

Bangladesh Economists' Forum

**Sustainable Development under Climate
Change and Environmental Stress from
Accelerated Growth**

(Background Paper)

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1. Bangladesh: Sustainable Development with Special Focus on Climate Change - Future Directions¹

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1.1. General

1.1.1. *Conceptualizing Sustaining Development*

Sustainable development invokes those issues concerning human societies and human activities, which can ultimately be specified in terms of two kinds of relationships—among human beings or among groups of human beings in economic, social, and other contexts on one hand and between human beings and environment on the other. Sustainable Development places human beings at the centre of the stage and is concerned with social, economic, and environmental sustainability within an integrated framework. Adjustments in economic policies must be introduced to promote inclusive, equitable economic growth. The intensifying climate change and increasing social disparity are fueling un-sustainability, and must be effectively addressed in promoting sustainable development. Development of human capability through appropriately designed and implemented education, training, healthcare, and organizing (access to credit, technology, other resources and services) programmes for the people to be able to address the issues in different areas effectively and purposefully is, thus, most vital in the context of planning and implementation of sustainable development which is necessarily people-centred.

Good governance (transparent, accountable, rule of law-based, efficient, coordinated), effective institutions (institutionalization of democracy at all levels of society, appropriate legal and regulatory systems, free and vibrant news media), social equity (both inter- and intra-generational), cultural imperatives, and participation are crucial considerations in the shaping of the sustainable development pathway. Indeed, sustainable development, at the heart of which are social cohesiveness and harmonious relationship among human beings and between them and the environment, is key to peace, security and stability, which in turn reinforces the sustainable development processes. This interacting symbiosis is a powerful force that needs to be harnessed effectively in both national and international spaces in the interest of an orderly progress for each nation—developed or developing—individually and for all nations collectively.

Schematically, the key elements of sustainable development may be shown in the Figure 1, in line with the definition of sustainable development provided in Agenda 21 adopted in Rio Earth Summit, 1992 and reiterated and elaborated in Rio+20 Earth Summit, 2012.

In the light of the concerns and imperatives underlying the relationships depicted in Figure 1, there is a need to formulate/change concepts and approaches to development such that the constructed/re-structured sustainable development pathway integrates economic, social, and

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environment issues and dimensions with due emphasis on adequate responses to intensifying climate change and increasing social inequality.

Sustainable development is capable of meeting the challenges of neo-liberal free market-based globalization, which has for the past several decades been the dominant paradigm defining the international and national systems. It is well known that the global financial meltdown starting in 2008 and the consequent global recession led to the return of the state's necessary enhanced role in economic management even in USA as has also been the case in UK and other developed countries. Sustainable development is, indeed, consistent with the country's cultural imperatives; and promotes social inclusion and puts justice and equity for all at the heart of economic, social and environmental/climate change processes of transformation.

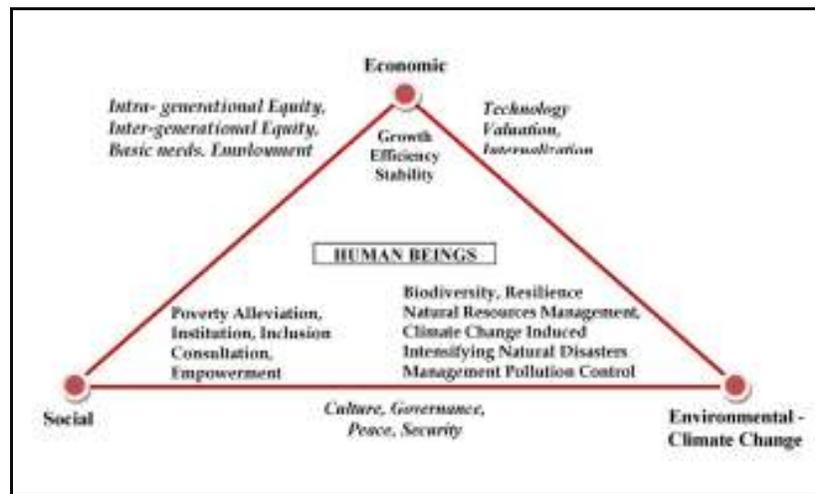


Figure 1. Schematic representation of key elements of sustainable development
(Such a figure is used by many with modifications here and there)

1.1.2. Rio Earth Summit 1992 and Rio+20 Earth Summit 2012

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during 3-14 June 1992. The Summit produced 5 documents; two conventions, a statement of principles, a major action agenda (Agenda 21) on worldwide sustainable development, and a declaration:

- One of the conventions is The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the mission of which is to stabilize greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and prevent potentially dangerous interferences with the climate system
- The other convention is the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that outlines what needs doing to protect and enhance biodiversity
- Agenda 21, which focuses on sustainable development and provides guidance for and encourages the development of national and global strategies, plans, policies and processes towards ensuring sustainable socio-economic and environmental development, centring around the human beings
- A Statement of Forest Principles that provides guidelines for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development outlines 27 agreed principles, with the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among states, key sectors of societies and people

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of the Rio Earth Summit and to monitor and report on implementation of the agreements reached therein at the local, national, regional and international levels. At the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 13-22 June 2012, it has been decided to establish a High Level Political Forum, which will in the course of time replace the CSD.

The Rio+20 conference sought to build on the outcomes of Rio 1992 and follow-up conferences and other related international conferences and actions and their results and produced an outcome document, *The Future We Want*, of which a key statement relating to sustainable development is as follows:

"We recognize that people are at the centre of sustainable development and in this regard we strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and we commit to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all." (para 6)

A major focus arising from the Rio+20 is the issue of 'Green Economy'. The original proposal of formulating 'green economy roadmap' was later abandoned, after protracted discussions and negotiations and replaced by 'Policies for Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication'.

In this context, "It is recognized that there is diversity of approaches, visions, models, and tools available to each country, given their national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development, within which greening of an economy would naturally feature under the environmental pillar" (para 56).

In Durban (CoP 18, November-December 2011), it was agreed that all countries of the world would negotiate a new binding climate treaty by 2015, which is expected to determine emission reduction targets, among other aspects, for each country on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities. Hence, the work on trying to bring about drastic reductions in GHG emissions through appropriate participation of all countries had been going on and not a great deal has perhaps been advanced by introducing the green economy concept in the Rio+20 outcome document. Yet it is a welcome reminder of a laudable goal. There must be country level policies and action towards greening the economy, but unless the worsening climate change is arrested and reversed through drastic reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions starting in the next few years, the developing countries, particularly the LDCs and SIDS will face increasing climate change impacts requiring them to keep adapting more and more in future. In that case, there will be little scope for and ability of these countries to attend to greening their economies, which essentially involves greenhouse gas emission reduction-focused actions.

1.2. Focus on Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, sustainable development is a policy goal. Integrated management of socio-economic and environmental/climate change issues is an accepted approach to pursuing sustainable development [see, for example, Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) and Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-2016)]. The details relating to integration may vary from sector to sector. It is, indeed, an involved exercise. But, it is essential to develop a framework and action plan for integrated action.

1.2.1. From Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

MDG achievements and shortfalls in Bangladesh: Many targets for 2015 under different MDGs have already been achieved, some others on track, and there are others which may not be achieved. Work is in progress in the country, at both official and people's levels, towards our contribution to the formulation of global Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda based on our experiences arising from the implementation of MDGs, the pursuit of development in general, and the expectations of people at large as well as by taking into consideration the experiences and development expectations of similar other countries.

We may simultaneously focus on developing a post-2015 agenda for Bangladesh, keeping the debates relating to the formulation of global Sustainable Development Agenda in perspective but also grounding our goals and targets on the national and external realities facing this country and, in that context, developing/strengthening our future policy directions relating to socio-economic development and environmental protection and enhancement. Vision 2021, the Six Five Year Plan, the Perspective Plan (2011-2021), and the BCCSAP are some of the exercises that have been carried out by the government, which may be built on.

In this paper, we intend to focus on climate change, recognizing that it belongs to the environmental pillar of sustainable development. Bangladesh is at the forefront of climate change impacts due to the following reasons:

- a) Geographical location and climatic reality
- b) A deltaic country with long coastal belt and low-lying areas inland, with mighty rivers subject to bank erosion as a consequence of strong flooding
- c) Very high density of population
- d) Widespread poverty
- e) Institutional weaknesses
- f) Human capability deficits
- g) Lack of effective local governance
- h) Resource constraints
- i) Lack of technological advancement

The impacts of intensifying climate change are manifesting through such events as changing and shifting pattern of rainfall, more frequent and devastating floods, increasingly severe and prolonged drought, high variability of temperature, more frequent and intense cyclones and storm surges, increasing sea level rise and the consequent salinity ingress, and increasing river erosion.

Agriculture is being destabilized as a consequence of climate change causing losses and damages to crops, adverse impact on crop productivity and adverse impact on fishery and

livestock, requiring forced changes in cropping patterns along with new approaches and crop varieties.

The impact of climate change is also causing climate change induced displacement of people, degradation of soil quality, and increasing incidents of water- and vector-borne and heat-related diseases. Indeed, the intensifying climate change impacts are a severe threat in relation to the country's food security, water security, energy security, livelihood security, health security, habitat security, infrastructural security, and human security (in terms of deaths and reduced future socio-economic prospects). The climate change impacts eventually lead to reduced flow of goods and services; increased poverty—increase in both incidence and depth; and worsening of income distribution leading to increased inequality, social tensions, pressure on development expenditure due to transfer of funds to relief and rehabilitation activities, and pressure on balance-of-payment.

1.2.2. National Climate Change Related Policy, Strategy and Action

Bangladesh's response to climate change is robust, despite various limitations. Actions are being pursued at two broad levels: within the country (at various levels from national to local) and at global level.

The government has a strong political will to face the challenges related to climate change. The following activities have been undertaken:

National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) on Climate Change was adopted in 2005 and updated in 2009.

Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) was adopted in July 2009. This has been developed keeping in perspective two basic principles: (i) integrated approach to socio-economic development and climate change management and (ii) adoption of low carbon development pathway. The latter requires international support in terms of finances and technology transfer and also in relation to capacity enhancement. The Action Plan is built around six thematic pillars and 44 programmes under those pillars. The BCCSAP has in fact outlined a ten-year programme aimed at enhancing the capacity and resilience of the country to meet the challenges of climate change. Bangladesh is the first developing country to have prepared such a document. Time has come, however, to revisit it for the purpose of updating and strengthening it as new knowledge, experiences and ideas, nationally and internationally, have emerged since it was adopted.

Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), 2009: The BCCTF is resourced through national budgetary allocation. Over the past four years a significant amount of money has been put into the Fund: Tk. 2,500 crore (the equivalent of well over US\$300 million), a unique step among the developing countries. Up to now, about 100 projects are being implemented by various government ministries and agencies with funding support from BCCTF. A number of projects to be implemented by NGOs is expected to come on stream soon.

Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF), 2011: This Fund is based on contributions from development partners. So far about US\$170 million has been received. This Fund supports projects worth US\$15-25 million. As of now, one project (construction of cyclone shelters) is being implemented and four others are in advanced stages of finalization.

Vision 2021, the Sixth Five Year Plan and the Perspective Plan have given due importance to the challenges of climate change and to the urgent need for addressing climate change issues. The critical importance of mainstreaming climate change management related activities has also been recognized.

Various other related Policies and Acts are also in place, including: Disaster Management Act, 2012; Forest (Amendment) Act, 2012; Bangladesh Wildlife Conservation and Security Act, 2012; Forest Transit Rule, 2011; Ship-breaking and Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2010; National Plan for Disaster Management, 2010-2015; National 3R Strategy, 2010 (3Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle); Environment Courts (in all districts) Act, 2010; Revised National Conservation Act, 2010; Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2008; Deer Rearing Rules, 2008; National Coastal Zone Strategy, 2006; Integrated Coastal Zone Policy, 2005; National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2004; National Water Management Plan, 2004; National Water Policy, 1999; National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), 1995.

1.2.3. Institutions for Implementation of Climate Action

For implementation of climate action, there is, at the apex administrative and operational level, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) with its operational arm the Department of Environment (DoE). A Climate Change Unit has been established in MoEF, which is being converted into Bangladesh Climate Change Trust under the Ministry. Climate change focal points in all ministries have been established or are being established. Also, there is a vibrant civil society and many NGOs, which are engaged in awareness-raising and some climate action on the ground.

For policy guidance and national coordination, the National Environment Committee has been formed with the Prime Minister as chairperson and the National Steering Committee on Climate Change chaired by the Minister for Environment and Forest.

1.3. Global Negotiations

The responsibility of causing global climate change lies with the developed countries (Annex 1 countries). The worst suffers are LDCs, SIDS, and countries in Africa. Some of these countries including Bangladesh are extremely vulnerable, i.e. they are at the forefront of climate change impacts. At this point, let us refer to the UN Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Its work focuses on the science of climate change; impact, adaptation and vulnerability; and mitigation. It was established in 1988 by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO). So far four assessment outcomes have been published by the IPCC and these are:

- a) First Assessment Reports 1990
- b) Second Assessment Reports 1995
- c) Third Assessment Reports 2001
- d) Forth Assessment Reports 2007

Publication of the Fifth Assessment Reports is expected during 2013-15. The IPCC has brought into sharp focus the intensifying threat of climate change. The UNFCCC process also acknowledges that climate change is worsening and that the historical responsibility lies with the developed countries. In recent years, though, large and fast growing developing countries are also emitting large quantities of greenhouse gasses.

Global negotiations relating to climate change management are conducted within the framework of the UNFCCC, adopted, as mentioned earlier, in 1992 Earth Summit, which came into force in 1994 (after ratification by 58 Parties). The UNFCCC originally focused on mitigation to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. However, the scope of negotiations has since been widened to include vision-setting, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, capacity building (Bali Action Plan, CoP 13, 2009). The Parties to the Convention (now 195) meet annually, which is known as Conference of the Parties (CoP), and is the highest decision making body. It met for the first time in 1995 and has since been meeting every year during end November-early December. Some of the key institutional arrangements to carry forward the negotiations or implement actions, established in the CoP process, up to CoP 13 (2007) are:

- a) Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), established in CoP 1 in 1995, which respectively deal with relevant issues, as implied in their titles, aimed at clarifying the issues and generating consensus for moving forward under collective mandates
- b) Kyoto Protocol (established in CoP 3, 1997) to UNFCCC, which sets binding obligations on Annex-1 countries to reduce greenhouse gases with a view to stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions. The Protocol entered into force in 2005 after its ratification by its Parties fulfilling the stipulated conditions. The emission reduction targets set by the Protocol for the Annex-1 countries add up to an average of five per cent emission reduction compared to 1990 level over the five-year first compliance period, 2008-12.
- c) Adoption of flexible mechanisms (Emissions Trading, Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation) under Kyoto Protocol (CoP 6, 2000)
- d) Ad-hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) to ensure the implementation of Kyoto Protocol (CoP 11, 2005)
- e) Creation of Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Adaptation Fund (CoP 6, 2000)
- f) Ad-hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) for implementation of the Convention up to 2012 (Cop 17, 2011)
- g) AWG-LCA negotiated Bali Action Plan (CoP 13, 2007) to guide negotiations towards a legally binding Agreement to combat climate change. Since then, negotiations are on-going to find solutions to the issues under its various components and related matters.

Some important outcomes of CoPs since CoP 13 are as follow:

- a. Outcome of CoP 15, Copenhagen 2009: Copenhagen Accord
- b. Outcome of CoP 16, Cancun 2010: Cancun Agreements
- c. Outcome of CoP 17, Durban 2011: Key results achieved include the setting up of Ad-hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) to negotiate a legally binding treaty by 2015, involving all Parties of the CoP on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities, and agreement that Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Committee, and Technology Mechanism will be operational in 2012. There was no progress in respect of setting of mitigation ambitions.

Expectations from CoP 18:

Cop 18 will be held in Doha, Qatar during late November-early December 2012. Not a great deal is expected. One major expectation is the extension of the Kyoto Protocol for a second commitment period following the first commitment period that ends on 31 December 2012. It is also expected that AWG-KP and AWG-LCA will be closed, with the unfinished tasks of these two institutions transferred to ADP and/or to the Subsidiary Bodies, as appropriate. Other expectations relate to further strengthening and operationalization of the institutions established in Durban.

1.3.1. Bangladesh in International Climate Negotiations

Bangladesh is represented in the international climate negotiations by a strong negotiating team, which is coordinated by the present author. The voice of Bangladesh is acknowledged widely but being an LDC by itself it is not a big player. However, Bangladesh tries to work with other countries within the framework of G77 and LDCs and in consultation with other groups such as Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS), Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), and Cartagena Dialogue countries. Working with others, Bangladesh has been able to influence the process to an extent, at times in a major way, on issues crucial for Bangladesh and similar other countries. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through her international interventions on climate change has made a significant impact. In recognition of our efforts, Bangladesh has been elected to the following 5 important UNFCCC committees:

- a) Green Climate Fund
- b) Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Executive Board
- c) Adaptation Committee
- d) Compliance Committee
- e) Consultative Group of Experts

1.3.2. The future directions in the context of climate change management

Nationally

As indicated earlier, issues related to climate change management are generally known and how may we proceed is broadly understood. But, more research on less clear aspects remains important. Also, details of action programmes and priorities are not yet worked out in many respects, which should be accomplished on a priority basis. There are also deficits in relation to human capability as well as institutional capacity, access to finances and technologies, and effective coordination. These issues must be addressed in earnest, including mobilization of international financial, technological, and capacity enhancement support.

Internationally

Bangladesh must continue to work within the framework of the UNFCCC and other processes to influence international policies and actions, particularly to help ensure the interests of Bangladesh and other vulnerable countries in relation to, for example, access to funds, technologies, and capacity enhancement facilities. Also the pressure must be kept up, working with other countries and groups of countries with the same view, for drastic cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions such that global warming by end 2100 remains below 2°C compared to the pre-industrial level.

1.4 Sustainable Development

There are other issues in addition to climate change under the environmental pillar of sustainable development. These include environmental issues such as bio-diversity preservation and enhancement, saving rivers from being polluted, ensuring use of Environmental Treatment Plan (ETP) by polluting industries, protecting wetlands, and so on. Those need to be addressed as well. Appropriate policies and action on the other two pillars (namely, economic and social) of sustainable development, as indicated in the first part of this paper, must simultaneously be given due attention in an inclusive integrated and equitable framework involving all the three sustainable development pillars.

Published in a book titled.....by Planning Commission, GoB, in 2013, transcribed from a lecture delivered at the Planning Commission (with some updating) in October 2012.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad

Let me start with a brief historical overview, *albeit* in a selective manner, to put sustainable development in perspective. One may go back to industrial revolution that started in Britain around 1750. Other currently developed countries followed suit later. In this procession, the US joined much later. But the essential point is that the main focus of industrialization was on economic growth, fueled by coal as the starter and later also by petroleum. Development of railway revolutionized movement of goods and people. All these activities began emitting greenhouse gases (GHGs) in a major way. The GHG emissions accelerated as the industrialization expanded in terms of production and distribution of machinery, equipment, coal-fired heating, vehicles and planes, consumer durables such as refrigerators and air conditioners, etc. The danger that began to grow slowly but steadily in terms of concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere to cause global warming was not recognized early enough.

The rush was to create and own more and more wealth and acquire more and more income. But, obviously, the benefits in terms of wealth and income were captured by the promoters of industrialization, namely, the capitalists. A realization about the emerging environmental hazard eventually surfaced publicly at the UN Conference on Human Development (UNCHD), held in Stockholm in 1972. On the other hand, economic growth, with the consequent increasing GHG emissions and destruction of nature, received a further boost as the structural adjustment programmes were initiated in the 1970s assigning pre-eminent role to the private sector, aimed mainly at economic growth to be accelerated while the role of the state was to be minimized. The rule of neo-liberalism (i.e. reliance on unfettered free market forces and unchecked influence padding by the rich and powerful individuals) relating to both economic and governance spheres began in earnest and has been flourishing around the world ever since. Simultaneously, the GHG emissions have increased phenomenally. It has reached a record level of 400 PPM (parts per million) recently, while it was 280 PPM in pre-industrial times.

After UNCHD, the IUCN's World Conservation Strategy of 1980 further raised awareness related to growing environmental unsustainability of development. Indeed, as the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere and the consequent global warming increased, the likelihood of anthropogenic climate change (manifested in the shifting and changing patterns of rainfall, melting of ice and sea level rise, and more frequent and devastating extreme climatic events such as floods, cyclones, hurricanes, droughts, heat waves, river bank erosion, etc.) began to gather momentum. In response, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was constituted by the UN Secretary General in 1983 under the chairmanship of Gro Hurler Brundtland, a former Prime Minister of Norway. The Commission submitted its Report, *Our Common Future*, in 1987. It called for sustainable development defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. This definition particularly focuses attention on environmental protection and sustainability. The Report also argued that both growth and environmental protection can be pursued simultaneously through organizational and technological innovations, while previously it was thought that the two goals were contradictory and could not be pursued together.

Then came the Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development—UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This was a landmark international conference in relation to economic and social development and environmental protection. It produced five

important documents, which are: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, The Statement of Forest Principles, Agenda 21, Convention on Biodiversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and Convention to Combat Desertification. In essence, this conference addressed sustainability from the points of view of environmental protection, economic growth, and social development. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and forests have been recognized as important aspects of environmental protection; and principles, policies, and strategies were suggested for the purpose. The Declaration, in essence, called attention to a process of socio-economic development that is environmentally sound. The key goal of the UNFCCC was mitigation, i.e. reduction in the emission of GHGs, in order to arrest and reverse the process of global warming and climate change. Agenda 21 defined sustainable development in terms of an integrated approach to economic growth, social development, and environmental protection along with climate change management. Furthermore, the Agenda put the human being at the centre of this development process.

Alongside, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established in 1987, produced environmental and climate change assessment reports containing scientific evidence on climate change, its impacts, and mitigation: the first Assessment Reports in 1990, the second in 1995, the 3rd in 2001, the 4th in 2007, and the 5th being published in 2013-2014 (one of the three main reports is already out and the other two are expected soon). The three major Reports produced by each IPCC Assessment are titled: Science of Climate Change (Working Group-1); Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability (Working Group-2); and Mitigation of Climate Change (Working Group-3). The IPCC, in addition, produces special reports on specific issues as deemed necessary. These IPCC Reports have testified to the fact that climate change has been occurring and in fact worsening. Both natural and human systems are affected as a result of global climate change. In sum, the Earth has been warming, ice smelting, and sea-level rising; and natural disasters such as cyclones, hurricanes, floods, heat waves, and cold spells have been increasing in terms of both frequency and impacts. The Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC Working Group-I on the Science of Climate Change suggests that climate change has been evolving into an increasingly menacing threat to the global society and even the planet Earth itself.

The Earth Summit was in fact followed up under the auspices of UN Commission on Sustainable Development; Inter-Agency Commission on Sustainable Development; and a High Level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development. The follow-up activities including research, publications, and conferences have been mobilizing opinions in favour of sustainable development, involving all its three legs and the focus on human development.

In 1995, social issues received a focused attention in the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Also, a review of how the Rio process was progressing was made in a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in 1995. Furthermore, World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa to review the progress and develop a plan of further implementation based on the progress achieved since 1992 in respect of the decisions taken relating to the pursuit of sustainable development. Outcomes of the WSSD include a Plan of Implementation, emphasizing health issues; a Political Declaration; and a number of implementation partnerships and initiatives. These decisions constituted a boost to the ongoing work on sustainable development.

It may also be mentioned that there were two other important developments prior to the 2002 WSSD. One was the 1999 World Bank-IMF initiated process of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) to be prepared by the aid-receiving developing countries to be used as a basis for development assistance to be provided to those countries. Such a document obviously focused on the key aspects of poverty reduction, but the PRSPs prepared by many countries were of little avail for them in terms of receipt of expected foreign aid. On the other hand, poverty reduction was supposed to be achieved within the framework of neo-liberal market economy, which has been the ruling paradigm particularly since the mid-1970s. The structural adjustment programmes would continue, focusing on greater and greater role of the private sector with that of the government commensurately rolled back. Under the circumstances, government's ability to take action specifically to address poverty has been constrained.

On the heel of the PRSP came the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000, which in fact proposed a framework for human development to be underpinned by such fundamental principles as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. But the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were formulated and adopted as a follow-up of the Declaration were not anchored on the Declaration. In fact, the framework and the directions proposed in the Declaration were totally ignored. The MDGs were picked as a top-down prescription of eight goals and associated targets to be implemented by poor countries, with assistance from the global community. In fact, though, the goals were very clearly specified and so were the targets and indicators. Also, the number of goals was limited. Therefore, the MDG process caught the imagination of the governments, the civil society actors, and other stakeholders around the world. As a result, a number of key targets for 2015 including poverty reduction have been achieved globally and in various countries around the world.

But, the achievements have been uneven across countries. Some countries, particularly in Africa, have not achieved and are not likely to achieve most of the key targets under different goals; and some of them have, in fact, regressed in relation to such key targets as poverty and hunger reduction and social indicators including education, health, and child and maternal mortality. Also, it may be pointed out that the expected support from the international community has not come through for most of the countries embarked on the implementation of the MDGs. Even that during the period 2000-present, i.e. during the implementation period of the MDGs, the overall official development assistance (ODA) has tended to decline. This has happened despite the Monterrey Consensus (March 2002) of fulfilling the commitment made by the developed countries in 1970 to provide 0.7% of their GNPs as ODA to developing countries every year and, as agreed at the Third UN Conference on the LDCs, held in Brussels in May 2001, 0.15-0.20% to the LDCs. In fact, the overall ODA disbursement is still about 0.32% and much lower than the targeted proportion to the LDCs, although a few countries, Scandinavian and other European, have reached or exceeded the commitment level.

By and large, the particularly successful countries in respect of the major MDG targets, including Bangladesh, have done so essentially with their own resources and efforts. However, despite these successes, understandably, no progress has been achieved in these countries towards sustainable development simply because the MDGs have not been geared to that end.

The intensifying climate change in combination with growing international and national inequalities, mounting tensions and civil strife in many parts of the world, and increasing terrorism around the world has been pushing the world not only on to an unsustainable pathway but, in fact, on a potentially ruinous one. The scope of negotiations under UNFCCC was broadened in concrete terms in the 2007 Bali Conference of the Parties (CoP) to include, along with the original purpose of mitigation, such key dimensions as adaptation, transfer of technologies, financing, capacity building, and a vision particularly relating to a cap on global warming which has later been broadly agreed as well below 2°C by the end of this century compared to the pre-industrial levels. Also, there have been several important successes since the first CoP held in 1995 such as the adoption of Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (CoP 3) and Nairobi Work Programme in 2006 (CoP 12). The Kyoto Protocol required the Annex 1, i.e. developed countries including countries in transition, to cut their GHG emissions during 2008-2012 by 5% compared to the 1990 levels. With the USA remaining outside the Protocol, compliance by many other countries falling short, and some fast industrializing developing countries significantly increasing their GHG emissions, the total global emission has kept increasing fast. The Protocol has been extended into a second commitment period after its first commitment period expired in December 2012. But, while the USA was not in it in the first commitment period and also not in the second, Russia, Japan, Canada, and New Zealand are not participating in the second. The Annex-1 countries remaining in the Protocol now account for only 13 or 14% of the total annual global GHG emission. However, it is the only existing legally binding Protocol and the countries remaining in it can possibly show the way forward, although by themselves they cannot make a meaningful impact in terms of mitigation even if they undertake drastic emission cuts.

Some of the successes achieved since Bali relate to architecture building for financing and technology transfer as well as a decision relating to the preparation of National Adaptation Plans and the adoption of a Framework for Loss and Damage. However, these agreements are yet to be translated into concrete actions. On mitigation, the original only purpose of the UNFCCC, there has been little or no progress in terms of adequate commitments by the developed countries, which are historically responsible for the now raging anthropogenic climate change, in the context of keeping to the above mentioned vision of well below 2°C increase in global warming. In the meantime, not only LDCs, SIDS, and other climate vulnerable countries, which are not at all responsible for climate change, are facing increasing adverse impacts of worsening climate change, but such natural disasters as severe hurricanes, droughts, and floods are hitting the developed countries as well quite frequently.

In relation to forging a legally binding instrument or instrument with legal force, as agreed in Durban (CoP 17), to be signed by 2015, involving all the countries of the world and all aspects of climate change management mentioned above, the progress up to now is very limited. The target of achieving the goal of signing this envisioned agreement in 2015, it seems to me, may not be achieved; and, even if it is, it may not be bold enough in terms of emission cuts and, moreover, its implementation, as agreed, will not start until 2020. By then, it may be too late for arresting and reversing the accelerating global climate change and its increasing impacts. However, the negotiations are ongoing and one would look forward to 2015 for a breakthrough.

In the meantime, the Rio+20 Conference was held in June 2012, also in Rio de Janeiro where the 1992 Earth Summit was held. Here again, the three legs of sustainable development, namely, economic, social, and environmental issues have been reemphasized with the proviso once again that the human being is at the centre of development. This conference called for

the formulation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the post-2015 period. In this context, it has been suggested that, giving due emphasis on their own circumstances and realities on the ground, countries would pursue greening of their economies under the environmental pillar of an integrated sustainable development pathway.

The formulation of the post-2015 or post-MDG development pathway is now in the works. There are the Rio+20 follow-up and the UN system initiated activities to that end. In the context of the Rio+20 follow-up process, an Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development, consisting of a number of UN member countries, included on the basis of an agreed procedure, has been established. The OWG has been debating, in successive sessions, various aspects related to the contents and manner of arriving at a set of post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to recommend. The Report of OWG is expected around mid-2014.

The UN Secretary General has set up an institutional framework for the task including the following actors: UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, appointed in January 2012; A Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Post-2015 Development Agenda, appointed in June 2012; The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP), appointed in July 2012; and A mechanism for collating and reviewing the various inputs coming from different stakeholders, towards formulating a set of goals and associated targets and indicators for consideration by the UN Secretary General and finally by the UN General Assembly.

The HLP submitted its Report to the UN Secretary General on 30 May 2013: titled “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”, while the UN Task Team had submitted its Report in June 2012 before the Rio+20 Conference: titled “Realizing the Future We Want for All.” Both the Reports have proposed that the post-2015 goals and targets should be anchored on a narrative invoking fundamental principles in line with those proposed in the Millennium Declaration. The HLP Report has also proposed five fundamental shifts to centre around the themes: leave no one behind; put sustainable development at the core; transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and forge a new global partnership. It has also suggested 12 Goals covering various key aspects that need particular attention.

The UN Task Team Report has identified the major weaknesses and omissions in the MDG framework and proposed building on those deficiencies while addressing the new realities for formulating the post-2015 development agenda.

At the same time, as encouraged by the UN, member countries, civil society organizations, UN recognized major groups (children and youth, farmers, business and industry, indigenous peoples, local authorities, NGOs, scientific and technological community, women, workers and trade unions) and other stakeholders have been submitting their analyses and recommendations relating to the formulation of the post-2015 agenda to the UN. The institutional mechanism set up by the UN Secretary General for compiling, reviewing, and drafting a set of goals, targets, and indicators for the post-2015 period, which is expected to be for 15 years, i.e. up to 2030 is at work. This is a difficult task given that proposals and recommendations have been pouring in from various stakeholders from around the world.

As may be noticed from the above few paragraphs that there is a slight difference in the approaches of the Rio+20 and the UN System relating to the conceptualization of the post-2015 goals and targets to be formulated. The Rio+20 process calls for the formulation of post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs), while the UN system talks about post-2015 development agenda as a follow-up of the MDGs. This may only be a semantic difference, not real given that sustainability is generally agreed to be at the core. A convergence is expected to emerge so that there will be one post-2015 sustainable development agenda with a manageable numbers goals and targets embedded on an appropriate narrative underpinned by fundamental principles, as indicated earlier, centring around an orderly progress of humanity with everybody in every country included and nobody anywhere left behind. I would expect the way forward to uphold human rights and human dignity for everyone everywhere as the ultimate goal. To that end, solid progress is to be sought relating to various aspects of human life and living within a human-centred equitable socio-economic-political framework.

The post-2015 goals and targets to be formulated should, as agreed, be applicable to and, therefore, agreed by all countries of the world. The means of implementation will need to be made as clear as possible, involving responsibilities on the part of both the developing and developed countries, taking into account the circumstances and realities facing different groups of countries. In the management of global aspects of the process and development of global partnerships, the principle of common but differential responsibility and respective capabilities may guide the decisions relating to who does what, how, and when.

Bangladesh is a star performer in relation to the MDGs. According to the ‘Millennium Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2012’, Bangladesh has already met or is on track to meet by end 2015 a significant number of key targets under different MDGs, including poverty ratio, poverty gap ratio, gender equality at primary and secondary levels of education, under-five mortality rate, containing HIV/AIDS infection, children under-five sleeping under insecticide-treated bed-nets, detection and cure rate of TB under DOTS, increasing immunization coverage, primary education enrollment, and infant and maternal mortality rates. There are some other targets under different MDGs, which may be met through enhanced efforts. However, a few targets relating to, for example, reduction of hunger and environmental protection will not be met.

Encouraged by its notable achievements in relation to the implementation of the MDGs, Bangladesh is very active in the run up to the formulation of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Two major inputs forwarded to the UN from Bangladesh are: “Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Bangladesh Proposal to UN” submitted by the Government of Bangladesh and “Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Perspectives and Recommendations from Bangladesh Civil Society” submitted by the People’s Forum on MDGs (PFM), Bangladesh. Each of these documents contains some background analyses, a proposed framework of fundamental principles on which to embed the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, and a set of goals and associated targets and indicators as inputs into the global post-2015 agenda to be formulated.

Both the documents include goals and associated targets and indicators which are very relevant for countries like Bangladesh (such as extreme poverty eradication, inequality reduction, unleashing of human potentials, food security and nutrition for all, universal access to health and family planning services, gender equality in all spheres of society, quality education and skill training, employment opportunities and decent work, transparency and

accountability, climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability, and domestic resource mobilization) as well as others which are essentially the responsibility of developed countries such as changes in production and consumption patterns and related matters of climate change mitigation to bring them in tune with the demands of environmental and social sustainability considerations, and ensuring the means of implementation of the agenda formulated, and still others which relate to democratization of global governance and management of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF with a view to giving voices to the voiceless developing countries in global policy and strategy development and reorienting the ways the multilateral institutions function.

Bangladesh may develop a set of its own post-2015 sustainable development goals with associated targets and indicators, keeping the relevant ones, modified if and as necessary, from the adopted Global Agenda but also including other country-specific issues in terms of additional goals and associated targets and indicators. The work may begin now to be finalized after the UN General Assembly adopts the Global Agenda in the 2015 UN General Assembly session.

Given the notable successes achieved in relation to the MDGs and also in the context of various other national issues (economic growth, environmental and climate change management, foodgrain production, education policy formulation, ICT, infrastructural development including electricity generation, rural development including both agriculture and non-agricultural sectors, rural employment generation, RMG exports, and so on) in recent times, Bangladesh is poised for take-off on to a sustainable development pathway encompassing economic, social, and environmental-climate change aspects in an integrated fashion, keeping in focus the vision of progress of every citizen of the country without exception towards the overarching goal of human dignity.

The Daily Star, Dhaka, 17 June 2014. Revised version.

2. CoP19: A review of the outcome

by SID · Dec 10, 2013 · 0 comments



by **Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad** | In a [preview of COP19](#) [1] posted in the SID Forum on 11 November 2013, I was cautiously optimistic about some progress in certain respects, but foresaw no breakthrough in respect of major issues. In this review I find that the negotiations have been kept on road, but these remain rather off-track particularly as far as the main building blocs of the desirable Paris Agreement are concerned. The review is as follows.

In a preview of COP19 published in SID Forum on 11 November 2013, I was cautiously optimistic about some progress in certain respects, but foresaw no breakthrough in respect of major issues. In this review I find that the negotiations have been kept on road, but these remain rather off-track particularly as far as the main building blocs of the desirable Paris Agreement are concerned. The review is as follows.

The Warsaw climate change conference (CoP19, 11-23 November, 2013) has kept the climate negotiations on the road . But these are not on track for the Legally Binding (Climate Change Management) Agreement to be reached at COP21 in Paris in 2015, involving all countries of the world and consistent with less than 2 Degree Celsius global warming by end of this Century compared to the pre-industrial level and effective management of the impacts and vulnerabilities caused by the intensifying climate change. It can be salvaged, but only if the developed countries and major developing countries bring truly committed leadership to bear on the negotiations in response to the looming catastrophic consequences for the global

society and even the planet Earth as a result of intensifying climate change. All other countries should also play their part commensurate with their responsibilities and capabilities, with total commitment. There is no room for dithering as signs of a colossal threat are only too visible all around the world, in terms of increasingly more frequent and devastating natural disasters.

One may recall the unprecedentedly powerful cyclone Haiyan that occurred just prior to COP19, wrecking havoc in the Philippines and also hitting other countries of that region, the widely devastating cyclones Aila and Sidr of only a few years ago in Bangladesh, the prolonged and widely destructive North American drought (2012-13 in particular, but building up since 2010) affecting a large number of US States very severely, and the 2012 second ever deadliest Hurricane Sandy to hit the US, affecting some 24 States, in particular New York and New Jersey causing an estimated total loss and damage to the tune of US\$66 billion. Accelerating melting of ice is devastating the geographic and biospheric landscape of the Arctic regions and the increasing sea level rise and the associated salinity ingress are threatening the coastal areas of many countries including, for example, Bangladesh and the very existence of so many low lying island countries.

The list of such climatic upheavals is getting longer, spread across all continents, which don't respect the level of development of countries hit. Obviously, developing countries, particularly LDCs, SIDS and other poorer countries in Africa, being resource-poor with extremely limited adaptive capacity, are ruthlessly set back. And if things continue to worsen, as climate science predicts and the evolving climatic behaviour indicates, the developed countries and other rich countries will surely find it hard going in the years to come and will eventually face intractable impacts and vulnerabilities given the ever increasing drain on resources for managing the ever increasing losses and damages and human devastations.

Given this grim backdrop, the so-called negotiators for working out agreements, mechanisms, institutional arrangements and procedures for dealing with climate change by the global community finally managed to strike some common grounds for the political leaders attending the high level segment in the last few days to consider and take some decisions in the night after (the night following 23 November, although the scheduled date of conclusion was 22 November) to keep hopes alive for further negotiations.

One of those decisions is the agreement to establish the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to provide technical and capacity building support to countries and facilitate coordination of work within UNFCCC and with other organizations in dealing with climate related loss and damage. It is also expected to mobilize funds to carry out its mandated activities. But, past experience suggests it will take much time and a lot of bargaining before the Mechanism may be operationalized. Moreover, also past experience suggests, raising funds to assist countries hit may not be easy and assessments of loss and damage caused by a natural disaster may be time consuming, while the people ravaged will continue to suffer and despair. But, it is appreciable that the Mechanism has been created. However, for it make an impact it has to be properly empowered and supported technically and financially. The task in this context is already huge and enlarging as time passes by. In fact, available estimates show that loss and damage caused by natural disasters has risen from around US\$200 billion a year a decade or so ago to US\$300-400 billion a year in recent times.

At the same time, adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) must remain cornerstones of climate change impact management. DRR has received little or no attention in this COP, and a paltry sum of US\$100 million has been promised by some developed countries for the Adaptation Fund. This pales even if we recall that Bangladesh has made a budgetary allocation from its own resources of close US\$400 million over the past 5 years for financing climate change management projects, mostly in the area of adaptation but also some on mitigation.

Work done by the ADP (Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for a Enhanced Action), the Subsidiary Bodies and other instructions such as the LDCs Expert Group (LEG), Technology Committee, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Executive Committee under Kyoto Protocol and so on has been appreciated. These activities in fact constitute some of the signposts showing that negotiations continue.

But, on the two overriding issues of mitigation and climate finance, there has been no progress. In fact, there is a backsliding on pre-2020 mitigation ambition by countries such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand as they have cut back on their previously announced greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions. No indication of enhanced pre-2020 emission reduction by other developed countries within or outside Kyoto Protocol has been available. They tend to prevaricate on the issue. On the other hand, pre-2020 emission gap (i.e. the gap between the actual emissions occurring and the required reduced emissions to keep the global warming consistent with less than 2 Degree Celsius vision), which is already huge, continues to increase. According to UNEP's 2013 Emissions Gap Report, 'Even if nations meet their current climate pledges, the greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 are likely to be 8-12 giga-tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (GtCO₂e) above the level that would provide a likely chance of remaining on the least-cost pathway.' Even regarding the ratification of the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (extending it into a second commitment period), there seems little enthusiasm among both developed and developing countries. While for the Amendment to come into force its ratification by 144 countries is required, so far only four developing countries (Barbados, Mauritius, the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh) have ratified it. Several developed and developing countries have however indicated their willingness to do so soon.

While there is such dithering in relation to pre-2020 mitigation ambition by the developed countries, how the post-2020 emission reduction commitments will shape up is anybody's guess. Here, all the countries of the world should make commitments on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities. The issue of historical responsibility may be invoked. Moreover, the right to development of the lower income countries, particularly the LDCs and SIDS, needs to be recognized. Indeed, the whole process is hugely complex.

On finance, COP19 has failed to make any progress although this COP was touted as primarily climate financing-focused conference. There has been no headway in relation to climate financing for the period 2013-2019. Discussions on this issue has been as frustrating as in the past, with no roadmap agreed by developed countries. The proposed long term climate financing with a kitty of US\$100 billion per year by 2020 remains unclear as to how the amount will be raised. The developed countries talk about the private sector playing the pivotal role in this context. But the private sector exists to make profits. It may therefore come forward with funding only for certain mitigation projects in which profits can be made. But, in the adaptation activities, which by and large involve poor people and poverty-stricken

areas, there would be little or no profit-making opportunities. The private sector cannot and will not be interested in such activities. Therefore, a major part of the long term climate finance necessarily has to come from public sources. Also, despite continuous demand by the intended recipient countries for balanced allocation of this fund between adaptation and mitigation (say 50% to each), mitigation still seems to be contended by the developed countries as the main purpose of this fund.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) still remains essentially unfunded, deprived even in terms of meaningful pledges. In the next two to three years, it may become clearer whether the GCF will become the major climate finance entity as was conceived or will it limp along making no real difference in relation to climate financing.

In concluding, let me say that some clarity has emerged as to how the desired 2015 Paris Agreement may be crafted. But it remains to be seen whether the dithering and prevaricating will continue leaving the global society to unprecedented harm's way or whether the global leaders can rise above their narrow national interests and vested-interest group pressures and respond to the looming climate change-induced catastrophe for the global society and the planet Earth. Experts, bureaucrats and diplomats are unlikely to be equal to the task.

Therefore, it is the political leaders who should take charge early enough, and not come just for the last few days. They should also bring farsighted political will and sagacity to bear on the work to deal adequately with the mega task at hand and agree an agenda that spells out what it will take for all the countries individually and collectively to do to save the global society and the environmental integrity of the globe itself from the looming catastrophe. While the leaders of all the countries have roles to play, preminent leadership must be demonstrated by those of the developed and major developing countries.

The question is: will they and can they? Let us raise our voice loud and strong and say NO to a failure in Paris-2015.

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