coastal region inter alia protesting the Multinational Seed Companies aggression in the name of climate tolerant agriculture; and
18. Providing special support in essential services like education and health to the marginal farmer, day labour and industrial labour.

We are sure that the government of the poor countries like Bangladesh is unable to allocate enough financial supports to meet the recommendations. So, we, the Hearing Panel Members, call to the common people, civil society and the Government of Bangladesh to raise their voices to demand the needed compensation from developed countries and for a legally binding agreement. We urge the government to unite with other most vulnerable countries to ensure climate justice in upcoming COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

1. Chair Professor Anowarul Kadir
Economist and Columnist
2. Member Advocate Feroz Ahmed
Politician and Environmentalist
3. Member Professor Monirul Islam
Director, Students' Affaires, Khulna University
4. Member A K Hiru
President, Khulna Press Club
5. Member Advocate Syeda Sabiha
Lawyer and Humanist