



Distinguished Chief Guest, Advocate Mostafizur Rahman, MP
Hon'ble State Minister for Land, Government of Bangladesh
Excellencies, Esteemed Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum and Good Morning.

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to today's Wrap-up Seminar on ***Climate Change and Security in Bangladesh***, jointly organized by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), and Saferworld, UK. We are particularly grateful to the Hon'ble State Minister for Land, Advocate Mostafizur Rahman, MP who despite his busy schedule, has kindly given his consent to be today's Chief Guest at our request. The honourable Minister, of course, was over seeing all the activities of the Ministry of Environment for last several months. That way we are fortunate to have him with us this morning. Let me also welcome Ms Rosy Cave, Head of the Asia Programme, of Saferworld, UK who has flown from London to Dhaka to join us for this Wrap-up seminar. I also welcome one of the leading climate change experts of Bangladesh Dr. Mizan R. Khan, Professor of the Department of Environmental Science and Management, North South University, Dhaka. I thank him for taking the time out to share his expertise with us.

Let me begin, firstly by giving you a brief background of today's seminar. BISS in collaboration with the Saferworld undertook a project study in 2008 relating to the socio-economic impact analysis of climate change, mainly based on primary sources that included Focus Group Discussions (FGD), case studies review and Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted in selective parts of the country. Secondary sources were also used to support the findings. The Dr. Abul Kalam Azad, Acting Director and his team of dedicated researchers comprised the BISS team. The main objectives of the study were i) to map the climate change induced socio-economic insecurities, particularly emanating from salinity, flood and sea level rise (ii) to map the coping mechanisms adopted by affected people to face the challenges (iii) to map the likely pattern of climate change induced migration and conflict scenarios, and finally (iv) to develop a set of recommendations for donors, government and civil society organization.

After long hours in remote areas of Bangladesh, our research team has been able to successfully complete the study. The project work report has been published, thanks mainly to the commendable efforts of Saferworld. We take this opportunity today to launch the report – one of the main components of this Seminar. The other two are, to have a constructive and thought provoking discussion on the book by an expert in the field, Dr. Mizan R. Khan, and to have an open and frank discussion across the floor.

The Seminar is in effect an acknowledgement of the collaborative work between BISS and Saferworld. The dissemination of ideas and thoughts via the proposed seminar will be beneficial for all concerned with the vulnerabilities of a vast majority of Bangladeshis to multifold climate induced insecurities in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate Change is a reality now. Global warming by the developed countries is causing sea level rise in an alarming pace. The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects an increase of temperature ranging between 1.1 and 6.40 degree Celsius over the next century, entailing the reduction of huge amount of ice. As a result, sea levels could rise 10 to 23 inches by 2100.

The consequence of such sea level rise is dangerous to all the countries but the least developing countries will be affected disproportionately. Bangladesh has already been pointed out as one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world. During the UN climate Change summit in Poznan in 2008, a German organization, German Watch listed Bangladesh as one of the top listed vulnerable countries that will be seriously affected by climate change. Floods, tropical cyclones, storm surges and droughts are likely to become more frequent and severe in the coming years. Some would even say that the effects of climate change have already taken toll as frequency of natural disasters has already increased.

Distinguished Guests

Although we are shocked as a nation to learn and accept these facts, we also have to come to terms with the reality. How do we as a developing and resource constraint country adapt to Climate Change? How is a farmer, a day labourer, a woman coping with climate change induced problems in his or her day to day activity? What happens when the affected people fail to cope with the effects of climate change? In the long run, is there a potential for conflict? These are some of the questions that were addressed in the study on *Climate Change and Security in Bangladesh*. The exploratory nature of the work was an attempt on the part of the research team to find the linkage between climate change and security and how one affects the other. But more importantly, the study aimed to give some policy recommendations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A copy of the report has been included in your folder. However, we will go through the main findings for your convenience and to have your views. Ms. **Rosy Cave** will present the key findings of the report.

Ms. Rosy obtained an MSc in Latin American Politics and BSc in Social Anthropology. She joined Saferworld in 2007 as the Head of Asia programme. Saferworld is an international non-governmental organization working to prevent and reduce violent conflict and to promote cooperative approaches to security. She is leading

Saferworld's work on conflict, community safety, security and arms in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. She has extensive experience of working on security issues including arms control and disarmament. She was also part of the International campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions Coalition.

The book will be reviewed by **Dr Mizan R. Khan** who has a Ph.D in Environmental Policy and Management from the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, MD, USA. He is currently a teacher at the Department of Environmental Science and Management (DESM) at North South University (NSU), Dhaka. He served for four years as UNDP Environmental Policy Specialist with the Govt. of Bangladesh. He was Vice Chair of the LDC Expert Group under the UNFCCC during 2002-2004. He attends the climate change negotiations as a member of the Bangladesh delegation since 2001. Dr. Khan is the Focal Point of the Nairobi Work Program of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) representing Civil Society in Bangladesh. He has a wide range of publications on security, environment & development issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A wide cross section of experts and practitioners are here with us to discuss today's subject matter. We look forward to a very fruitful interaction and deliberation on the theme of today's Seminar.

I thank you all once again for your presence.



**WRAP-UP SEMINAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY IN
BANGLADESH: A CASE STUDY**

Wednesday, 12 August 2009

CONCLUDING REMARKS by the CHAIR

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of a very lively and thought provoking Seminar on climate change and its impact on security both in the traditional and non-traditional senses. In effect, the seminar has been an attempt to reveal the fact that unmitigated climate change will have profound consequences for security at all the levels – individual, national, regional and global. Perhaps, there is no gainsaying that climate change has now become an issue of first order concern for the foreign and security policies of a vast majority of the nations alongside terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Even a decade ago, apart from the experts, very few of us had any idea about climate change and its impact. Today, climate change has become almost a household name –for scientists, experts, donors, policy makers, and advocacy groups. While the expert opinions on the climate change issue may be wide ranging and as well complex in nature, the fact remains that Bangladesh today remains one of the most vulnerable countries to the adverse impacts of climate change. The people living in remote areas of the country in particular, are the most vulnerable lots witnessing the ravaging

effects of climate change in the form of sea level rise, coastal and river erosion, flooding, salinity etc. It is needless to mention, these vulnerable and poor people are the stewards of many important environmental resources of the country. In keeping with this issue of grave concern, this joint study by BIISS and Saferworld on *Climate Change and Security in Bangladesh* was in fact, a noble endeavour to address the insecurities of such vulnerable people out of climate change – perhaps the first of its kind in South Asia.

Distinguished Guests,

We have reasons to feel happy that some very important points came out from today's discussion that can work as recommendations for the government, donor agencies, and civil society organizations in formulating their policies on Climate Change. In many ways, the recommendations can influence the forthcoming climate change conference in Copenhagen in December where all the participating states are expected to come out with an equitable, balanced and comprehensive agreement on climate change. Let me read out few of the recommendations alluded to in the seminar.

- Promote a cross-governmental approach to climate change and security especially in the region;
- Share information more within or between ministries, departments working on climate change, migration and security;
- Establishing a climate security working group that would facilitate political authorities, international institutions, climate scientists, conflict prevention experts and social scientists to share their experience and knowledge;

- Ensure that all climate change adaptation and development programming is conflict-sensitive, particularly when adaptation measures are being implemented;
- Develop a *preventive* approach to address the risk of insecurity and conflict in Bangladesh as opposed to *responding* to security and conflict crises as they occur;
- Strengthen the capacity of local government, as many of the environmental security issues are essentially local in nature;
- Strengthen capacity to manage internal migration as the report has shown that climate change will lead to an acceleration of internal migratory flows;
- Allow local communities to spend adaptation resources on conflict prevention and security-building, if required;
- Carry more detailed policy research to understand fully the effect of climate change on security and conflict dynamics, both within Bangladesh and internationally.
- Industrial countries should act first and show their commitment to CC adaptations and mitigation efforts.
- Promoting regional cooperation is very important for adapting to CC as Bangladesh or for that matter no country can solve it alone.
- The burden of CC effects should be shared by everybody within the industrialized countries and developing countries.
- Through the initiative of BIISS, the security component of CC should be incorporated in the Climate Change Strategy Paper.
- We should be able to distinguish between a socio-economic induced and Climate Change induced problems and victims.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I like to conclude by saying that whereas in the security domain, strategic doctrines and defense budgets are readily available on the basis of far less observable evidence, very little has been done to research, address or even conceptualize the potential security implications of climate change despite its many observable manifestations of catastrophic nature. The onus, therefore, is on the policy makers to take the issue far more seriously in concert with the agencies linked up with the activities on climate change in one way or the other. As has been mentioned during the discussion that we possibly have to focus on mitigation and adaptation; and that should happen combined with a concerted burden sharing by all the countries of the globe. Climate change is primarily a *justice issue*, therefore, if we can join our hands together both of the countries of North and South, possibly we can fair well in dealing with the vagaries of Climate Change.

With that expression of hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all once again.
