



PROCEEDINGS
Seminar on

Global Climate Negotiations: Challenges and Priorities for Bangladesh

Wednesday, 18 December 2024



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Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)



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Seminar on **Global Climate Negotiations: Challenges and Priorities for Bangladesh**

Wednesday, 18 December 2024



The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised a seminar titled “**Global Climate Negotiations: Challenges and Priorities for Bangladesh**” on Wednesday, 18 December 2024, at the BISS auditorium. **HE Syeda Rizwana Hasan**, Honourable Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, graced the event as the Chief Guest. **Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker**, Chairman, BISS, chaired the seminar. **Major General Iftekhar Anis, BSP, awc, afwc, psc, PEng**, Director General, BISS, delivered the welcome address.

In total, four presentations were delivered by distinguished presenters to cover the wide range of issues of global climate negotiations. The presentation titled “**The Geopolitics of Climate Negotiation: Progress or Paradox on the Road to Climate Action,**” was delivered by **Dr Sufia Khanom**, Senior Research Fellow, BISS. Afterwards, a presentation on “**Outcome of Global Climate Finance Negotiation: Quantity, Quality, Opportunities and Challenges,**” was presented by **Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed**, Deputy Managing Director of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF). “**Climate Negotiations for Bangladesh: Mind the Gap,**” was presented by **Professor Sharmind Neelormi**, Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University. **Advocate M Hafijul Islam Khan**, Member of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage at UNFCCC, presented on the “**Current State of Loss and Damage Global Governance: Negotiations and Diplomacy.**”

The seminar facilitated a robust open discussion in which policymakers, experts, and other stakeholders participated and proposed some actionable strategies for Bangladesh in the evolving landscape of global climate negotiations.

Inaugural Session

Welcome Address



Major General Iftekhar Anis, BSP, awc, afwc, psc, PEng
Director General, BISS

Major General Iftekhar Anis expressed his gratitude to the Chief Guest and welcomed everyone at the seminar. He stated that climate change stands out as the defining challenge of the current time, with mounting evidence highlighting its impacts and the undeniable role of human activities in driving it. Bangladesh is recognised globally as one of the most vulnerable countries to the adversities of climate change effects. In the recently published “The World Risk Report 2024”, Bangladesh has been identified as the ninth most at risk country in the world, owing to a combination of diverse exposures, high intensities, and higher vulnerabilities due to natural disasters. He argued that despite contributing a mere 0.47 per cent to global emissions, the nation bears the brunt of climate-related challenges and hardships. In recent years, climatic events such as cyclones and floods have become increasingly unpredictable, as well as more intense and frequent.

The Director General stated that around the world, concern is mounting over the need to build consensus and secure firm commitments for addressing climate change within a broader foreign policy framework. Achieving this alignment requires nations to recognise climate action not only as an environmental necessity but also as a critical element of global diplomacy. One of the

fundamental challenges of global climate negotiations is overcoming the deep-seated divisions between developed and developing countries which often impede progress in climate talks.

Major General Anis said that the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) was held in November 2024 with a central focus on climate finance. The COP29 final agreement introduces an annual financial commitment, where developed nations will contribute US\$ 300 billion each year to help developing countries tackle climate-related challenges. The agreement also sets a futuristic goal of scaling up financial support for developing countries to reach a target of US\$ 1.3 trillion annually by 2035. However, developing nations entered COP29 negotiations with a goal of securing US\$ 1.3 trillion annually in climate financing. Therefore, the final agreement of US\$ 300 billion fell far short of expectations.

Major General Anis highlighted that Bangladesh's proactive efforts to leverage diplomatic relationships in addressing climate change are noteworthy. Its experience in climate resilience, adaptation, and disaster risk management provides valuable lessons that influence international adaptation strategies. Bangladesh has also demonstrated a strong commitment to playing a leadership role in global climate discussions. As Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), the country played a key role in negotiations with developed countries, urging them to reduce carbon emissions and uphold their commitments. This highlights Bangladesh's active and promising engagement in international climate negotiations, including at the most recent COP29.



The Director General argued that for Bangladesh, the priorities in climate negotiations centre around securing adequate climate finance, ensuring fair access to adaptation technologies, and advocating for stronger emissions reduction commitments from developed countries. A key focus is the full operationalisation of the Loss and Damage mechanism, which is vital for supporting nations already facing irreversible climate impacts. Moreover, securing dedicated financing for adaptation and resilience-building continues to be a key focus. Bangladesh emphasises that climate finance must be accessible, predictable, and scaled up to effectively address the challenges faced by vulnerable nations.

Major General Anis opined that Bangladesh's role in global climate negotiations extends beyond climate finance and advocacy for vulnerable countries. It also highlights specific issues that disproportionately impact certain groups, particularly women. As a low-lying, climate-vulnerable country, Bangladesh acknowledges that women, especially in rural areas, bear a significant burden from the effects of climate change. Events like floods, cyclones, and droughts exacerbate existing gender inequalities, making women even more vulnerable. Therefore, Bangladesh has been a strong advocate for incorporating gender perspectives into climate policies, emphasising that women are not just victims, but also essential agents of change in developing resilience and adaptation strategies.

In conclusion, the Director General expressed hope that the seminar will be an opportunity to explore how Bangladesh can leverage its position in the global climate regime and address the challenges it faces in climate negotiations. He expressed firm belief that Bangladesh has the potential to strengthen its global partnerships, contribute meaningfully to international climate action, and uphold the principles that align with the country's commitment to a sustainable and resilient future. Finally, he expressed gratitude to the honourable Chief Guest, distinguished panellists and the learned participants for encouraging with their kind participations.

Presentation 1

The Geopolitics of Climate Negotiation: Progress or Paradox on the Road to Climate Action



Dr Sufia Khanom

Senior Research Fellow, BISS

Dr Sufia Khanom, delivered a detailed presentation during the seminar and discussed primarily the geopolitics of climate negotiations, focusing on whether the progress made so far represents true advancement or paradoxes on the road to climate action. Dr Khanom began her presentation by providing a historical overview of climate negotiations, starting with the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in 1972 and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). She highlighted a few milestones such as the first UN Climate Conference held in 1979 in Geneva, which gathered scientists worldwide to evaluate the state of the climate. Other important steps included the Vienna Convention in 1985, the Montreal Protocol in 1987, the formation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, and the Earth Summit in 1992. These developments culminated in the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which aimed to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Dr Khanom explained that formal negotiations under the UNFCCC began with the first COP in Berlin in 1995. She traced significant moments in the process, such as the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997; the Bali Roadmap at COP13; and the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015. She also

mentioned more recent developments, including COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, where new climate finance goals for 2035 were set, and a loss and damage fund of US\$ 800 million was committed.

Transitioning to the political dynamics of climate negotiations, Dr Khanom emphasised the complexities created by the North-South divide. She noted that developed and developing countries often hold differing views on the historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions and the strategies needed to address climate change. Within these blocs, she pointed out the presence of smaller groups, such as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the European Union (EU), and alliances of developing countries like the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which further complicate negotiations.

Dr Khanom also examined the role of the political economy in climate diplomacy, observing that developed countries have greater resources and bargaining power compared to developing nations. She argued that this disparity often forces developing countries to compromise their positions due to domestic pressures for economic growth. Another key aspect of her speech was the debate over whether climate negotiations are dominated by science or social science. While scientific data measures the impacts of climate change, Dr Khanom asserted that ultimate decisions are made by politicians, often sidelining difficult realities. She also criticised the influence of business and industry groups, which frequently overshadow environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in shaping climate policies.



Dr Khanom highlighted the fragmentation of negotiation blocs over time, noting that national interests increasingly take precedence over collective global goals. She pointed out the shifting and sometimes unclear positions of emerging global powers, such as the BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China), within climate negotiations.

To improve their performance in negotiations, she suggested that developing countries focus on forming effective coalitions and enhancing their bargaining power by hiring experts and increasing capacity. She also stressed the importance of maintaining consistent strategies and utilising negotiation instruments like technology transfer and financial support. Dr Khanom also cited the example of small states and island nations, which have successfully unified to influence climate action.

Regarding inefficiencies in the UNFCCC process, Dr Khanom criticised the management of decision-making, citing procedural disputes, lack of transparency, and increasing complexity as barriers to effective outcomes. She argued that these issues often lead to disappointing results from annual climate meetings.

Dr Khanom concluded by discussing Bangladesh's unique position as both a climate-vulnerable and resilient nation. She emphasised the need for Bangladesh to showcase its adaptation strategies as examples for other countries and to develop strategies for securing climate funds post-graduation from LDC status. She also stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in managing climate funds to maintain Bangladesh's moral leadership in global climate negotiations. Dr Khanom ended her presentation by expressing gratitude for the audience's attention and emphasising the need for continued collective efforts to address climate challenges effectively.

Presentation 2

Outcome of Global Climate Finance Negotiation: Quantity, Quality, Opportunities and Challenges



Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed

Deputy Managing Director, PKSF

At the outset, **Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed** thanked BISS for inviting him to speak on such an important issue on COP, which has been dubbed the “Finance COP.” He informed the audience that there were thirteen agenda items on COP. One of the agenda items was called the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance. This is supposed to measure the amount of finance that will flow from developed to developing countries till 2035. He identified the lack of transparency and agreement at the global level to define climate finance as a serious obstacle in climate finance negotiation. Consequently, it is difficult to bring accountability in climate finance accounting. However, Dr Ahmed argued that in a general sense, whatever has been spent from the developed countries to developing countries on climate change adaptation, that is the adjustment of climate change impacts; mitigation that is to reduce the greenhouse emissions into the atmosphere and finally addressing the loss and damage can be termed as climate finance. The UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 and ratified after two years in 1994. Article 11 of this important UN document describes the basic mechanism of climate finance which indicates three things. First, the finance should go from developed to developing countries;

second, it should be as grant or concessional loans; and finally, the channeling of this finance can be bilateral or multilateral. In the Paris Agreement, which was adopted in the COP21 in 2015, it was declared that developed countries should take the lead, but the developing countries are encouraged to donate voluntarily to climate finance in Article 9.2. What is happening in NCQG is that out of US\$ 1.3 trillion, US\$ 1 trillion is allocated for developing countries where there is no concrete commitment.

Another issue agreed upon in the Paris Agreement was that grant-based adaptation finance should be allocated to the LDCs and island countries. Climate finance should be scaled up and the allocation between adaptation and mitigation should be balanced. If the history of climate finance gets analysed, only 10 per cent of money flows to adaptation purposes. Adaptation does not generate revenue or minimal scope to create businesses, so the allocation for adaptation is much less compared to mitigation. Hence, in the Paris Agreement, it was agreed that there should be some balance between mitigation and adaptation. Some achievements in this regard have been made since 2001 when dedicated funding windows were established as LDCs fund and adaptation funds. Similarly, in 2010, a dedicated climate fund was established and as a continuation, in 2022, the loss and damage fund was established.



However, the amount of finance that comes through these funds is minuscule compared to the expectation. Meanwhile, the LDC group recommends that at least 20 per cent of finance should come through UNFCCC windows. Under the aegis of UNFCCC, there are five windows for funding which are the green climate fund, adaptation fund, special climate change fund, LDC Fund and so forth. However, maximum fund flows on a bilateral basis, which Dr Ahmed identified as a major problem. If the history of climate financing gets analysed, the implementation of developed countries' political agendas becomes a precondition to receiving climate finance for developing countries. Multilateral banks such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) or bilateral channels are used by the developed countries to channel these funds where climate issues take a backseat, and political agendas of donor countries become the primary concern for selecting recipient countries. From US\$ 100 billion in 2025, the global funding is expected to become US\$ 300 billion by 2035. In the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku in

2024, despite the several groups and subgroups among the developing countries, there were some agreed demands or expectations. The first one was the adequate quantity of funds. The Dubai COP or COP28 in 2023 focused heavily on the first of the Global Stocktakes that were agreed upon in the Paris Agreement. During this COP, the IPCC report, Emission Gap report and Adaptation Gap report estimated that around US\$ 4–5 trillion will be required to address all the adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage issues.

Notably, Dr Ahmed pointed out that developing countries were in consensus that they would need around US\$ 1.3 trillion to address Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as well as the national adaptation plan. Another expectation was balanced financing for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage. Dr Ahmed also identified the quality of the finance not the quantity as an important issue of consensus among the developing countries. For example, most of the finances comes as loans rather than grants and in many cases, these loans are given at the market rate which contradicts Article 11 of UNFCCC. Another issue of agreement among developing countries is that Official Development Assistance (ODA) should not be linked with climate finance. He viewed that double counting of the funds should be avoided through transparent accounting in cases of new and additional funding, which is a prevalent practice. Easy access and better utilisation of the funds were other expectations of developing countries from the next NCQG. For the last two years, 12 technical and 02 ministerial dialogues took place to make the latest NCQG document. Dr Ahmed suggested that the document was changed at the last moment and all the necessary points were discarded from the outcome document. Hence, all the developing countries regardless of their internal fractions and diversity expressed their discontent. Such an event was the first in the history of COP negotiation.

In the concluding part of his speech, Dr Ahmed highlighted the role of the developing countries as this document has already been adopted in the Baku COP. All the nations in the world have already submitted their NDCs to keep the temperature rise well below 2 degrees or 1.5 degrees. To achieve this target, a collective and coherent approach will be required. If there is any lack of trust among nations, it will be impossible to adopt a collective effort to keep the temperature rise below the target. If the collective attempt fails, this will undermine the future negotiation process. Therefore, climate-vulnerable countries should come together to strengthen their diplomatic effort and try to access quality funding for their mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage as accessing these funds is their right.

Presentation 3

Climate Negotiations for Bangladesh: Mind the Gap



Professor Sharmind Neelormi

Department of Economics, Jahangirnagar University

Professor Sharmind Neelormi pointed out that while discussing challenges and priorities within a national forum, the narrative should differ when negotiating internationally. During international negotiations, the focus should not be on a country's internal transparency issues but rather on presenting its priorities strategically. She supported Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed's observations, particularly regarding the successes of institutions like PKSF and Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) in obtaining accreditation from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). She questioned why other institutions in Bangladesh, a large country with a significant economy, cannot similarly overcome fiduciary and management challenges to secure such accreditation. She emphasised the need to scale up institutional capacity to address these gaps effectively.

Professor Neelormi also highlighted the importance of comprehensive landscape funding architecture. She mentioned discussions with colleagues from the Economic Relations Division (ERD) regarding the lack of accessible financial information on bilateral and multilateral climate

change-designated funding. While international funds are routed through ERD, there is no consolidated financial architecture to track how much funding is received and utilised from time to time. She emphasised that such gaps need to be addressed to strengthen the country's climate finance framework.

Referring to the knowledge gaps, Professor Neelormi clarified that her comments were not intended to undermine expertise within ministries or organisations but rather to advocate for a more knowledge-driven approach. She stressed the importance of scientific rigor in determining thresholds for climate-related disasters, such as floods, and urged collaborative efforts with organisations possessing relevant expertise. For example, the Water Development Board could serve as a model for addressing gaps in data and collaboration for embankment projects, emphasising the role of knowledge-based practices.



Professor Neelormi acknowledged the relevance of disaster management but clarified that not all disasters are directly linked to climate change. She pointed out that data relevant to climate change is disseminated by multiple ministries and agencies, necessitating a collective effort to foster a knowledge-driven process. She also reiterated the need for greater transparency in negotiation processes, arguing that position papers should be made publicly available before negotiations, not just afterward. She cited her own experience of having to acquire such documents independently, that she viewed as a systemic issue.

On the inclusion of vulnerable groups in negotiations, Professor Neelormi argued that while it is crucial to consider their perspectives, the negotiation table is not the appropriate platform to directly represent them. Negotiations are intergovernmental processes that rely on pre-existing knowledge and policymaking. Instead, she suggested engaging vulnerable groups through separate forums to inform policy formulation before the negotiation stage. Finally, Professor Neelormi emphasised the importance of a strategic and knowledge-driven approach to negotiations and underscored the need for collective efforts to address both the challenges and opportunities associated with climate finance and adaptation.

Presentation 4

Current State of Loss and Damage Global Governance: Negotiations and Diplomacy



Advocate M Hafijul Islam Khan

Member, Executive Committee of Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage at UNFCCC

At the outset, **Advocate M Hafijul Islam Khan** praised BIISS for arranging the timely seminar. He also appreciated the presence of Honourable Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Syeda Rizwana Hasan who led the Bangladesh delegation on COP29. He acknowledged the keynote presenter who nicely presented on climate diplomacy. However, he also added that the topic complemented some of his thoughts. So far, the stakeholders are associated with the negotiation in the last 30 years, which resulted in three global treaties: the UN Convention on Climate Change in 1992; the Kyoto Protocol in 1997; and the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015. It is a known fact, as he noted, science always drives the political processes. The IPCC was established in 1998 and the first assessment report published in 1999 depicted that climate change is anthropogenic or man-made. The signal from the scientific community was crucial for the political community to act. In 1991, an inter-governmental negotiating community was formed and after a year-long work in 1992, the global community adopted the UNFCCC. If someone looks into the convention, s/he might find it a different global instrument.

The preamble paragraph of the Paris Agreement recognises the historical responsibility of the developed countries that have been polluting the greenhouse gases in the last 400 years since the Industrial Revolution and caused climate change as an outcome. This recognition indicates that the historical responsibility is recognised and reflected in the UNFCCC framework. Another principle is the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capacities (CBDRRC) which is a useful and noteworthy principle for addressing climate challenges. Even though there is no explicit proportionate responsibility outlined and the “polluter pays” principle is not directly applied, the Paris Agreement recognises the Climate Justice Principle seeks to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all nations in the context of climate action.

However, Advocate Khan shared that, in the 1992 Convention, the global community agreed on a 5 per cent emission reduction target by 2000 where the base year was 1990. Usually, people talk about the COP, the Conference of Parties (CMP), an international instrument. The countries who have signed and ratified the instrument are the parties of the COP. So, every year parties of this international instrument meet to review the performances and adopt further decisions. The COP mainly refers to the CMP for the Convention. For the Kyoto Protocol, the relevant meeting is the CMP, which serves as a significant meeting thus among parties. Similarly, for the Paris Agreement, the corresponding body is the CMA which stands for Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. Countries meet every year in COP not only for money but also for decisions and further guidance among parties. Therefore, it is very important to understand the global negotiations and simultaneously identify the challenges and priorities of Bangladesh.

Advocate Khan highlighted the point that defining the issue of climate financing is not that difficult, rather, the tough part or real concern is the political challenge. However, he mentioned that defining loss and damage is, indeed, technically challenging. Mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage are the three pillars of global and local policies and interestingly, these three concepts form a continuum. While mitigation can reduce the risks of loss and damage, adaptation can reduce the potential impacts of such risks. Mitigation and adaptation, in brief, are the proactive responses to loss and damage. Finally, the vulnerable countries need to face the loss and damage. Because, if someone looks into the IPCC’s 6th Assessment Report, s/he can find that the global temperature is now 1.3 degrees. So, the vulnerable communities in not only Bangladesh but also other countries throughout the world that are facing huge losses and damage. In this aspect, people need to recover, rehabilitate and restore the ecosystems for those affected by loss and damage. He referred to migration as the classical example of loss and damage. For instance, if a person from Satkhira is relocated to the hilly areas, it is essential to ensure proper resettlement in that new location. This is because, continuing their traditional livelihoods would be extremely challenging in such a different environment. Furthermore, the ecosystem must also be taken into account, as the changes in the environment can significantly impact the person’s ability to adapt. Therefore, money alone cannot solve every problem, and it remains unclear how financial resources could effectively address the issues related to ecosystem restoration or the resettlement of displaced individuals.

According to Advocate Khan, addressing loss and damage requires more than just financial resources; it necessitates technical support and capacity-building efforts. In addition to funding, it is crucial to develop indigenous strategies that align with local realities. Loss and damage have now become undeniable, and it is imperative to tackle them directly. There is often confusion between the concepts of loss and damage and adaptation, but there are clear distinctions between the two. The IPCC's 6th Assessment Report highlights the limits of adaptation and underscores the reality of loss and damage. For Bangladesh, the priority is adaptation to recover from loss and damage, not mitigation. While some scholars in the country advocate for mitigation, this is however, largely driven by donor interests. Donors often push for mitigation-related projects, but Bangladesh should focus on submitting projects related to adaptation and loss and damage to GCF, rather than mitigation-focused proposals.



Afterwards, Advocate Khan focused on the current global policies regarding loss and damage issues. He mentioned that it is required to understand the global political and institutional striker, otherwise, it will be difficult to access the finance, technology and capacity building. The Warsaw International Mechanism operates under both the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, serving as an important institution for addressing loss and damage related to climate change. It is a unique mechanism that supports two international frameworks. Within this mechanism, two main bodies are at work. The first is the Executive Committee for the Warsaw International Mechanism, which functions as the policy arm, offering guidance and direction. Currently, the Executive Committee is developing six sets of dual methodologies to assess various aspects of loss and damage. These include evaluating the loss and damage itself, identifying the needs of vulnerable communities, determining the most effective approaches to address these issues, and pinpointing the appropriate institutions and legal structures required to tackle loss and damage at national and regional levels. Second is the Santiago Network which aims to catalyse technical assistance to vulnerable developing countries. If the country needs technical assistance, for example, technical guides are prepared by the Executive Committee that need to be translated

considering the national circumstances. These technical guides need to be utilised by the national government and Santiago Network is there to provide technical support to assess the nature of loss and damage, and the needs of vulnerable communities. In this aspect, specialists also can develop maps to assess the probable needs of vulnerable communities. However, it remains uncertain how accurately these needs can be assessed and to what extent such assessments can be evidence-based. Thus, it is crucial to use the right tools and methods to identify the needs of the vulnerable community. This will, nevertheless, ensure reliability of the assessments and can inform the development of targeted, impactful interventions.

Advocate Khan then mentioned that Bangladesh needs to secure and access funds for loss and damage. The fund was established in COP27 and is now going to be operationalised. He also emphasised the need to appoint a national contact point and for the UNFCCC, the focal point is the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest. In Madrid, Bangladesh agreed to appoint a particular contact point for the loss and damage. The Bangladesh government has also designated a contact point from the Ministry, ensuring that the right person is appointed to facilitate smooth communication with the global community. Advocate Khan further emphasised that COP is not just about the event itself; it is crucial to implement the decisions made at COP. He also discussed the functioning of international mechanisms, realising that establishing such mechanisms is a long and challenging process—taking Bangladesh 12 years to establish its own. However, he suggested that valuable lessons can be drawn from these international mechanisms, which can guide the development of a national institutional structure to better access global resources.

Advocate Khan further talked about the loss and damage fund, clarifying that the fund is distinct from the GCF. He emphasised that Bangladesh needs to access the funds to reconstruct, restore, and rehabilitate the migrants, but accessing the fund is a great challenge. Although the World Bank hosts the fund, countries have agreed to the principles of independence, transparency and accountability of this independent secretariat managing it. In addition, they agreed on twelve sets of conditionalities and based on these terms, the World Bank will host the fund only for a period of four years. If the parties of the Paris Agreement are dissatisfied with the performance of the World Bank, they have the option to withdraw from this scheme.

This is an interim arrangement, and following the COP, a fourth board meeting was held in Manila, where the parties agreed on certain modalities for accessing the funds. By mid-2025, the disbursement of the fund is expected to begin. Therefore, it is crucial to prepare in advance for this process. The fund is intended to provide support to vulnerable developing countries, enabling them to prepare and access the financial resources when needed. In this context, the focus is on effectively utilising global institutions. Bangladesh, for example, needs to access technology, financial resources, and capacity-building support. While the loss and damage fund is available to provide financial assistance, the challenge lies in understanding the process of accessing this fund. Meanwhile, the Santiago Network offers technical resources, with the key challenge being how to tap into these technical resources effectively.

Finally, Advocate Khan shared that the executive committee prepared the technical guides, and the key challenge now is to utilise these tools and methodologies. In his view, this is the time to adopt an evidence-based approach. He emphasised the need to assess the country's needs

rigorously. In the last 30 years, a top-down approach has been used where the countries negotiated within the UNFCCC framework. However, it is time to change the bottom-up approach, where countries will present evidence-based data to support their positions.



Advocate Khan further emphasised the point that by assessing Bangladesh's needs, the country can develop policies and plans grounded in evidence. So, this is the right time to develop a loss and damage programme. Because Bangladesh agreed on the loss and damage fund which is different from the GCF. Unlike the GCF, which is project-based and may take 5 to 10 years to access, the loss and damage fund requires a different approach. Advocate Khan also pointed out that, by assessing Bangladesh's needs, the country can develop policies and plans grounded in evidence. Soon after a flood or cyclone, immediate access to the fund is essential. To facilitate quick access, Bangladesh must develop both local and global institutional structures, adopting a trigger-based approach.

Additionally, Advocate Khan stressed the importance of programme-based approaches, particularly for slow-onset processes. This involves creating short-term, mid-term, and long-term programmes, which should be submitted to the loss and damage fund. He also highlighted the need to seek direct budget support based on these programmes and evidence. By doing so, Bangladesh can request direct budget support annually, aligning it with the country's development budget and ensuring that the funds can be allocated to each relevant ministry. This is especially critical immediately after a flood when the time to access funding is limited. In conclusion, Advocate Khan urged careful preparation for the bottom-up approach, emphasising that Bangladesh should be ready to access the fund in the coming year. He concluded by requesting Syeda Rizwana Hasan, the Honourable Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, to organise a post-COP conference to further discuss these matters.

Open Discussion



Mr Md Shamsuddoha

Chief Executive

Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), Bangladesh

Mr Md Shamsuddoha highlighted that adaptation to climate change goes beyond addressing climate risks and includes tackling the challenges associated with adaptation itself. He emphasised the importance of efficiently utilising climate change finance, improving governance, and building capacity to address the needs of the most vulnerable, including marginalised and isolated communities. Referring to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), he noted that it lacks a bottom-up approach and fails to capture the differentiated vulnerabilities of various segments of society. He stressed that addressing climate change is not just about securing funds from international conferences or national revenues but also about enhancing capacity, governance, and planning mechanisms. He concluded by expressing hope for further guidance from advisors representing vulnerable communities.



Ms Sadia Jahan Rothi

BRAC University

Ms Sadia Jahan Rothi raised a question directed to Dr Ahmed regarding climate finance commitments. She acknowledged his strong advocacy efforts at COP29 and referred to the US\$ 100 billion annual climate finance goal, a commitment made in 2009 that took over 12 years to materialise. She noted that in 2022, developed countries mobilised US\$ 115 billion for developing nations. Highlighting the new pledge to provide US\$ 300 billion annually until 2035, she raised questions as to how to ensure this commitment is met consistently each year. She also inquired how accountability can be maintained, given the delays in fulfilling the previous US\$ 100 billion goal. Furthermore, she sought strategies to hold developed countries accountable for their promises this time.



Dr Shah Abdul Saadi

*Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD)
Ministry of Finance*

Dr Shah Abdul Saadi provided a detailed clarification regarding climate finance during his remarks. He stated that, since 1992, the inflow of climate funds from UNFCCC mechanisms, including commitments from the GCF, Global Environment Facility, and Adaptation Fund, stands at US\$ 661.2 million, alongside co-finance commitments of US\$ 1.168 billion. He noted that ERD has data on the inflow of climate finance and mentioned that data

on Official Development Assistance (ODA) could be accessed through the ERD's Foreign Aid Budget and Accounts Wing following due procedures.

Dr Saadi emphasised that the UNFCCC agreement of 1992 defined climate finance as “new and additional” and referenced the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report indicating that developed countries delivered on their commitments before 2022, though reports from organisations like Oxfam present differing accounts. He drew attention to Section 8 of the NCQZ, adopted during COP29, which outlines the US\$ 300 billion floor for climate finance to be mobilised by developed countries for developing nations. He highlighted the sources identified in the NCQZ, including public and private funding from bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, such as bilateral development banks.

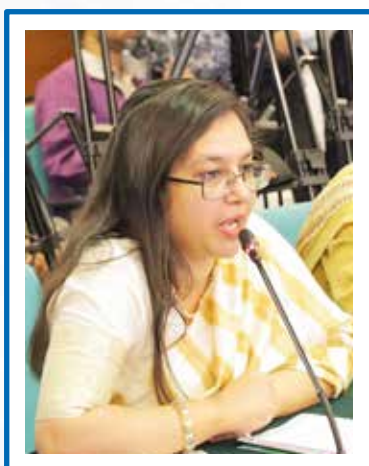
Dr Saadi questioned whether Section 8 effectively defines climate finance, given the ongoing debate about including ODA in climate finance. He argued that the articulated sources in the NCQZ and their typology for defining climate projects—categorising them as principal, significant, or climate components—suggest a conclusion that climate finance is now effectively defined. He noted that this outcome diverges from the negotiations pursued since 1992 and aligns with the reported fulfillment of the US\$ 100 billion floor by 2022.



Mr Salahud Din Ahmed

*Former Member
Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC)*

Mr Salahud Din Ahmed raised two key concerns during his remarks. He highlighted issues of accountability and transparency, citing that 54 per cent of a fund had reportedly been misused and placed in an FDR account at Padma Bank. Additionally, he addressed the concern regarding Bangladesh's transition from an LDC status, questioning whether this shift necessitates a realignment of national planning priorities.



Dr Saima Ahmed

*Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations
University of Dhaka*

Dr Saima Ahmed addressed a concern to the honourable advisor, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, regarding air pollution in Dhaka. She highlighted that Dhaka has consistently ranked as one of the most polluted cities in the world, a concern shared by many. Dr Ahmed further inquired about the specific policies and investments the government has planned to address air pollution in Dhaka and improve the quality of air across the country. Additionally, she sought to understand how these challenges would be reflected in global climate negotiations.



Ms Mansura Amdad

*Lecturer, Department of International Relations
University of Dhaka*

Ms Mansura Amdad raised several critical questions during her address. She began by pointing out that 100 major corporations globally are responsible for 71 per cent of total carbon emissions. She asked how small states can devise effective strategies to counter the influence of such large non-state entities and how the states might unite to tackle this challenge collectively. Her second question focused on the unprecedented warming of the Bay of Bengal, which has experienced 30 per cent more warming over the last three decades compared to other seas worldwide. She inquired how the small states surrounding the Bay of Bengal can collaborate to address this alarming issue.

Lastly, Ms Amdad emphasised the role of everyday human actions in contributing to climate change. Citing examples such as the use of air conditioners during Dhaka's winter and cigarette smoking, she highlighted their impacts on air pollution and Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emissions. She questioned how national, local, and community-level issues could be addressed collectively to inform better policymaking and enhance negotiation strategies to tackle climate change effectively.



Mr Fahim Shahriar

*CEO & Co-Founder
SustainLaunch Labs*

Mr Fahim Shahriar shared his thoughts on the need for greater support for climate-focused startups. He mentioned that his venture studio empowers such startups, which play a critical role in promoting sustainable adaptation. Reflecting on his participation in this year's COP Summit, he noted that while there were numerous workshops on increasing grant-based funding, there was a noticeable lack of discussion around supporting eco-friendly startups. Mr Shahriar directed his question to the panellists, asking if there are ways to provide meaningful support to help these startups scale and implement their solutions more effectively.



Dr Kazi Kamrun Nahar

*Joint Secretary
Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change*

Dr Kazi Kamrun Nahar addressed the issue of awareness regarding the climate change budget. She remarked that there is a general lack of understanding and consideration for this budget. Furthermore, she highlighted a challenge within the system, noting that officials who participate in capacity-building training are often transferred shortly afterward, as government regulations mandate transfers every 2–3 years.

Dr Nahar also pointed out the role of the Ministry of Disaster Management, which specifically deals with climate change-related issues. Although she has not worked in that ministry, she emphasised that it likely has a dedicated budget for addressing climate change. She clarified that her own ministry also allocates funds for climate-related matters, countering the notion that there is no budget for such issues.



Dr Afsana Shahid

Assistant Professor

Noakhali Science and Technology University

Dr Afsana Shahid raised several pertinent questions regarding Bangladesh's stance and actions in addressing climate change. She began by inquiring about Bangladesh's position in the global climate negotiation process, noting that it was not clearly addressed in the presentations she had heard. Dr Shahid then directed her second question to the Honourable Advisor, focusing on the lack of funds within existing safety net programmes for climate-vulnerable women. She emphasised the need for social safety and adaptation initiatives specifically tailored to support resilience and reduce the vulnerability of those severely affected by climate change. Lastly, she proposed a more inclusive approach to Bangladesh's participation in the COP summits, suggesting that representatives from vulnerable groups be brought to the negotiations instead of relying solely on videos or case studies to convey their experiences.

Responses from the Presenters



Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed
Deputy Managing Director, PKSF

Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed highlighted that addressing the multifaceted issues raised during the session is challenging within a short timeframe, as the responses require both individual and collective consensus, which might not always align. He acknowledged the presence of governance issues but clarified that governance in the context of climate finance differs from governance in general. For example, GCF is a “patient fund,” and accreditation is granted to entities that meet specific standards of transparency, accountability, and governance. He noted that 16 international agencies, with robust governance structures, are accredited as well.

Dr Ahmed emphasised that the claim that developed countries refrain from providing funds due to governance issues is not entirely valid. Instead, he proposed that if there is skepticism about a country’s capacity, such projects could be routed through agencies like the World Bank. He argued that the core issue is not governance but the inadequacy of financial support. He illustrated this by stating that although Bangladesh has submitted billion-dollar project proposals, it has received only US\$ 90 million in total, despite its capacity to spend over US\$ 1 billion annually on such projects. This discrepancy, he stated, reflects not only a lack of governance but also a shortage of available funding from donors.

Addressing concerns about accountability, Dr Ahmed acknowledged some internal failures, particularly in accounting within ODA, where double counting remains unacceptable. On the matter of quality versus quantity, he pointed out that while quantitative deficits are evident, the quality of funding also raises serious questions. These concerns have been identified by research institutions and peer-reviewed studies, which have been acknowledged by Bangladesh based on its own experiences.

Dr Ahmed stressed that the lack of a universally accepted definition of climate finance creates further challenges. He criticised the global leadership and political commitment, highlighting a significant gap in addressing these issues at the international level. He pointed out that capacity building is a continuous process and acknowledged limitations in Bangladesh's capacity as an LDC. However, he argued that capacity constraints exist across all nations, including developed ones. For example, GCF's delays in project approvals, sometimes spanning five years, reflect their own capacity issues, such as inadequate manpower. He urged greater transparency and alignment with international accounting mechanisms to ensure that funds—whether US\$ 100 billion or US\$ 500 million—are effectively utilised.

In conclusion, Dr Ahmed reiterated that Bangladesh, as a vulnerable country, has the potential to emerge as a leader in future COP processes, advocating for the concerns of developing nations. He stressed the importance of transparency and global leadership in advancing the climate finance agenda.



Dr Sufia Khanom

Senior Research Fellow, BISS

Dr Sufia Khanom presented a slightly different perspective, emphasising the importance of considering regional cooperation to strengthen climate change negotiations. She observed that most of the climate vulnerabilities faced by Bangladesh are hydrometeorological in nature. In this context, she highlighted the potential of regional collaboration in addressing shared challenges, such as air pollution and air shed management. Dr Khanom suggested that leveraging regional cooperation could enhance the effectiveness of negotiations and yield greater benefits for all parties involved.

Speech of the Chief Guest



HE Syeda Rizwana Hasan

*Adviser for Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Interim Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*

The Honourable Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, **HE Syeda Rizwana Hasan**, began her speech by stating that Bangladesh often fails to represent itself effectively in international climate forums. Instead of directly advocating, Bangladesh participates in climate change discussions as part of various groups or “bloc”s. This approach prevents her from highlighting its unique and complex climate-related challenges during these discussions.

The Adviser emphasised that adopting a politically neutral stance is not only essential for securing foreign cooperation but also crucial for advancing the country’s demands and addressing its climate vulnerabilities. If the current global annual temperature rise cannot be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius, it will no longer be possible to prevent the loss of one-third of Bangladesh’s landmass to rising sea levels. She explained this point and posed a critical question: “Can any fixed sum of money effectively address the potential submersion of one-third of Bangladesh by the end of this century?”

Drawing from her experience not just as an adviser but also as a former environmental activist, she observed that Bangladesh’s representatives often appear satisfied with promises of substantial aid from developed countries, which should not be the case. This year’s global

climate summit primarily focused on “adaptation”—adjusting to the impacts of climate change. In contrast, “mitigation”—addressing the root causes of climate change—was given such minimal attention that it was excluded from the agenda of the next major COP.

Adviser Ms Hasan also mentioned the Honourable Chief Adviser’s objections to this lack of emphasis on mitigation, expressing his disappointment in this regard. She stressed the need to adopt appropriate political stances and called for Bangladesh to navigate climate change with increased awareness, rather than merely imitating developed countries. She pointed out that wasteful use of electricity and other resources in Bangladesh undermines its moral authority to advise developed nations on the proper use of their resources.

Honourable Adviser then went on to discuss the need to make the lifestyles of Bangladeshi people more sustainable. She expressed her disinterest in the traditional approaches of international climate forums, citing the lack of meaningful action on this front. She lamented that the framework used by developed nations to conduct these climate meetings clearly demonstrates that they do not take their responsibilities seriously. According to her, this is because natural disasters have not significantly impacted developed nations. For instance, they are far more concerned about Spain than they would ever be about Noakhali or Comilla in Bangladesh.

As a result, Adviser Ms Hasan argued that instead of adhering to traditional forum structures, more emphasis should be placed on fostering direct human-to-human connections. She believes that the rise of climate activists like Greta Thunberg reflects this need, as such individuals have successfully communicated the appeals of disaster-affected countries like Bangladesh to the world. She also pointed out that the scientific data presented at these meetings underscore the urgency of taking decisive action.



She returned to the issue of political engagement, which she mentioned at the beginning of her speech, as a key reason why climate change “mitigation” discussions often lose momentum at

critical stages. She explained that it becomes challenging to ensure that the funds allocated for addressing climate change are properly utilised in the right areas. Mismanagement and misuse of these funds are widespread, and that is why developed nations are reducing their financial contributions to climate-related initiatives year after year.

Moving away from this, Honourable Adviser advocated short-term, plan-based activities that have dominated efforts so far, she instead highlighted the need for enforcing long-term laws and taking comprehensive actions. As an example, she referenced their campaign to shut down illegal brick kilns to combat air pollution, a project through which she and her colleagues have actively addressed one critical aspect of environmental degradation.

Honourable Adviser concluded by expressing her hope and aspiration that all citizens of Bangladesh will become more aware of climate change “mitigation” efforts. This collective awareness, she believes, will make the government’s initiatives more effective and far-reaching, ultimately transforming measures to combat excessive pollution into long-term, sustainable solutions.

Concluding Remarks by the Chair



Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarker
Chairman, BISS

At the commencement of his remarks, **Ambassador AFM Gousal Azam Sarker** thanked the speakers and participants for their critical insights, thought-provoking discussions, and shared commitment that emerged during the seminar. Ambassador Sarker stated that the changing climate is one of the most pressing challenges of this current world. The climate crisis is no longer a distant concern, but a harsh and urgent reality that is impacting lives, economies, and ecosystems across the globe. Rising temperatures, intensifying weather events, and the threats of irreversible damage are immediate concerns that demand collective attention and action. He argued that against this backdrop of stark urgency of climate challenges, the world reflected on the global climate negotiations that unfolded during COP28, held in Dubai just a few weeks ago. The conference marked a significant moment in the fight against climate change, with key milestones and hard-won achievements, as well as persistent challenges that continue to need attention.

According to Ambassador Sarker, the COP28, while a step forward, underscored the complexity of climate diplomacy. The conference acknowledged the need to transition away from fossil fuels—something which have been long advocated for—and highlighted the importance of adaptation strategies, particularly through the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework. However, the challenges the world faces cannot be solved by words alone. The transition to a

greener, more sustainable world requires tangible commitments, timely actions, and the creation of solid implementation mechanisms.

Ambassador Sarker further emphasised on the point that Bangladesh, as a low-lying nation, faces increasing threats from flooding, cyclones, droughts, and other extreme weather events. These challenges are not theoretical—they are deeply personal for millions of people across the country, especially those living in rural areas and coastal regions. Another key challenge for Bangladesh—and for many countries in the Global South—is ensuring that climate adaptation technologies are accessible. The technological divide between developed and developing nations remains a significant barrier to progress.

Ambassador Sarker informed that Bangladesh's experience with climate resilience and disaster risk management offers invaluable lessons for the world. Through active participation in international forums like the CVF and the LDCs group, Bangladesh must ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable nations are not only heard but also acted upon. As climate impacts become more severe and irreversible, the need for a dedicated fund to address the losses faced by vulnerable countries like Bangladesh has never been more pressing. The world needs a greater commitment to climate finance—finance that is not only sufficient but also accessible, predictable, and equitably distributed.

In conclusion, Ambassador Sarker argued that the fight against climate change is far from over and the gap between ambition and action is still wide. He hoped that the seminar would not end but it is now up to all to carry forward the momentum generated at the seminar and translate the shared ideas into concrete solutions. He reminded the audience that climate change is not just an environmental issue—it is rather a social, economic, and human rights issue. The future of the planet and the well-being of future generations depends on the actions taken today. Bangladesh, as a country deeply impacted by climate change, will continue to stand at the forefront of global climate negotiations. The country will advocate for the needs of the most vulnerable, ensure that adaptation and resilience are prioritised, and push for a more equitable, sustainable, and just climate future.

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