

Bangladesh - National Debriefing on the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26): Expectations, Achievements and Way Forward



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Introduction

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26 (the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties), was held in Glasgow, Scotland from 31 October to 13 November 2021. The Bangladesh delegation was led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and included government officials, cabinet members, and climate experts. As a national post-COP26 action, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in Bangladesh and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), under the CARE for South Asia project, jointly organized a national debriefing workshop on 1 December 2021. The workshop was held at the conference room of the Department of Environment (DoE).

Overview



Among the members of the COP26 government delegation participating in the workshop were the honorable Minister and Deputy Minister for the MoEFCC, along with two other parliament members (who are also members of the parliamentary standing committee for MoEFCC). Renowned climate change specialists and COP negotiators Dr. Ainun Nishat and Dr. Q.K. Ahmad were also present at the event, and shared their insights

on COP26 proceedings. Mr. Md. Mostafa Kamal, Secretary, MoEFCC chaired and moderated the event.



Overall, more than 100 participants from key ministries and departments attended the debriefing. The objectives of the event were to reflect on the collective experience of attending COP26, and, based on that, to identify the priorities for the country. It was also expected that the discussion would help chalk out national priorities for adaptation and mitigation in Bangladesh.

Reflections on COP26

The speakers highlighted that the countries that supported the Glasgow Climate Pact are determined to mark the decade of the 2020s as the decade of climate action and support. Related decisions range from more concerted efforts to build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to providing necessary financing. At COP26, countries reaffirmed their position and assured their best possible efforts to channel 100 billion dollars annually from developed countries to developing countries. Countries at COP26 agreed to join hands to reduce the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions, so as to keep the global temperature rise under 1.5 degrees.

The keynote speakers shared a few achievements of COP26. They mentioned, as part of the package decisions, that the Paris Agreement's rulebook completion is both urgent and necessary. This relates to market mechanisms and non-market approaches including transparent reporting of climate actions and support provided or received, including for loss and damage. This set of rules lays out how countries are held accountable for delivering on their climate action promises and self-set targets under their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). At COP26, parties adopted reporting tables and formats, outlines for a biennial transparency report and technical review report, as well as a training program for technical review experts.

The participants also highlighted the launch of a work program on the global goal for adaptation, which is considered an important part of the world's journey to both make and measure progress towards limiting global average temperature increase.



The Paris Agreement (Article 9.4) states that the provision of scaled-up financial resources should aim to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation. In fact, there is a political aspiration of having a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation, with a greater share of the adaptation funding going to the most vulnerable countries (UNFCCC, 2021b). Hence, COP26 urged developed nations to at least double their collective provision for adaptation finance at 2019 levels by 2025, in order to achieve this balance between adaptation and mitigation.

At COP26, parties adopted the functions of the Santiago Network and set up a process to further develop the institutional and funding arrangements for the Network. This will make it possible to identify technical assistance needs and priorities, and more effectively catalyze demand-driven technical assistance for averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage at the local, national and regional levels. Parties also established the Glasgow Dialogue to take place over the next three years: so as to discuss arrangements for funding activities to avert, minimize, and address loss and damage. The discussants noted the important role of Bangladesh in COP26 as a chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF).

The way forward and action plans for Bangladesh

Mr. Md. Mostafa Kamal, Secretary, MoEFCC urged that adapting to climate change and building resilience is a call for everyone. Frontline communities which are the most vulnerable to climate change do not have the luxury of time to wait; they are already adapting to climate change scenarios in their own way. Therefore, actions should be taken by integrating locally-led adaptation approaches and re-generating systems of nature that are the most powerful means to tackle it. Finally, the workshop concluded with a number of actions as a way forward for Bangladesh, including the following steps.

Policy and Planning

- o The MoEFCC is formulating a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) which needs to be prepared based on the latest projections by the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).
- o Science-based planning and development linkages are important for policy formulation, hence coordination between Universities and Ministries is needed for capacity development and research.
- o Preparation for the country's position paper should be started, towards submission for the pre-COP events next year.
- o Bangladesh needs to develop a Climate Risk Index for climate investment.

Climate Finance

- o Local-level financing is equally important for building climate resilience, and the government is doing its best to allocate resources for climate actions through the development planning and budget setting process. Sector ministries are encouraged to build capacity to undertake new and innovative climate adaptation projects.
- o Private sector engagement in climate financing is equally important, with revenue financing by the government and grants financing by multilateral and bi-lateral entities.
- o An increase of the Adaptation Fund is a good notion, but Bangladesh needs to improve its capacity to design new projects to enhance access to this fund.

Research and Capacity Building

- o Research and data availability are very critical issues for investment, hence data provision on climate resilience and disaster-informed investment needs to be emphasized towards effective planning and sustainable development.
- o Capacity to access the new and additional international financing windows for climate change should be enhanced.
- o Inter-ministerial coordination is important for effective planning and implementation of climate actions.
- o Strengthening the monitoring mechanism for NDC project implementation is essential.
- o Engagement of youth and the private sector is encouraged for the planning and implementation of climate actions in COP26.

Cross-cutting Issues

Gender considerations need to be increasingly integrated within development planning as well as climate financing.



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