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Staff Correspondent



“ Our right to life is being jeopardised by climate change. Education is at stake as school hours get hampered due to floods, and salinity is taking a huge toll on women's health. The "loss and damage" issue must be taken seriously.

FARAH KABIR, COUNTRY DIRECTOR OF ACTIONAID BANGLADESH

Khulna has been identified as one of the most vulnerable cities in the world due to climate change. As climate-induced displacements in adjacent areas skyrocket, the city is and will further struggle with the growing population, speakers told a roundtable yesterday.



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They made the remarks at a roundtable, titled "Financing Loss & Damage and Displacement: A Global Call for Climate Justice", organised jointly by The Daily Star and AOSED (An Organisation for Socio-Economic Development) at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Prof Mustafa Saroar, head of urban and regional planning at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet), presented the keynote of the discussion.

Khulna City Corporation Mayor Talukdar Abdul Kheleque said the Khulna region has been bearing the brunt of climate change, as more and more coastal people from the south-western upazilas are taking shelter in the city.

"The displaced and impoverished people end up in slums, making it difficult for the city authority to ensure pure water, sanitation and other civic amenities for them. The city will soon lose its liveability if the influx continues," he said.

Lawmaker of Satkhira-2 Mir Mushtaque Ahmed Robi criticised the United Nations for "not being able to make any tangible progress in fighting climate change".

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said efforts to arrange for "loss and damage" has been ongoing for 30 years. Yet, the developed countries did not agree to the arrangement.

"Our right to life is being jeopardised by climate change. Education is at stake, as school hours get hampered due to floods, and salinity is taking a huge toll on women's health. The 'loss and damage' issue must be taken seriously," she added.

Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid Bangladesh, pointed out the loopholes in the record-keeping process of climate-induced damage suffered by the country.

"All we do is count how many tube-wells and homesteads are destroyed in natural calamities. We don't know whether the government has any aggregated data," she said.

She also suggested the government take help from academics and development organisations to create an evidence-based database to make the "loss and damage" claim stronger and scientifically valid.

Md Shamsuddoha, chief executive of Centre for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), said, "The mindset to not accept the 'loss and damage' claim led to political denial from developed countries. However, due to the pressure from affected countries, they agreed to form the "Warsaw International Mechanism for Damage and Loss" in 2013 under UNFCCC."

"The issue was also included under article-8 of the Paris Agreement. In both cases, there was a decision to finance the 'loss and damage' claim. However, no fund was released for that," he added.

Prof Mohammad Abdul Quader, chairperson of geography and environment at Jagannath University, said, "When disasters hit us, we never assess the losses in terms of ecology and biodiversity."

"There are many trickeries from the developed countries to deprive the Global South. Equally, there is a lack of negotiation skills from our side," he added.

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