

## RIO+20 and Green Economy:

### Is there any opportunity for the sustainable development of Bangladesh?

20 years have been passed. In this June the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20 is going to be held, just after two decades of the first earth summit of Rio, Brazil in 1992. In the first summit international action plan to ensure sustainable development was taken. World leaders recognized the unequal and unsustainable character of prevailing development patterns of that time, They also committed to take initiatives towards more equitable and sustainable development. The first earth summit produced the conventions on climate change and biodiversity, and the Agenda 21 action plan.

What the world has achieved after 20 years. In fact, we will find that, the world is not on the track of realizing or implementing the commitment and the plan of the first summit towards the sustainable development. The existing scenario gives some picture of upset. For example, Global economic expansion continues to severely strain the environment. Humanity's ecological footprint now exceeds the planet's bio-capacity by over 50%.

Despite the vast amounts of wealth being produced, the benefits and costs are not shared equally, rather it is very unequal. The wealthiest 20% of humankind are responsible for nearly 80% of greenhouse gas emissions while they are enjoying over 70% of total world income. Half of the world's population live on less than \$2.50 a day, nearly 1 billion live in hunger, and close to 2 billion are trapped in multidimensional poverty. The bottom 20% share only 1% of world income but suffer the worst consequences of the climate crisis generated by this economic system.

The main causes for the existing world wide social unrest are the expanded social and economic disparities, injustice and exclusion. Recent surveys indicate a diminishing trend in people's confidence in the ability of governments to deal with the multiple crises faced by the majority.



World leaders should utilize the upcoming Rio+20 summit to face the existing world wide social, economic and ecological problems. But civil society members and some government representatives have already expressed their concern on the themes of the upcoming event. Their concern is, these themes are not adequate and holistic to address the dominating social, economic and ecological problems. The two themes are, 'Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication' and the 'Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development'.

Concern, discussion and fear about the Green Economy' have been raised across the globe. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) asserts that there is "growing recognition that achieving sustainability rests almost entirely on getting the economy right". For this reason, the concept of a Green Economy and how it proposes to advance economic, ecological and social sustainability should be critically analyzed.

#### **The concept and concerns of the Green Economy:**

According to the Green Economy Report of the UNEP, Green Economy does the following: (a) Produce low greenhouse gas emissions; (b) Use resources more efficiently; (c) Continue to generate growth, income and jobs; and (d) Observe social equity and inclusiveness. In the GER's words, it is one that "results in improved human well-being and social equity, while

significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.” Supporters of the Green Economy argues that, the green shift is both necessary for humanity and profitable for business, can reduce the human ecological footprint 50% by 2050, will develop renewable energy sources, be a net generator of jobs and an engine of economic growth, and is vital for the elimination of world poverty.

It is said that, Green Economy can get it desired pace in three steps or parts, such as:

Part I : Investing in Natural Capital-is divided into four areas: Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries, and Water.

Part II : Investing in Energy and Resource Efficiency- identifies seven sectors: Manufacturing, Waste, Transport, Renewable Energy, Buildings, Tourism, and Cities

Part III: Supporting the transition to a global green economy- describes three means to the stated ends: Modeling, Enabling Conditions, and Finance.

What will be the source of the finance for the Green Economy? There are some suggestions:

- Invest 2% of Global GDP (USD 1.3 trillion per year) and until 2050.
- For economic development and intended to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and eliminate poverty.
- Investment Success requires “sound public policies and regulatory frameworks” including removal of “costly and harmful subsidies”. Currently one to two percent of global GDP goes to pernicious subsidies, particularly to fossil fuels. That money could be redirected by governments and multilateral financial institutions into green projects.
- Innovative and technology development will supportive and enhance the effective supply of resources. So investment needed in technological breakthrough for resource productivity and development of knowledge-based product and services as well as resources substitution.

## **Green Economy is a THREAT for the LDCs!**

Experts express their concern that, Green Economy can be threat for the Least Development Countries, because:

- First hit will come to agriculture sector through LULUCF that’s allowing bio-char, ethanol plantations and GMO mega-projects, and ignoring the rights of local people who practice marginal farming. This allows land grabs and dispossession, which are already happening.
- Investing REDD will allow “forest landholders” ignores indigenous peoples, peasants and others who cannot prove legal title to the land. It will promote monoculture tree plantations as “forest” that will be major cause of destroying bio-diversity and eco system.
- Shift industries from brown to green might not be affordable for LDCs and if support be available but with hard terms & conditions and might hamper the national plan.

## **Civil Societies Members’ observation on the Green economy**

Civil society members across the globe and some governments are opposing the idea of the Green Economy. According to them-

- The Green Economy is not characterized by a redistribution of the ownership and control of economic resources. It is premised on a highly inequitable and undemocratic structure where a few control a vast portion of resources.
- The Green Economy is not oriented towards providing for peoples’ needs in a manner that is in harmony with the environment and within the earth’s carrying capacity. Instead it upholds profit generation as the main motivation for economic undertakings, aggregate growth as the main measure of success, and markets as main determinants of what goods and services are sold and who can buy them.

- The Green Economy will not green agriculture or feed the hungry; rather, it will lead to the capture and further commoditization of all elements crucial for agricultural and food production--land, water, seeds, biodiversity--by corporations, and the disintegration of local, diverse food systems
- The Green economy does not recognize and account for discrimination and disparities based on gender, class and race/ethnicity, nor does it recognize social reproduction and activities outside of the public sphere such as the invisible work of women. Economies that are blind to these conditions will only serve to reinforce injustices arising from these.
- This "Green Economy" definitely not result in improved human well-being and social equity. Instead, the Green Economy will raise the commoditization, privatization and profit making of nature making and concentration of control over nature by elites to new heights.
- Commoditization, privatization and commercialization of natural resources has been happening in few context and for some time.
- Thus the Green Economy will deepen these processes expand them to include all resources that are crucial to life, eg, water, biodiversity, forests, lands, seeds, etc. The Green Economy will intensify the globalization of the right to own and monopolize these resources, globalization of such markets, and globalization of impacts.

### **Civil society members' to the Green Economy**

Experts, activists and civil society members work with the nature, environment, climate and bio-diversity place some demands or suggestion to the Green Economy to make really effective in ensuring sustainable development, such as:

It must be followed the Universal Declaration of Mother Earth's Right. Mother Earth is a living system and human is the part of nature. There is no right to infringing the Mother Earth through human actions.

So that it should to immediate stop to the commoditization, privatization and commercialization of nature, especially lands, water, territories, eco-system and all its components and functions.

Also call to stop of all policies and laws that allow land- grabbing and support governance systems that ensure equitable access of local communities and peoples to the natural commons.

The world must move decisively and immediately to drastically reduce GHG emissions and to shift to low-carbon. The transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient systems should socially just, rather than an opportunity for further expansion of finance capital and commercialization of nature and life.

All false solutions especially those involving the commoditization and commercialization of nature and its functions (ex. carbon trading and REDD) and the violation of peoples, rights must be stopped.

This is an obligations of rich, industrialized countries to include providing the appropriate technology and covering the full cost of enabling people of the LDCs to deal with the impacts of climate change,

### **Green Economy and sustainable development of Bangladesh**

There should be effective analyze to identify whether the there is any opportunity for Bangladesh to ensure its sustainable development. For various reason Bangladesh is recognized as a vulnerable countries. Though Bangladesh has done well in achieving some of the MDGs targets, it is still lagged behind in many issues. It has over population (1200/Sq km) and still high birth rate (1.67%). There is chronic poverty (31%) , employment and Food insecurity. It has low per capita GDP and low investing capacity.

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change effects that will major constraint for sustainable development. Rate of natural disaster has been increased dud to climate change. 60% people of Bangladesh is yet directly or indirectly depend on agriculture. Frequent flood, gradually increasing salinity,

changing pattern of rain caused less production. Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assumed that 8% of rice and 32% of wheat production of Bangladesh will be decreased by 2050 due to impact of climate change. It is also assumed that rising sea level will turn 20 million people into climate migrant by next 20 years. Poverty, high density of population, depletion of natural resources, institutional limitations are the major concern of Bangladesh.

Under this circumstances, to ensure the sustainable development and to achieve the MDGs within 2015, Bangladesh will need 104.18 billion dollar. But government allocation on this regard in the last fiscal year was frustrating. UN suggestion was to allocate 5% of the GDP, but the allocation for the health sector was only 0.98% and 2.25% for the health sector.

This type of allocation can't contribute in long term poverty eradication, nor this can ensure effective achievement of the MDGs. Green economy or green world is not possible without a long term solution of the poverty.

Besides different development plan, Bangladesh has prepared the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) for adaptation with climate change impact. Implementing the plan required strong inter-ministerial coordination that absent. Bangladesh needs at least USD 5 billion for climate adaptation and 104 billion for achieving the MDGs by 2015, but the source is uncertain.

### **What should be Bangladesh's role in Rio+20?**

Bangladesh representatives to the RIO+20 summit should consider homeland's sovereignty and the future security of the next generation and they should play their role according to that consideration. They should consider the following:

- Bangladesh should oppose any sort of Conditionality.
- Ensure State sovereignty to determining the strategy for adopting so-called green economic initiation.
- No private sector finance in the natural resources. State has to be ensured as their obligatory measures to preserve and protect the natural resources and to establish people's right and ownership.
- Rich and Developed countries will finance and technologies to the poor countries (like Bangladesh) in line with their national condition and as they are responsible for damage the mother earth and if really want a green earth in future.
- Strong position to cancel the IPR

Rio+20 is important for both mankind and the globe where green economy and institutional framework will be focused. For sustainable development greening the economy is important and Bangladesh need technical and technological assistance from developed countries to do so. Simultaneously we have to prepare some regulations to stop the new profit strategy on the name of green market strategy of corporate companies. Efforts of green economy will initiated by developed countries and developing countries may follow that. In the contest of Bangladesh, reducing poverty and strengthening local government is necessary for sustainable development. Without strong engagement of local government it is hard to meet the norms of sustainable development. Financial and technological support is also required. Unfortunately, most of the developed countries have failed to provide their committed fund for developing countries which are environmentally vulnerable.