

# Climate induced displaced deserve protection regime both from national and international level

## 1. Forecasting and empirical experiences on climate induced displacement in South Asia and Bangladesh

Several IPCC reports have clearly revealed that, at least 180-200 million people will be forced and to be displaced globally due to adverse impacts of climate variability and change. Climate Induced Forced Displacement (CIFD) is quite a different phenomenon than conventional displacement/migration. The persons under CIFD experience insurmountable challenges towards maintaining their livelihoods as a consequence of hazards and conditions created and exacerbated by climate variability and change. Therefore, persons under CIFD cannot be comparable to the experiences of 'opportunistic migrants' – those who are displaced in search of better opportunities without being perturbed by compounding challenges posed by climate variability and change.

Most of the cases of forced displacement, according to IPCC reports, will be occurring in South Asian countries. The latest investigation in this regard has revealed that about 27 million people on an average have been displaced per year due to implications of climate change, including variability, and hazards which are associated with these phenomena such as cyclone, storm surge and extreme weather events (IDMC, 2014). Among these incidents, more than 80% have been observed in South Asian countries.

Bangladesh is amongst the most vulnerable countries in case of climate induced forced displacement (Harmeling, 2011). Projected sea level rise combining with exacerbated extreme climatic events will likely to displace 30-40 million people forcibly in different parts of the country by 2100 (Accounting Climate Induced Migration in Bangladesh: An Exploratory GIS Based Study, November 2011). This means one in every five people with a likelihood of being displaced in Bangladesh if adequate measures are not considered.

A category 5 cyclone, Sidr, had ravaged the coastal zone of Bangladesh in mid-November 2007. While the GOB and its development partners have tried their level best to restore life, rehabilitate destructed dwellings, infrastructure and livelihoods of local people, the single incidence of an extreme weather event forced many coastal dwellers to leave their ancestral villages fearing complete loss of livelihoods and hunger (Adri, 2015). Apart from this, the negative impacts of climate variability and change have been intensifying in coastal as well as non-coastal areas in Bangladesh, especially due to flood, increased wave interaction and subsequent salinity ingress, water logging and river erosion (MOEF,

2012). About 40,000 ± 10,000 people have been forced and subsequently displaced on an average year by these climate induced phenomena from their own land (Ahmed and Neelormi, 2008). There is every reason to believe that, cases of CIFD in Bangladesh will be increased with increasing adverse effects of climate change.

## 2. Managing the climate induced displacement

Most of the vulnerable countries have been trying to manage climate induced forced displacement. Although the level of such forced displacement is still very low, the process has already placed significant pressure on the institutional capacity of respective agencies of poor vulnerable countries. While expenditure on social protection had to be increased to contain the magnitude of out-migration, high rates of displacement has resulted in proliferation of squatters and slums in urban areas and their peripheries and further contributing to unplanned urbanization process.

It is observed that, the international process to deal with climate induced forced displacement has been rather slow to pick up the issue. Although the UNFCCC calls for addressing adverse impacts of climate change, very little has so far been discussed and actually done to address the issue of managing climate induced displacement in the backdrop of continued demand of climate vulnerable countries. Since most of such forced displacements are occurring in resource constrained countries, it is often beyond their capacity to deal with the issue without adequate international support and policy instrument. Experiencing the above crisis we, the civil society representatives of Bangladesh placing following demands to protect climate induced displaced people and their rights to live.

## 3. Our Demands

### 3.1 At national Level

#### a. Include Climate induced displaced in the BCCSAP and national planning process

The climate induced forced displacement and their management strategies and action are not addressed in the BCCSAP. Although the Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the Environment and Forest Ministry have mentioned projected numbers of climate induced and forcibly displaced people many a times, there hasn't been any action considered while utilizing two financing windows: The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) and the Resilience Fund (BCCRF).

We do believe our government is serious with the issue of climate induced forced displacement, therefore it is imperative to review the BCCSAP to address the issue and include specific strategies and action plan for managing the issue. The GoB is about to start the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Seventh Five Year Development Planning (SFYP) processes, we strongly recommend that the issue regarding climate change induced forced displacement to be integrated in NAP and SFYP.

### **b. Develop Internal Displacement Policy (IDP)**

High density of population in Bangladesh might put additional challenges regarding management of the issue of climate induced forced displacement in future. Presently 964 people are living per square kilometer in Bangladesh, which is already one of the highest population densities in the world. By 2050, the average number of population will be 1580 per sq. km, which will be 3 or 4 time higher comparing global average. Ahmad and Ahmed (2000) anticipated escalation of social tension and consequent rupture of social harmony following large scale climate induced forced displacement across the country.

This concern should be addressed through a systematic exercise and development of grievance redress mechanism. In order to achieve a smooth social transition, we recommend that GOB will develop a policy regime for internal management of displaced population who are victims of climate variability and change. Many countries have so far developed/proposed their policy regime to address CIFD. Bangladesh should take initiatives to learn from such policy regime and devise its own policies and plans towards facilitating safer displacement of climate victims. We need to develop a policy that will support climate victims in anticipation of adverse climatic impacts to prevent their displacement and simultaneously, create opportunities for those who will have no other option but to contemplate displacement from highly vulnerable areas of the country. We request and demand to our government to develop our internal displacement management policy, by which we could be able to establish internal mechanisms to address the critical issue.

### **c. Educate and skill up the people for migration with dignity in both home and abroad**

Most of the climate induced displaced people lack education and skill. The lack of skills to continue livelihoods leaves little room to eke out a living when ravaged by climate driven extreme events. In contrast, while education enhances possibilities to find adequate response measures, the victims easily diversify their economy by finding one or more suitable opportunities and alternatives. We think, the traditional development strategies can never be suitable in managing the climate induced forced displacement, rather to ensure sustainable solution we need special and out of the box attention.

In that cases government must consider facilitating additional, effective and job oriented education strategies (which involve awareness, vocational training, skills and

orientation towards self-employment). Enhanced skills can be helpful for the climate induced people to ensure their uninterrupted livelihoods. Therefore, we demand engagement of all technical and vocational institutions for employment oriented education of forced displaced people. Such a technical education should be prioritized for climate hot spot areas. These technical educations will also be able to meet the growing urban demand for similar skills. Skilled displaced people will be able to ensure a dignified livelihood option, without being looked down upon as mere climate victims.

Therefore, we demand to engage all technical and vocational institutions for their first stage of employment oriented education. Such an education should be incorporated for coastal areas especially from junior to higher secondary level where rate of drop out is all most 50 %. Skilled people also will be able to ensure a livelihood option for them with dignity in home and abroad.

## **3.2 Exploring Possibilities in Regional Level**

### **a. Easier VISA process for climate induced cross border migration**

Cross border migration is evident between neighboring countries worldwide. IPCC has reported the same experience on cross-border migration and its trend of mobility. But this is a big concern since cross-border migration is often treated threat to national security, and unexpected barriers are being imposed in the name of national security. We think that neighboring countries should reconsider and make the VISA process easier for cross-border migration especially for climate induced force displaced people. We have an example Between India-Nepal cross-border movement & migration (1965 Friendship Treaty) and could follow this instance under the SAARC mechanism.

### **b. Setting common standard to facilitate cross border migration**

Off course we accept and recognize that there are a common standard needed for climate induced displaced especially on their identification, definition and inter-state migratory process & modalities that will ensure a well managed and safer migration pathways. In order to build up this common standard, we demand to our neighboring countries initiating a new work frame.

### **c. India-Bangladesh can follow bi-lateral model for climate induced cross border migration**

Further, on a bilateral front, both India and Bangladesh should study the model followed by Australia and New Zealand that supports people from neighboring countries suffering from the consequences of climate change. This could even have an impact on future trade relations between the two countries. Hence, India should look at migration as an opportunity rather than a threat and start working to formulate strategies with all the stakeholders, especially Bangladesh, to deal with the potential threat of

climate induced migration in the most proactive manner (The tenuous of Future climate migrants: Manish Vaid and Tridivesh Singh Maini, India 2014).

### 3.3 To UN and CoP process

#### a. Bangladesh govt. should develop text for submission to UN and CoP process

Our Prime Minister demands a separate protocol for climate induced displaced in different international forums. She categorically demanded it in the UN general assembly in 2009. There our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that “Copenhagen must consider measures to provide social, cultural and economic support for “climate migrants” who have to flee their homes and sometimes their entire countries because of global warming. She added “make a strong call” for the development of a new legal regime under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Protocol to ensure the “social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of climate-induced displaced migrants” (Ref: UN news center at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=32278#.VRecYpPnyBF>).

In the forum of CVC (Climate Vulnerable Forum) in 2011, our Prime Minister said that “the gravest effect of climate change may be on human migration. Last year, 42 million people were newly displaced by rapid-onset natural disasters. Extreme weather events are already displacing many more people than violent conflict. Slow-onset events like sea-level rise and desertification get even lower global focus. We must work towards correcting this imbalance and we need to commence discussion on the creation of an appropriate framework to address the needs of people displaced due to climate change” (Ref: Inaugural speech from Sheikh Hasina, also see more at <http://daraint.org/2011/11/14/2726/inauguration-of-the-climate-vulnerable-forum-2011/#sthash.YVBVJ51V.dpuf>).

Apart from, in April 2014 she also demanded the inclusion of migration issue in post-2015 development agenda during the “Global expert meeting on Migration in the post-2015 Development Agenda”. In favor of her demand, our Prime Minister said “the world leaders to include the migration issue in the post-2015 development agenda with due importance and view every migrant as a ‘human person’ instead of only a factor of production. It’s a growing need for social protection for migrants and members of their families in the countries like Bangladesh, exposed to climate change and facing some acute challenges, while safeguarding lives and livelihoods of millions of people” (Bengalnews24.com, 28 April, 2014).

Following the demand, respective ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Forest & Environment) are yet to develop any demand and to submit any official proposal to UN and CoP negotiations. We demand to the ministries to give importance to the Prime Minister’s well wish and to develop a proposal to submit to the next CoP negotiation. This proposal should include clear demand on the rights of climate displaced people and their protection.

#### b. Rich countries will have to facilitate climate induced displaced following Cancun Adaptation Framework:

The Cancun Adaptation Framework has emphasized to take into the account the issue of climate induced forced displacement under the principle of Common But Different Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC). CBDRRC principle have been recognized by all country parties especially by developed countries for enhancing their action thorough enhancing understanding, coordination and cooperation regarding climate induced displacement and migration. The Article 14(f) of Cancun Agreement clearly decided to extend international cooperation to support planned relocation where appropriate at national regional and international level (Cancun Agreement: Article 14.f). The Doha decision has placed Loss and Damage under wider Adaptation regime and therefore, the issues concerning climate induced forced displacement should be reviewed in 2016 under the international L&D Mechanism.

We express our concern in this regard and we would like to demand to the developed countries to recognize their responsibilities and to create an international regime to facilitate various processes of climate induced forced displacement of people. The legally binding agreement to be developed leading up to Paris must include this aspect and create an avenue to discuss how best to serve the purpose of victims of such displacements. The call for an international Protocol on Climate Induced Forced Displacement must not be undermined in UNFCCC-led negotiation processes.

#### c. Develop new international protocol under UN process

The Cancun Adaptation framework is also leveraging us and demanding to develop a new international protocol through UN process. As UN has mandate to protect human rights, so it has responsibility to initiate a new international protocol/legal process towards protecting rights of climate induced displaced and their effective relocation, rehabilitation and in case of reintegration at destination societies. Since these people are hapless victims of excessive emission of greenhouse gases from advanced economies, the creators of the problem must also create avenues to facilitate the forced displaces so that they can enjoy dignified life. We call for a new international protocol under the UN processes to ensure rights of the climate victims.

#### d. Developed countries must include and mention the actions and support strategies in their INDC for climate displaced people

The Lima outcome has attributed the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) that will be a foundation for climate action in post 2020 new agreement. But attribution is meant only for mitigation commitment and dictated by the developed countries, which is not logical and ethical considering the crisis faced by climate

vulnerable countries. So we demand that all country parties especially developed countries will have to mention their effort and support in INDCs for vulnerable countries to achieve a sustainable solution with climate induced displaced people.

#### **e. UN will raise the climate displaced issue as separate agenda in COP negotiation process**

The climate induced forced displacement is a not a local crisis, rather IPCC recognizes it as a global and human rights crisis. The effective and sustainable solution of this crisis is obviously related with ensuring rights of the affected people. As a facilitator of COP process, UN could address this issue to formulate a separate and acceptable international framework that is needed, where all country parties will act accordingly. In that case we demand separate agenda in the COP negotiation process.

Regarding the issue we also demand for special care to be considered in dealing with the climate induced displaced issue within the discourse of Loss & Damage (L & D). Because the L & D and its negotiation process and techniques are mostly market and finance based solutions, which are not appropriate mechanisms for addressing climate induced displaced population. So we demand for looking at the climate induced displaced population in the perspectives of both finance and human rights and find a unique solution accordingly through a global process.

#### **f. Bangladesh govt. needs to mobilize their interest in CVF, LDC and MVCs**

Due to lack of appropriate advocacy and lobby in the above mentioned forums, our own interest especially on the management of the climate displaced people are not getting due emphasis and proper attention. We expect that, our government will take this issue with due emphasis and will set appropriate strategies to mobilize the agenda through these forums. Government should try to take leading role in these forums also to create an

international regime for climate induced forced displaced people.

### **3.4 In international level**

#### **a. Climate induced displaced must be included in all global discourses as separate agenda**

This is being observed that the agenda on climate induced displaced is not included in many important global development discourses like, Post 2015 SDG, RIO+20 etc. We denounce the dual policies in dealing with an important agenda such as the one involving climate induced forced displacement. Where UN and other international discourses have been talking about future sustainable development, the problem involving climate induced forced displacement has been deliberately kept out of the evolving regimes despite being discussed at COPs under 14(f) of Cancun Agreement. The omission is unacceptable and is a clear gap in other global negotiations and agreements. We demand to the UN for including the issue in all global development discourses.

#### **b. International policies will have to be reviewed and updated**

We demand all international policies to be brought under a global review process so that the rights of the climate induced forced displaced population may be upheld. These policies have been developed during the Second World War in order to create peace and to establish human rights among the war-torn countries. These policies certainly could not highlight the need for addressing climate change. Over time, situation has been changed in human rights perspective and considering future development requirement. Such agreed and subsequent legal regimes need to incorporate climate change related concerns, which is more forward looking. So therefore demand a thorough review of all international policies and to update those in the light of new requirements, especially those involving CIFD.

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#### Organizations:

Bangladesh Poribesh Angolan (BAPA), Bangladesh Indigenous People Network for Climate Change and Bio Diversity (BIPNet-CCBD), Bangladesh Climate Change Journalist Forum (BCJF), Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL), Climate Change Development Forum (CCDF) Coastal Development Partnership (CDP), CounterFoto, Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN), Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (EquityBD), Forum for Environmental Journalist in Bangladesh (FEJB), Participatory Research & Development Initiative (PRDI) and Udayan Bangladesh

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