



Concept Note on Learning Hub Event

“Supporting the Planning Commission of the Government of Bangladesh to set up a learning/knowledge hub for enabling knowledge exchange and dialogue on climate resilient development planning”
GED-IIED-ICCCAD

Climate Change and Migration

Introduction

‘Learning Hub Events (LHEs)’ are jointly organised by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), UK and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) based at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) to support the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission of the Government of Bangladesh in incorporating climate change concerns into the National Plans. The current five year plan that is the Seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP) 2016-2020 focused on developing a framework where the basic needs of the people of Bangladesh can be met. The overall development process is largely dependent on how climate change issues are properly integrated within the national policies of different sectors. Migration is a key concern for the future as it is related directly to human security. With the increase in environmental degradation due to climate change, migration will be a matter of distress and security.

Background

Migration is a normal process for humans to adjust to adverse situations, whether it is due to natural environment degradation or human induced conflict. In recent years human displacement has become a serious issue with climate change as its main driver.¹ In the future, this will become a crucial point of dispute for people in the most vulnerable countries. For, Bangladesh it will be a matter of concern due to the impacts of climate change.²

Many factors are involved regarding human mobility due to environmental degradation. Gradual climate change is putting pressure on this already existing problem. Thus it is regarded a ‘complex issue’.³ At least 25 million to 1 billion people are feared to be displaced by the adverse impact of climate change. It is feared that this migration will be both internal as well as cross – border.⁴ Migration will also depend on the specific location where people live. Places which are considered as ‘climate change hot spots’ are the most vulnerable due to any of these

¹ ‘Climate change is a new driver of human migration that many people expect will dwarf all others in its impact.’ Newland, K. *Climate Change and Migration Dynamics* (2011), RSC European University Institute and Migration Policy Institute.

² ‘Although Asia and the Pacific has experienced vast mobility for several decades now, climate induced changes in natural resource conditions will accentuate existing mobility patterns in unprecedented ways.’ Asian Development Bank, *Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific* (2009)

³ ‘There are complex linkages between climate change and human mobility. Current estimates of the number of people who will be obliged to move as a result of climate change and environmental degradation by the year 2050 range from 25 million to one billion.’ IASC (Inter – Agency Standing Committee), *Climate Change, Migration and Displacement: Who will be affected?*; 31 October 2008

⁴ ‘The likelihood is that most migration in these regions will be internal, rural-to-urban or across adjacent borders without authorization.’ Newland, K. *Climate Change and Migration Dynamics* (2011), RSC European University Institute and Migration Policy Institute.

factors: slow onset events, increases in extreme natural events such as cyclones, water logging, saline intrusion, temperatures, average annual run – off, longer periods of drought etc.

Bangladesh is one of the climate change 'hot spots'⁵ in the world due to its geographical location. It has been projected by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change) that Bangladesh is in danger from large scale coastal flooding, cyclones, high intensity short term rainfall, water logging and salinity intrusion. This will pose a threat not only to the natural environment but also to fresh water reservoirs and food production mostly in the southern region of Bangladesh. Most poor people are largely dependent on agriculture for their living.⁶ Therefore, with their livelihoods and food security at high risk, they will be forced to look for an alternative place to live in as mentioned in the 7FYP.⁷ This is where migration can be used as an adaptation technique.

Although, Bangladesh has been dealing with demographic transition for a long time due to environmental degradation (such as river erosion, flooding etc) the magnitude of migration is expected to increase due to the increasing threat of climate change. The one meter projected sea level rise at the end of this century will result in a displacement of 26 million people.⁸ These people will eventually take refuge in the northern parts of the country namely the capital city of Dhaka. Dhaka city is already burdened with a high number of people.⁹ Most migrated poor people live in the slums¹⁰ around Dhaka city in poor conditions with no or fewer job opportunities. Unless there are appropriate policies to support this diaspora, there will be conflict which will lead to human security.

At present, there is no existing policy on climate induced migration in Bangladesh.¹¹ Building and strengthening the capacity of local people and helping them to develop a resilient society have been the main focus of NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action) and BCCSAP (Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan). The estimated rate of climate migrants in the future is a challenge which needs support from both government and private sectors. But it is crucial to remember that global warming will affect almost 30 million people in Bangladesh who live in the coastal areas and islands of the Bay of Bengal.¹²

Specific objectives of this LHE are followings:

- To help the policy-makers understand the degree of climate change induced migration and the opportunities and risks associated with it.

⁵ 'Java in Indonesia, the river deltas of southern Asia, the coastal areas of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the river valleys of India and Bangladesh, are among the world's most densely settled areas. As will be shown later, these areas are among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and considered as climate change "hot spots."' Asian Development Bank, *Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific*; 2009

⁶ 'Bangladesh remains at a very high risk, not only due to its geographic location, but also due to a very young, poor population that depends primarily on agriculture for daily subsistence.' *Same as above*.

⁷ 'Loss of livelihoods may trigger secondary effects such as perpetuation of poverty, even may lead to forced out-migration'. 11a_Climate Change and Disaster Management ; 7th Five Year Plan (2015-16 to 2019-20), General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Bangladesh).

⁸ 'Myers (2001b) argues that sea level rise caused by global warming, coupled with an increase in inland floods (from melting Himalayan glaciers) could cause "environmental displacement" in India of 20 million and 26 million in Bangladesh through 2050.' Asian Development Bank, *Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific*; 2009

⁹ 'Over 500,000 people migrate to this already overcrowded city each year, which has less than 1% of the country's land.' Shachi, S. M. *Dhaka – a city on the brink of a climate refugee crisis*. Source: <http://www.icccad.net/dhaka-tribune-articles/dhaka-a-city-on-the-brink-of-a-climate-refugee-crisis/>

¹⁰ 'Most climate refugees come from humble financial backgrounds and inevitably resort to affordable but cramped and substandard squatter settlements, known as bosti.' *Same as above*.

¹¹ Reza, Md. S. (2015); Fair (Foreign Affairs Insights and Reviews), *Climate Change Induced Migration: Future Challenges and Opportunities for Bangladesh*. Source: <http://fairbd.net/climate-change-induced-migration-future-challenges-and-opportunities-for-bangladesh/>

¹² 'If global warming continues as predicted, rise in sea levels will bring further dangers to the approximately 30 million Bangladeshis living in vulnerable coastal areas and islands in the Bay of Bengal.' 22. *The Impact of the Demographic Transition on Socioeconomic Development in Bangladesh: Future prospects and Implications for Public Policy*; 7th Five Year Plan (2015-16 to 2019-20), General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, Bangladesh).

- To gather and share relevant knowledge and lessons derived from cross-country experiences about the impact of migration due to climate change in order to create a framework for better policy making.

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced understanding about the implications of climate change induced migration and how to incorporate the issue in the national policy of Bangladesh.
- Understand the future of human security in terms of climate change related migration.
- Shared knowledge of the integrated approach of climate change and migration that will help build the capacity of the participants and provide them with necessary technical assistance needed for achieving the new sustainable development goals.