



Press Release, Dhaka, 19 February 2017



Seminar with Member of Parliament (MP) s and civil society in Parliament Media Centre on Anticipatory Crisis in Bangladesh Coast in Next Monsoon.

## **WDB has to be restructured and coordinate with other, must take anticipatory action to save coastal population.**

Dhaka, 19 February 2017. Today a seminar titled “Protecting Bangladesh Coast from Climate Catastrophes: Actions Prior to Next Monsoon” jointly organized by office of the Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment and Forest in cooperation with COAST Trust where speakers emphasized the protection of coastal land and people could be done from country’s own resources, and in this regard Water Development Board has to be restructured and must coordinate with other government ministries. The seminar was chaired by Dr. Hasan Mahmud, moderated by Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of COAST Trust. Special Guest of the seminar was Mr. Abdullah Al Islam MP Deputy Minister. Other speakers are Dr. Ainun Nishat Emirates Professor BRAC University, Mr. Ponchanon Biswas MP, Ms. Zebunnesa Afroz MP, Mr. Ponkaz Nath MP, Mr. Shiekh Nurul Haque MP and Mr. Didarul Islam MP. Mr. Mujibul Haque Munir of COAST Trust gave the key note presentation.

Mr Mujibul Haque Munir in his key note presentation, apart from the long term impact of climate change in Bangladeshi coastal area, presented the gloomy experiences of embankment construction with emergency allocation which was given after cyclone Roanu i.e. after last monsoon. He said about discrepancies of original plan and actual work; hardly 50 % of the work has been done so far, although there is lot of concern on quality. He expressed worries; if this sorry state will prevails then again coastal population will suffer tidal surge and related crisis again in next monsoon. Apart from long term solutions, he proposed (i) full transparency and accountability of the Water Development Board (WDB) officials to the local community and to local governments, (ii) coordination between Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) and Relief Ministry iii) special allocation to the Upazilla Parishad for emergency work during next monsoon.

Mr. Didarul Islam MP of Sitakundu, Ms. Zebunnesa MP of Barisal, Mr. Pankaz Nath MP of Mehediganj, Mr. Shiekh Nurul Haque MP of Koira, Mr. Ponchanon Biswas of Khulna also narrated the sorry state of their constituency which in fact is still unprotected from river erosion and tidal surge; people are worried about incoming monsoon. They have emphasized sluice gate reactivation, canal revaccinations and dredging, river management in their area. They also said that presence of WDB officials in the field are found minimum. They narrated the sorry state of their constituencies whom in fact in still unprotected from river erosion and tidal surge further more drinking water crisis is also acute in most of the areas.

Dr. Ainun Nishat has said that, embankment height in coastal area has to be increased up to 7 meter, participation of local community, transparency and accountability to them should be a must in WDB work. He criticized the present preparation of Delta plan as proposed by donors. Dr. Hasan Mahmud said that, political leaders should come forward in suggesting mobilizing country’s local resource how the government can do their coastal protection work with country’s own local resource mobilization. He also said that the World Bank should not come forward with the proposal of giving loan to Bangladesh in this regard. He emphasized that, WDB has to be restructure and there must be coordination with LGED, Relief Ministry and Shipping Ministry for protecting Bangladesh’s coast.

Reported by : Rezaul Karim Chodhury +8801711529792, Mostafa K Akhanda +8801711455591