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AOSED (An Organization for Socio-Economic Development) in association with The Daily Star organised a roundtable titled "Financing Loss and Damage and Displacement - A Global Call for Climate Justice" on October 24, 2022. The programme was supported by Bread for the World. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

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Golam Mortoza, Editor, The Daily Star Bangla

Although Bangladesh accounts for a very small portion of global emissions, it is one of the countries most affected by climate change. Hence, Bangladesh must raise her voice seeking compensation for the loss and damage the country suffers from. We also need to address local issues such as pollution from brick kilns, river grabbing and destruction of forests.



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Shamim Arfeen, *Executive Director, AOSED*

Development organizations working at grassroots level find it difficult to mainstream climatic loss and damage since Bangladesh's politics is Dhaka-based and the efforts of local organisations are often get overlooked. Nonetheless, grassroots organizations like AOSED want to provide evidence-based information to assist the policymakers in negotiating loss and damage and other climate issues at international platforms.



Water and climate change are inextricably linked. Climate change has major impacts on the earth's water cycle leading to unpredictable water availability, water scarcity, and contamination of water resources. AOSED has been working on water and climate justice for building climate resilience of the marginalised seagoing fishers and other vulnerable communities in coastal areas.

The 3rd Coastal Water Convention will be held in January 2023 involving 19 coastal districts in Bangladesh. AOSED is working as the secretariat of the convention. Around 100 organizations including INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, academia, research institutes and government agencies will jointly organise the convention. We are expecting support from media and private sector to make this conference successful.

Md Shamsuddoha, *Chief Executive, Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD)*

Loss and damage not only cause economic loss but also is responsible for displacement, migration, gender-based violence and reproductive health crisis. Although the issue is accepted as a provisional agenda in the COP27, there is an apprehension that developed countries might prevent its inclusion in the permanent agenda. Clear political understanding and strong determination of LDCs are crucial for the inclusion of this issue as a permanent agenda.



Some countries such as Scotland and Denmark are committing voluntary finance for loss and damage out of the UNFCCC process. These finances are not need-based, rather political demand based. If such separate neutral funds are established, it will weaken our political argument.

Hasin Jahan, *Country Director, WaterAid Bangladesh*

Although data is key to creating evidence, planning and damage analysis to carry forward the negotiation in the international forum, Bangladesh is lagging behind. During a disaster, for example,



Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) collect information on damages using a manual format. Unfortunately, this data is often lost due to lengthy bureaucratic processes. We need concerted national efforts to collect data on loss and damage. The government should gather scientific evidence and have a unified voice to strengthen their position in the loss and damage negotiations. Academic and research institutions should come forward and support the government in this regard.



Dr. Mohammad Abdul Quader, *Chairman and Professor, Department of Geography & Environment, Jagannath University*

COP conferences are dominated by developed countries, and climate-affected countries like us have very little say. However, I also have doubts about our negotiation skills. We have to strengthen our international negotiation capacity.



The lack in research-based evidence seriously hinders LDCs' negotiation effort at international platforms. We need to consider both short-term and long-term impacts of climate change with equal importance.

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Globally, many geo-platforms have been established online where victims can report the loss and damage they suffer from and, thus, a wealth of evidence is created. We can establish such platforms in Bangladesh.

We need to activate our Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) immediately.

Farah Kabir, *Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh*

We know that we won't gain much from COP 27. However, we need to set our plans for the upcoming COP summits.



Climate change has become an existential threat to Bangladesh. It affects every aspect of our lives. There are 101 countries around the world that are facing severe challenges due to climate change. We need to create solidarity among these countries. We also need to engage young people, social organisations, and NGOs in the effort to demand compensation for loss and damage from climate change.

The initiative of creating a fund outside the UNFCCC framework is an encouraging development. It reflects commitment of some developed countries to address the loss and damage issue.

Although the Bangladesh government is concerned about climate change, and they have taken various measures to address the threat, there is a lack of coordination among these initiatives. The allocation in the national budget for addressing climate change impacts is still very insignificant. The government also lacks a broader perspective on climate change.

We need to engage the corporate sector in combating climate change impacts. They have to realise that their investment and establishments are also under threat due to climate change.

Humayun Kabir Boby, *Secretary, Pani Adhikar Committee, Khulna*

We must stop the misuse of climate funds and ensure that the funds reach climate-vulnerable areas, particularly the coastal belt. Local public representatives and Members of Parliament should be included in all the government committees to tackle climate change effectively.



Shamim Arfeen, *Executive Director, AOSED*

A community-based database can be created where members of climate-vulnerable communities will identify risks as well as suggest solutions in order to ensure the availability of appropriate data. We can start the database project on a pilot basis involving the most vulnerable communities.

Tanjim Ferdous, *In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star & Moderator of the session*

The nature, pattern and frequency of disasters have changed over the years due to climate change. Bangladesh is one of the worst sufferers of climate-change-induced loss and damage. Therefore, the discussion on financing loss and damage and displacement is very timely and relevant for Bangladesh.



Talukder Abdul Khaleque, *Mayor, Khulna City Corporation (KCC)*

I want to thank AOSED, Bread for the World and



I want to thank ROBEY, friend for the work and The Daily Star for organising today's discussion which, I believe, will be helpful for the policymakers ahead of the COP27.



Khulna is the third largest city in Bangladesh which has been identified as one of the 10 most climate-vulnerable coastal cities in the world. An increasing number of climate migrants from the south-western coastal areas are taking shelter in city slums. Most of them earn their living from labour-intensive, low-paid informal sector. They have limited access to basic urban services. Khulna City Corporation (KCC) is committed to provide all the civic amenities to the city dwellers. However, it is becoming really difficult to support the increasing number of climate migrants in the city.

In the last couple of decades, the intensity and frequency of climatic hazards such as cyclone, flood, depressions, river erosion, waterlogging, salinity have increased and that have been affecting the liveability, biodiversity and ecosystem in Khulna and its adjoining areas.

In this context, Government and the KCC have undertaken several initiatives to address the adverse impacts of climate change in the area that include improvement of the sewerage system, dredging of Moyur River, improvement of roads and infrastructure, development of urban areas, improvement of the livelihood of marginalised communities, establishment of asphalt plant and proper waste management.

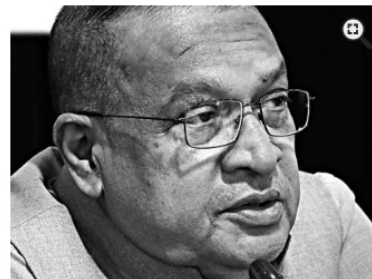
I have also requested development partners, donor organisations, civil society, business community and others repeatedly to come forward to build resilience in climate-affected areas to prevent climate-induced internal displacement/migration. We have to create alternative income generation opportunities for these people back in their home areas. This will reduce the increasing pressure on urban resources and these people can contribute to rural economy through continuing their profession.

I urge the developed countries to keep their promise of providing adequate funds to the countries who are the worst sufferers to help the latter tackle the impacts of climate change. However, funding itself is not the only solution. It is important to take action as promised by the developed countries in their Nationally Determined Contributions to lower their GHG emission in order to achieve the 1.5o C target.

Instead of depending on others, we should find innovative solutions to our local problems based on our indigenous knowledge and expertise. Last but not least, we need to make people aware of the risks of climate-related disasters and enhance disaster preparedness to reduce the loss and damage from climate change.

Mir Mushtaque Ahmed Robi, *Member of the Parliament, Satkhira-2*

We haven't gained much from COPs. Instead of waiting for international bodies to come around, we should strengthen our national capabilities to combat the impacts of climate change. Today's discussion is very significant in this regard. It will help create a national consensus on addressing loss and damage from climate change in



Bangladesh.

There are gaps in our national initiatives. Some years ago, I had put forward some demands to our former Disaster Management and Relief minister and he said he would allot ten times more funds since my area is greatly affected by climate change, but he didn't do anything for the people of my area. Our bureaucracy continues to bear the brunt of colonial legacy; it's all talk and no action. Our honourable prime minister has given many important instructions but many of these remain unimplemented since our bureaucracy is highly inefficient. A national forum can be established to set our priorities to address climate change induced loss and damage in Bangladesh.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Saroar, *Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET)*

'Loss and damage' is a general term used in UN climate negotiations to refer to the consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt. Addressing loss and damage is the crucial pillar of climate action for which vulnerable nations have been calling on developed countries to provide financial assistance that can help them address loss and damage.



Communities within Bangladesh in environmentally stressed geographies are particularly prone to loss and damage as they experience climate impacts beyond what they can adapt to – be it due to lack of access to finance to implement adaptation measures or because there are no measures that are feasible to implement. In various studies, it has been projected that 5 to 35 million people could be displaced by the end of this century in Bangladesh if the issues of loss and damage are not addressed. Loss and damage financing could include weather-indexed crop insurance, funds to rebuild critical infrastructure when disaster strikes, financing for livelihood restoration, and financing planned relocation of people who are permanently displaced.

COP's Agenda of Loss and Damage: Where we stand now

The COP has been taking place for about three decades. In the first decade of COP, the negotiations were centered on mitigation; in the second decade focus was on adaptation. The loss and damage issue first appeared in the Bali Action Plan (2007). At COP 16 in Cancún (2010), the Work Programme on Loss and Damage was established, and in COP 18 in Doha (2012), enhanced action and support to address loss and damage was discussed. However, the real momentum came in Warsaw (2013), when the parties formed the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) to avert, minimise and address loss and damage. But neither the WIM nor any other subsequent COPs including Paris Agreements (COP 19) established a mechanism that delivers funding to help countries manage loss and damage. However, at COP 26, the two-year Glasgow Dialogue to discuss possible arrangements for loss and damage funding was initiated to provide developing countries with technical assistance to address loss and damage by operationalising Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD).

What we want to achieve from COP 27

Following the overall lack of progress, loss and damage will again take centre-stage at COP27. We want to see loss and damage finance on the formal agenda of COP 27. We want to raise our

voice in Egypt (COP 27) and advocate for a dedicated financial mechanism to address loss and damage and associated displacement. The following critical issues need to be moved forward at COP 27 in Egypt in November 2022.

- Establish loss and damage as a permanent, standalone agenda item for all future COPs, and appoint a loss and damage focal point to mobilise and enhance political will.
- Parties should take pre-emptive measures to protect communities before they are displaced. Invest in communities and organisations working to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities.
- Include loss and damage within the upcoming Global Stocktake and encourage parties to consider how relevant policies and actions contribute to reducing climate-related displacement risk.
- Encourage the Santiago Network to invite a wide variety of relevant organisations, bodies, networks, and experts, particularly from the local level, so that they can contribute to dealing with loss and damage.
- Encourage the TFD (Task Force on Displacement) to explore and analyse distinctions between financing under adaptation and financing for loss and damage and displacement.

Finally, the COP 27 offers an opportunity to move the loss and damage agenda forward by creating institutional arrangements of financing that help developing countries, including Bangladesh, to address the issue and associated displacement.

Recommendations

- Build consensus among climate-affected countries to address loss and damage issues.
- Loss and damage should be made a permanent and stand-alone agenda in all future COPs.
- Compensation should be sought for not only immediate impacts of climate change but also for long-term consequences.
- Create research-based scientific evidence for loss and damage.
- Establish a national geo-platform in Bangladesh to collect loss and damage data from victims.
- Strengthen international negotiation capacity of the Bangladesh government.
- Activate Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) immediately.
- Improve the national data collection system for loss and damage.
- Find innovative solutions to climate change impacts by utilising indigenous knowledge and expertise.
- Allocate adequate funds in the national budget to address climate change impacts.

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