

Equity and Justice Working Group (EquityBD) position on joint communiqué and Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul's remarks in UK Bangladesh London conference on climate change held on 10th September 2008, presented at a press conference held on 12th September 2008 at Dhaka Reporters Unity, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Is Bangladesh has tried as a Scapegoat for Global Climate Business ?

1. Background

EquityBD has already made a position prior to this conference on 4th September; this was through a press conference, media interview, participation BBC Bengali Service *Songlap*, article in the news papers, and sending all those to fellow NGOs and CSOs members in abroad. EquityBD has also organized a demonstration along with other organization on 10th September in central *Saheed Minar*, in Dhaka. In the pre conference and in the position paper EquityBD has already warned that there will be an initiative of multi donor trust fund (MDTF) where World Bank will be dragged in for managing the fund.

There were 39 member delegations from Bangladesh in the conference leaded by Dr. ABM Mirza Azizul Islam, the Finance Adviser of present government. Some prominent CSO leaders have also participated as part of the delegation. EquityBD is referring two documents in relation to this position, which has been collected from www.bdnews24.com dated 11th September; these are UK Bangladesh joint communiqué and news item title "Azizul wants WB to oversee MDTF".

2. Consequences/ features of joint communiqué, MDTF and Azizul's proposal WB to manage MDTF.

EquityBD believes that, statement in joint communiqué related to 50 % carbon reduction by 2050 which is G8 position declared in Japan summit; intentions to form MDTF and Azizul open statement on invitation to World Bank (WB) to manage fund will create following situation as follows; (i) Common interest of Bangladeshi people has been undermined, that there will be more exploitation in view of neo liberal conditionality which will in fact aggravate the present pauperization process, (ii) Bangladesh alienated herself from the common position with other LDCs and also with G 77 in UNFCCC negotiations, the position is 20 – 40 % reduction by 2020, there will be little confidence on Bangladesh leadership in the process (iii) in the process of preparation of action plan which has presented in the conference, was participated by some so called expert people who are often involved with consultancy work offered by WB and other prominent multi national companies, in fact which reflect conflict of interest with general people, and (iv) G8 countries and in fact international financial institutions (IFI) will be able to present Bangladesh as show case example to other LDCs and developing countries that Bangladesh has taken their path.

3. Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan: A Paper Prepared in a Very Little Transparent and Participatory Process.

In pre conference position, EquityBD has mentioned that the paper has prepared in a very little transparent and participatory process, and still the paper is not an open and available document to the public. Details comment on the contents of the paper has presented in that earlier position paper. Total action plan was biased to the consultancy and physical infrastructure work, the paper hardly be mentioned as a strategy paper, rather the paper contains some bundle of programs. It is already mentioned that in fact the paper was drafted by consultants who were occasionally involved with WB and different multi national companies. There was conflict of opinions between different ministries in preparation of the paper. In fact there was no specific mentioning of future problems, which will be confronted by poor segment of the people, there are no specific mentioning of how to deal with displaced / climate refugees etc. In fact this has not taken from the view of total paradigm shift and as it will be a matter of total re orientation and integration. EquityBD believes that, such an action plan should be prepared in intensive participatory process especially taking participation of grass root people and political leadership; finally the plan must have political ownership.

4. Positioning in line with G8 Japan declaration on carbon emission might create confusion on Bangladesh role in G77 and LDC's common struggle against G8.

A joint communiqué has signed by UK secretary of state Douglas Alexander MP and Bangladesh Finance Advisor Dr. ABM Azizul Islam as out come of the conference. In section 5, 6 and 7 of this communiqué Bangladesh has to welcome Hokkaido declaration of G8 which stated that 50 % carbon reduction by 2050, but in fact which is contrary to the IPCC position i.e., 20 to 40 % reduction by 2020 and which is under negotiation in UNFCCC. It is also stated that UK will support Bangladesh to switch to a low carbon development path, but in view of the Bali action plan and other international agreement such an adaptation is not mandatory for LDC like Bangladesh, Bangladesh has right to go for development without considering such a approach.

In section 11 of the joint communiqué it is mentioned that UK will continue to work with Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and other development partners to make the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) operational in near future. We believe that this is also a deviation from the Bali Action Plan, which has proposed to develop the fund within UN framework and there was agreement on representation for management of the fund.

We feels that, UK tries Bangladesh to accept all these deviations, which will signal Bangladesh position in line with G8 in global climate negotiations, and in fact role of Bangladesh within the group of G77 and LDCs will be questionable in future because of these reasons.

5. Finance Adviser (FA) Azizul's statement against compensation has no scientific ground and proposal on World Bank to manage fund is against the common people's interest and has no basis to political legitimacy.

As quoted by the media in inaugural function of this conference FA Azizul mentioned "...We feel that the World Bank may be given the responsibility to act as administrator of the MDTF". As media dispatched the adviser said he was not in favor of demanding compensation from the developed countries. In furtherance he said "... If we analyze the terminology compensation, there are lot of complexities and legal actions to blame a particular country for climate change." He raise question that "... is there any meaning of demanding compensation when there is no such research on who polluted to what extent?"

Our position, FA's proposal to invite WB to manage the fund has no approval from the government, as there was no official discussion during the preparation of the paper. Moreover as there are a lot question regarding the role of WB, IMF and ADB, not only in whole over the world but also in Bangladesh in respect of putting neo liberal conditionality in fact those institutions are being considered as major reasons for pauperization. Taking cognizance of such a public opinion, and moreover as he is from a non political and non representational interim government, he should think twice to give such a speech. We are raising question on political legitimacy of his statement.

In IPCC report it has clearly mentioned that, which country is responsible for what extent in respect of carbon emission. So FA's comments on fixing responsibility has no basis. Moreover there are speeches from the Chief Adviser (CA) in several occasions on climate change especially during climate change SAARC ministerial meeting and also in SAARC Colombo conference, as our memories goes the CA has always mentioned about the compensation from the developed countries, he hardly mentioned about the terminology "aid" in this regard.

6. Our Demands: FA Azizul should withdraw his proposal, GoB should form Public Commission on Ecological Debt Assessment, and Donors must compensate the SIDR damages first.

We have already proposed some demands during pre conference press briefings, which have already widely circulated. In view of latest situation we have revised those demands in this regards, these are as follows;

(i) GoB must prepare a comprehensive climate strategy with political ownership

GoB must go for comprehensive climate strategy and action plan with the participation from grass root and especially from the political forces, the draft plan should be presented in next parliament. It should be process oriented so that during

the preparation there will be sensitization on the issue as well. There should be an approach of total paradigm shift and re orientation and integration in all development aspects.

- (ii) UK government must re consider its position to propose MDTF, all climate funding must through existing channel with greater compliance to the Paris Declaration.**

UK government should re consider its position to go for separate management for the funding, it must be through existing government and non government channel but with greater transparency, accountability and participation especially with civil society and people's at grass root level. In compliance to the Paris Declaration we believe that there should not be extra structure and there should be additional effort to strengthening of mutual accountability.

- (iii) Compensate cyclone SIDR damage first.**

All most every day there are news on sufferings of the SIDR victims being published in news papers. Donors should come first to compensate the SIDR damages, which is around \$ 3 billions as it was assessed by joint donor and GoB team.

- (iv) Azizul's proposal for WB to manage fund has no popular and political legitimacy.**

FA Azizul's opinion on invitation to WB to manage fund, should be considered as his individual opinion, it has no popular and political legitimacy. His comments on compensation have also no scientific ground against the popular basis.

- (v) Form Public Commission on Ecological Debt Assessment.**

In view of popular opinion GoB should form a Public Commission on Ecological Debt Assessment, the commission will asses what are the damages has already occurred and will be occurred in future with scientific data analysis and accordingly the figure for compensation should be drawn. There are already scientific basis in this regard in IPCC report.

- (vi) Maintain GHP principles in SIDR response / humanitarian assistance.**

There are already allegations being heard in media in respect of relief and rehabilitation activities in SIDR area. But, it should be noted that there is a Global Humanitarian Partnership (GHP) and its principles jointly set out by UN bodies, International Red Crescent Federations and International NGOs during 2006, during 2008 it has been reviewed. Local level accountability and transparency are two major aspects in these principles. We urge all government, non government agencies, and other agencies who are conducting humanitarian assistance in SIDR affected area and to other humanitarian situation in the country, should open and publish their budget

and planning in local and national level and seek opinions. Proposing this process of transparency and accountability we are urging them to strengthen the accountability in down ward especially in ground level.

Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (EquityBD)

House 9/4, Road 2, Shaymoli, Dhaka 1207

Bangladesh

Telephone: +88-02-8125181, +88-02-8154673, +88-0171-4014203

Fax : +880-02-9129395, e mail : info@equitybd.org

Web : www.equitybd.org