

Local and National NGOs of Bangladesh on the Eve of WHS
 Accountability to Community and Frontline Workers First

Equal and Dignified Partnership for Sustainable Capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction and Response



The six years old girl was trying to find out her parents who were lost in the cyclone Sidr previous night (2007)

Climate change and disaster vulnerability in Bangladesh

The seventh Climate Change and Environmental Risk Atlas (CCERA) recently released by Maplecroft, a global risk analytics company, identifies Bangladesh as the country at 1st and most risk considering Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI). It evaluates the sensitivity of populations, the physical exposure of countries, and governmental capacity to adapt to climate change over the next 30 years.¹ The sixth annual Climate Change Vulnerability Index of Maplecroft revealed that, Bangladesh would feel the economic impacts of climate change most intensely and that its capital Dhaka would be one of the five most climate vulnerable cities in the world.²

Bangladesh is one of the most natural disaster prone countries in the world, occupying the 5th position among 173 countries. Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most natural disaster prone countries in the world, occupying the 5th position among 173 countries. Bangladesh scores 63.78 percent in vulnerability, 86.84 and 61.03 percent in lack of coping and adaptive capacities respectively³. The country is also considered as one of the most vulnerable countries due the impact of climate change for its huge population of 160 million and world's most dense population.

¹<http://maplecroft.com/portfolio/new-analysis/2014/10/29/climate-change-and-lack-food-security-multiply-risks-conflict-and-civil-unrest-32-countries-maplecroft/>

²<http://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/bangladesh-most-climate-vulnerable-country>

Consultation on WHS in Bangladesh

On the eve of the World Humanitarian Summit, a working group of 28 Bangladeshi local and national NGOs have gone through a countrywide consultation with various stakeholders. The principal theme of the consultation was Natural Disasters in Bangladesh. 21 NGOs organized 50 Focus Group Consultations (FGC) and 997 individual interviews in 16 districts of Bangladesh on 9 sub themes under disaster including flood, flash flood, cyclone, salinity, deforestation, drought, river erosion, monsoon tidal surge and cold wave.

The key participants of the consultation process included affected communities, frontline staff/workers, CEO of NGOs/Institutions, local government representatives, old age, physically challenged, children, fisher-folk and local media representatives.

scores 63.78 percent in vulnerability, 86.84 and 61.03 percent in lack of coping and adaptive capacities respectively³. The country is also considered as one of the most vulnerable countries due to the impact of climate change for its huge population of 160 million and world's most dense population. 31.5% of the total population is living at the upper poverty line and 17.60% are extreme poor. It is now worldwide recognized that, the poor⁴ in Bangladesh will face more food insecurity, water stress and health problems because of the rapidly changing climate that also significantly undermines the poverty reduction efforts⁵.

Bangladesh government emphasized facing the climate change challenges and to reduce the risk of disaster and the continued efforts in this significantly reduced the number of lives lost in cyclones. Bangladesh has also been successful in disaster management in some dimensions.

In spite of these achievements, Bangladesh remains as a priority country for the OCHA Global Focus Model. It is ranked fourth in the Asia-Pacific region in terms of risk factors indicating that international humanitarian response may be necessary in medium or large-scale emergencies.⁶ Bangladesh is exposed to a wide range of disaster and is consistently ranked amongst the most vulnerable countries in the world. The country ranks 1st in terms of vulnerability and 6th in terms of human exposure to floods and cyclone in the world. Similarly, the country is highly exposed to the risk of Tsunami (3rd out of 76 countries) and earthquakes (17th out of 153 countries), landslides (35th out of 162) and drought (63rd out of 162 countries). Bangladesh faces extreme risks of climate change and ranks 2nd on the Climate Change Vulnerability Index.⁷

During 1991 to 2010 Bangladesh invested \$321 million for disaster risk reduction⁸ and the investment is quite significant as it drastically reduced the loss of lives in the cyclones. Enhanced humanitarian activities have also been experienced.

Methodologies and Activities

Bangladesh NGOs working group on WHS (BNfWHS) are organizing the consultation process mainly in two different stages. Stage one is up to the South and Central Asian consultation (July 2015). The activities implemented at this stage are: two Preparatory Meetings, Formation of alliance/Working group, Orientation on WHS questionnaire, Distribution of organizations for country wide FGC and interview, Field Work i.e. FGC and Interview, Workshop to compile the findings, National seminar to present the key findings.

The national level seminar was presided by Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Member of the 2007 Nobel Peace prize Winning UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Team. The chief guest of the seminar was Md. Shah Alam, Secretary for the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, which is the highest administrative position in implementing government decisions. Mr. Jeremy Wellard from UN OCHA was also present.

³United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), The Nature Conservancy, Alliance Development Works, World Risk Report-2012: Environmental Degradation and Disaster.

⁴Bangladesh Government (2015): Bangladesh Economic Review

⁵UNDP Human Development Report (2007), Background Paper on Risks, Vulnerability and Adaptation in Bangladesh

⁶UNDP (2011): Achieving Effective Balance in Coordination: Disaster Risk Reduction Through Preparedness & Response

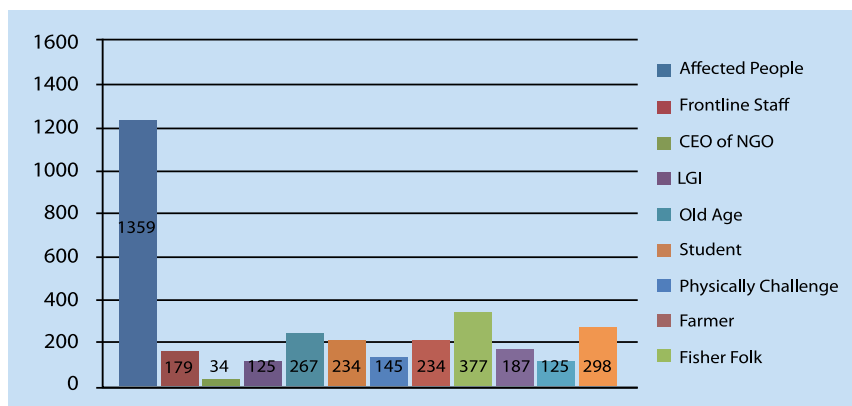
⁷European Commission (2014), Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, Bangladesh fact sheet)

⁸Excerpted from WHS Regional Scoping Paper (For South and Central Asia)

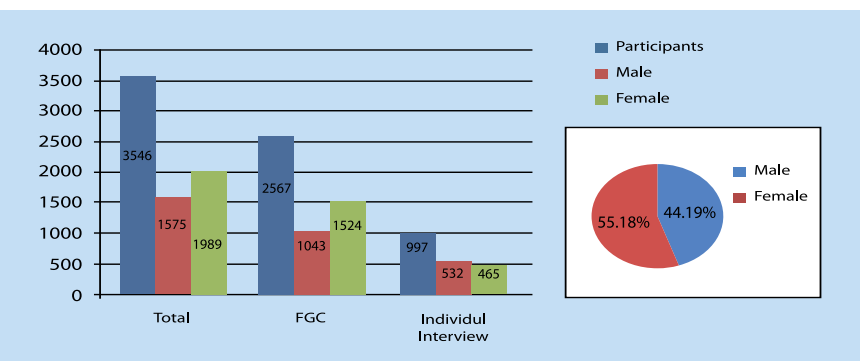
Along with these activities stage two is also going on which will be continued up to the global summit (May 2016). Details of this stage are available at: <http://www.coastbd.org/event/preparation-meeting-on-national-consultation-in-view-of-whs-world-humanitarian-summit>
<https://www.facebook.com/bdngswhs?fref=ts>

Number and Types of Participants

The consultation tried to involve all stakeholders related in the process. The participants for the FGC and interviews are selected by maintaining specific criteria so that the outcomes get more focused. The people affected by various disasters and people vulnerable and exposed to them are considered to get in the center. Community members experienced of getting humanitarian support and the ones who need it are given special attention. NGO staffs involved in various humanitarian activities are also included in this. Types of the participants are shown in the following chart:



A total of 3565 individuals participated in the consultation process including 1575 men and 1989 women. 2567 people participate in the Focus Group Consultation and 997 are interviewed. Number of participants in total, in FGC and interviews is shown in the following chart.



Objectives of the Consultation

The NGOs working group mainly tried to get ideas on the effectiveness of humanitarian support, vulnerabilities of people due to natural disaster, innovation and recommendation for effective humanitarian support. All the findings are compiled, fine tuned and validated in a workshop with the participation of representatives from the members NGOs. Final recommendations are placed in the national level seminar in presence of policy makers, top most administrative policy implementers, representatives from national and international NGOs, experts, activists, academics etc.

Covered Areas and Issues

FGCs and interviews covered all of the important regions of Bangladesh. Covered areas and issues are displayed in the following table and map of Bangladesh.

Area	Disaster Issues
1. Kurigram	Drought
2. Gaibandha	River eroaion
3. Sherpur	Flash Flood
4. Jamalpur	River Erosion, Flood
5. Bogra	Cold Wave
6. Natore	Drought
7. Tangail	Flood
8. Kishoreganj	Flood
9. Munsiganj	Flood
10. Khulna	Salinity
11. Pirojpur	Cyclone
12. Noakhali	Cyclone
13. Patuakhali	Salinity
14. Bhola	Cyclone
15. Chittagong	Deforestation
16. Cox's Bazar	Monsoon Tidal Surge



Common issues of concern for Local Level Arrangement

1. **Building sustainable capacities** of local NGOs for **immediate response** in local level instead of waiting for external assistance,
2. Institutional and **capacity building support** to local NGOs along with the partnerships with INGOs and donors agencies in respect of project implementation, with special emphasis on **Strategies to empower Frontline** workers and communities.
3. **Devising downward accountability and Complaint Response Mechanism** that will promote a reasonable level of direct and both way communication for policy/ planning with frontline workers and community.
4. Priority to **work with local government** and other government agencies to **develop sustainable capacity** in respect of disaster risk reduction and responses,
5. Local government and other **government agencies should be assisted** to develop their capacities in respect of having **coordination** with all.

Common issues of concern (National Level)

1. Need of priority based **investment to construct embankment** in coastal and flood prone area,
2. **Excavation and re-excavation of ponds / water reservoirs** for surface water preservation,



At the national level seminar (From the left) Mr. Jeremy Wellard (UN OCHA), Rezaul Karim Cowdhury (COAST Trust), Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad (Chairman, PKSF), Emranul Haque Chowdhury (Uddipan) and Rafiqul Alam (DUS)

3. **Increasing allocation and investment** for disaster risk reduction and **building resilient community**,
4. Government assistance and easier regulation for **promoting community media (radio)**,
5. Government assistance and easy regulation for **network building among Amateur Radio for disaster response**,
6. Priority to invest and strengthening **telecom network with national ownership** in it,
7. **I-NGOs should not compete with National NGOs** in respect of fund hunting for national level activities,
8. **Multi stakeholder dialogue** for sharing experiences and strategies in respect of **future disaster risk reduction** and humanitarian activities,
9. **Ethical expenditure with value for money** with respect to the tax payers concern and poor people's culture,
10. Bangladesh should prepare its **own rehabilitation and relocation policies for internally displaced people** by disaster and climate impacts.

Common issues of concern (International Level)

1. **INGOs should have more development education in their country of origin** for not having **antipathy to development aid and xenophobia**. There should be a sense of **global citizenship and global sharing**,
2. Promoting a reasonable level of organizational culture of **Mutual Accountability and Horizontal Communication** while tiers in mid level sometimes hinder **appropriate understanding on ground level**,
3. UN should consider **new protocol on disaster or climate displaced**. As we feel that Bangladesh alone will hardly be able to meet this displacement situation, and finally,
4. Preparation and implementation with **verification system** in respect of **Principles of Partnership** and code of conduct thereby **respecting each other's organizational sovereignty** and dignity.

