URBAN INGO FORUM



Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services

Organized by
Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh

7th Urban Dialogue 2023

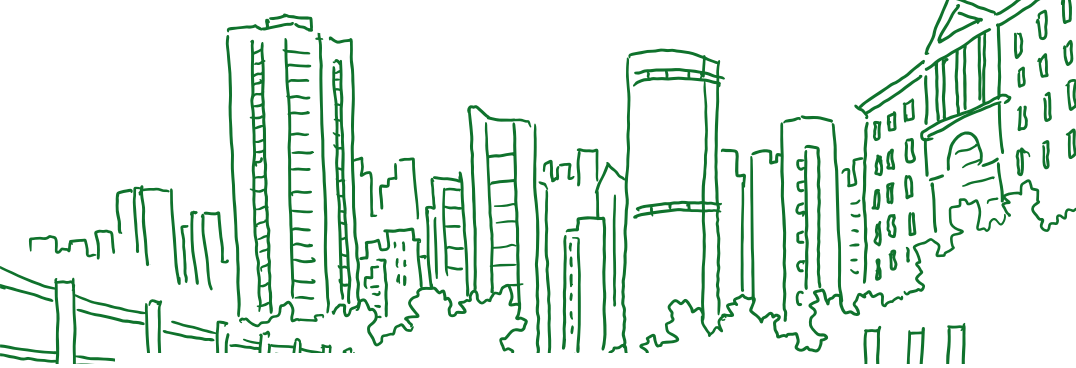
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Gulshan - 2, Dhaka

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Introduction of Urban INGO Forum Bangladesh

Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh is a consortium of 20 International INGOs working on different issues in urban areas of Bangladesh. It comprises of some of the eminent INGOs like Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh, Save the Children Bangladesh, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, Action Aid Bangladesh, World Vision Bangladesh, Concern Worldwide Bangladesh, Action Centre La Faim, CARE Bangladesh, Christian Aid, EDUCO Bangladesh, Humanity and Inclusion Bangladesh, Oxfam Bangladesh, Plan International, Practical Action, SEEDS Asia, United Purpose, World Renew, Caritas Switzerland, Global ONE and HelpAge International. The Urban INGO forum was formed in 2013 and it was initiated by Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh with the support of Islamic Relief Bangladesh and World Vision Bangladesh. The initial objective of this forum was to ensure collective effort through better coordination, smooth communication and networking amongst the urban stakeholders. It was an effort to build a forum where all the urban actors can come together in a common platform and interlink, coordinate and share their experience with each other. The Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh envisages working closely with the Government of Bangladesh, especially with local government organizations at city level, relevant ministries, and development partners, international and national organizations.

Urbanization is defined as a population shift from rural to urban areas and it is predominantly the process by which towns and cities are formed and become larger as more people begin living and working in central areas. As of May 2018, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. In Bangladesh urban population is 38%[1]. The world's population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050 according to a new United Nations data set launched on 16 May 2018[2].

1 https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=BD

2 https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

Bangladesh is also undergoing a transformation toward urbanization at a significant pace in comparison to the other neighboring countries, despite being a predominantly rural country, its urban population has grown at a yearly average rate of 6% since independence, at a time when national population growth was 2.2%. In the urban areas of Bangladesh 18.9% people live below the poverty line[3].

More than half of the urban population lives in the four largest cities[4] of the country, resulting in immense burden on the cities in terms of ensuring available supply of basic utilities, standard living condition, and proper education for the next generation. With its immense urbanization, the country's vulnerability also increased in a similar way. The major vulnerabilities include Urban Disasters, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and severe crisis for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) especially for Low Income Communities, urban flooding, exposed to water logging, child labor, lack of good governance, etc. Although many of the national and international organizations are working to address the needs, urban communities still need support to ensure their access in basic amenities and prepare them to be resilient to hazards.

In this backdrop, the INGOs working in urban areas feel the necessity to be united to support urban communities with an especial attention to the marginalized communities in an effective and broader way. At the country level, the aim of this forum is to ensure a more coherent and effective response by mobilizing other actors, government line-ministries and agencies, and NGOs. The forum's actions aim at addressing the gaps and bringing actors together to ensure a more predictable, timely and effective response in addressing the issues of urban sectors; as well as facilitate inter-sectoral synergy engaging relevant forums, networks and stakeholders. To make the effort more inclusive, UINGOF has been organizing Urban Dialogue since 2013 as a common room for interaction among the urban communities, policy makers, academia, activists and practitioners.

Vision

Enhance basic living conditions of the urban poor to have immediate access to basic needs in an effective and coordinated manner among the INGOs working in urban areas in Bangladesh.

Purpose

The purpose of Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh is to facilitate communication, information sharing and action among international humanitarian and development agencies based in Bangladesh. The forum is also responsible for

3 https://bdnews24.com/economy/2017/10/18/poverty-rate-has-dropped-to-24.3-percent-bbs-survey

4 Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, and Rajshahi

fostering communication and coordination between NGO coordinating bodies in Bangladesh and also between INGOs and national NGOs, UN agencies or other international actors and appropriate representatives of the government of Bangladesh to allow for effective and efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance, recovery and development programming to meet basic needs in Bangladesh.

Background

This forum is working in collaboration with public and private sectors, national and international agencies, and strong positioning in relevant platforms for awareness building, knowledge enhancement and promote practices. As a continuation of this efforts, in 2013 the first urban dialogue was organized by Habitat for humanity while second dialogue was jointly organized by Habitat for Humanity, World Vision Bangladesh and Islamic Relief in 2014. The 3rd Urban Dialogue was jointly organized in 2015, by the Department of Disaster Science and Management of the University of Dhaka and 12 INGOs, the theme was 'Urban Resilience'. In 2016, the Urban INGO Forum organized the 4th Urban Dialogue, and the theme was 'Healthy and Safer Cities'. In 2017, the 5th Urban Dialogue's theme was, 'Inclusive and Resilient Cities '. A two-day long 6th Urban Dialogue on "Live-able City for All" was held at Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban Auditorium of Dhaka University (DU). Department of Disaster Science and Management of DU and Urban INGO Forum have jointly organized the event in June 2019.

About 7th Urban Dialogue 2023

Since inception the dialogues have become a vibrant national space on urban development. This year, the 7th Urban Dialogue 2023, has been organized by the direct participation of 8 INGOs, the theme is "**Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services**".

In Bangladesh, 38%[5] of the population live in urban areas, out of which 2.23[6] million people live in slums across the country while it is projected that (almost 45%) half of the country's population will live in the urban areas by 2030. Rapid urban expansion due to rural urban migration and unplanned extension of City Corporation's administration boundaries are the major reasons for urban poverty. Every year 250000[7] rural people migrate to urban areas in search of employment and desiring to have improved economic, social, health and recreational facilities. Most of the people find their places in slum areas with a very low standard of living and limited access to basic amenities. Around 40% of urban populations are living in low-income communities.

5 https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=BD

6 http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2015/06/29/number-of-slum-dwellers-in-bangladeshincreases-by-60.43-percent-in-17-years

7 https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS

7th Urban Dialogue was focusing on the urban issues i.e. housing, basic services and provisions, public safety, WASH, environmental degradation, ecological damage, lack of institutional and civic responsibility in terms of behavioral issues related to a clean, manageable and livable city, recognition of the urban poor, shrinking political space for citizens in particular for the young people, capacity building, livelihood and entrepreneurship, safe space for women and children, availability of and accessibility into public easements etc. will be discussed/highlighted in the sessions.

Objectives of the Dialogue

Overall objective of the 7th Urban Dialogue was to articulate acceptable recommendations on the necessity of participatory urban governance, with revisited urban policies and institutional outlook to -

- Facilitate an interface for face-to-face interaction among urban actors and Promote collaboration with stakeholders at different tiers to complement government initiatives
- Identify and mainstream the urban issues that need to be addressed urgently through engagement of the stakeholders and duty bearers
- Advocate at policy level so that urban issues are addressed, and the evidence-based solutions are used in formulating development policies for sustainable urban services

Outcome of the Dialogue

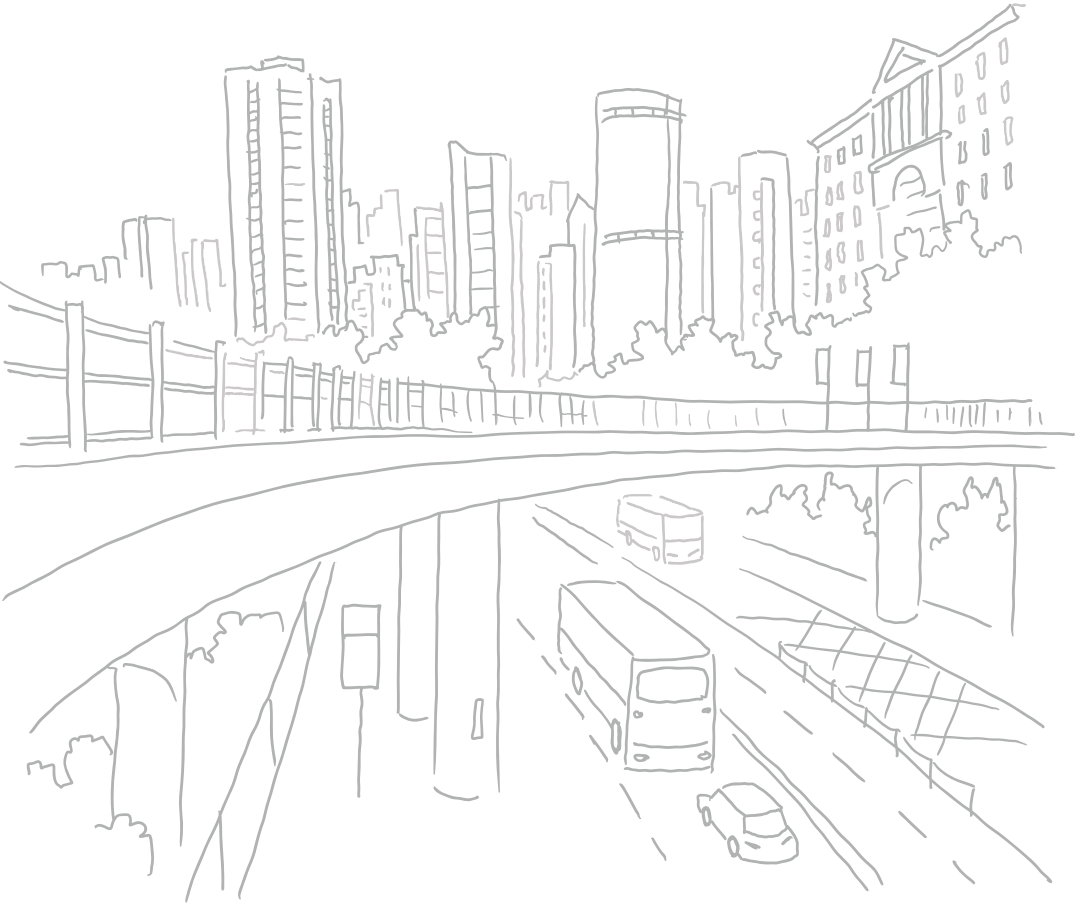
- The dialogue was focused on basic public services-
  - To build collaboration between urban actors to raise awareness about the importance of shelter in informal urban settlements and to find out gaps and proposed potential innovative housing initiatives through government policy makers and other stakeholders.
  - To find potential solutions and ideas to assemble the basic services (health, water, education, social safety nets, food, treatment etc.) accessible for all urban slum communities.
- The dialogue will provide a learning environment by offering stakeholders the opportunity to gather, share successes and failures, and address common urban challenges which covers natural or manmade disaster and climate change impact and implications of knowledge and learnings to build a disaster resilient future in urban areas.
- A comprehensive declaration was adopted, highlighting policy recommendations for “Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services”.

Participants

Ministers, Secretaries, Mayors, Government officials, Academicians and Researchers, Representatives from donors, INGOs, NGOs, and Service Providing Agencies, children, students, slum dwellers, representation from vulnerable groups and disable, media.

Organizers

ActionAid Bangladesh, Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and German Red cross, Habitat for Humanity International - Bangladesh, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, Save the Children, United Purpose Bangladesh, World Vision Bangladesh.



Program Schedule

The 7th Urban Dialogue 2023

14 June 2023

Venue: **Lake Shore Hotel and Hotel Amari, Gulshan-2, Dhaka**

Time	Event	Resource
09:30AM – 10:00AM	Registration and Refreshment	**Venue:** La vita Hall, Lake Shore Hotel, Gulshan-2
10.00AM – 10:15AM	Inaugural ceremony of 7th Urban Dialogue 2023 **Theme** "Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services". **Welcome Speech** Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh	
10:15 AM – 10:45AM	**Keynote presentation** **Dr. Md. Akter Mahmud,** Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Jahangirnagar University	
10:45 AM – 12: 30PM	**Speech from guests** **1. Special Guest:** **Moyen Uddin Ahmmed** Programme Manager – H&RP, Special Representative of the Country Director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh, **2. Special Guest:** **Dr. Muktar Hossain,** Director, Social Safety Net Programme, Department of Social Service under Social Welfare Ministry **3. Special Guest:** **Md. Ashraful Alam,** Director General, Housing and Building Research Institute **4. Chief Guest:** **Sk. Md. Moniruzzaman,** Director General (Add. Sec.), NGO Affairs Bureau **5. Chair:** **Andreas Hapsoro** Interim National Director, Habitat for Humanity International Bangladesh	
12:30 PM – 01:30PM	**Lunch break and break out room preparation for parallel session**	Lake Shore Hotel and Hotel Amari, Gulshan -2

Time	Event	Resource
01:30PM – 03:00PM	**Parallel session**	
	Parallel Session 1 – Ensuring Basic Civic Services for Urban Communities.	**Venue:** Hotel Amari Gulshan - 2
	Parallel Session 2 – Revisiting environmental and ecological conservation including anticipatory action in present context for city resilience building	**Venue:** Hotel Lake Shore Gulshan-2
	Parallel Session 3 – Engaging private sector and media in DRM, in the era of SMART Bangladesh	**Venue:** Hotel Lake Shore Gulshan-2
03:00PM – 03:30PM	**Health Break**	
03:30PM – 04:30PM	Concluding Session • **Declaration Speech:** **A M Nasir Uddin** Consortium Manager, SUPER Project, Disaster Risk Reduction at ActionAid Bangladesh • **Special Guest:** **M.A. Halim,** Director, Disaster and Climate Risk Management, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society • **Special Guest:** **Sriramappa Gonchikara** Country Director, United Purpose Bangladesh • **Special Guest:** **Suresh Bartlett** National Director, World Vision Bangladesh • **Special Guest:** **Md. Kamrul Hasan, NDC,** Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief • **Chief Guest:** **Dr. Md. Enamur Rahman MP,** State Minister Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief • **Chair:** **Andreas Hapsoro** Interim National Director Habitat for Humanity International Bangladesh	**Venue:** La vita Hall, Lake Shore Hotel Gulshan-2

Session Details

Inaugural Session of the 7th Urban Dialogue 2023

Theme of the session

The inaugural session was designed to exchange thoughts on the main theme of the dialogue giving an opportunity to the target audience to discuss "why city is demanded to be inclusive and resilient". The session brought out the role of governments/stakeholders/duty bearers in supporting and facilitating more sustainable and inclusive business practices. Urban interventions aim to have an Inclusive and Resilient Cities by ensuring the components of different parallel sessions. The inaugural session was a great opportunity for the audience to the emerging issues like DRR and CCA, resilient settlement of green cities, basic services, health, education and social safety net/protection, wash and waste management and women and youth empowerment and child protection from different perspective. In the session, relevant policy makers, representatives from different service providing agencies and other institutions were present. A keynote was presented where mentioning the key achievements and challenges considering the declarations of last dialogue. The honorable guests presented their thoughts, views, plan and practices in their speech and that was considered in the long-term synergic plan to be achieve the aim. It was expected that the dialogue would broaden the platform to envision on the theme of "**Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services**" through better and proactive collaboration.



Inaugural Session panel

In this session brief discussion points on progress and initiatives by GoB and NGOs was taken place in different speakers' speeches based on the 6th Urban Dialogue Declaration points given below –

1. The government will finalize the draft Urban Sector Policy with the provision of a delegated authority to implement the policy.
2. Government will enact the revised Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) by end of 2019 with the provision of a delegated authority to implement the code.[8]
3. Government must ensure an integrated and inclusive masterplan to promote protection of housing and livable environmental conditions for urban poor with land tenure security including satisfactory and acceptable financial arrangement.
4. Incentivize eco-friendly and reusable construction technologies and materials with policy support (i.e., reduced income tax for the producers and holding tax for users) and ensure compliance on use of these technologies and materials in government projects.
5. Ensure sufficient open and inclusive spaces, playground, amusement parks, social interaction spaces considering the number of children and young population at all urban Wards. Remove encroachment from all existing public easements. Promote political and cultural spaces for young people to participate and contribute. Engaging children and young people in every development planning consultation to make cities suitable for them as well as develop them as responsive citizen;
6. Enhance skills on technology and promote technology-based employment options for young people ensuring equal opportunity for all. Opening up young people's engagement in development activities to groom them as future professionals and leaders.
7. Government will endorse behavioral changes with diversified incentives; i.e., recognition for greening initiatives, waste management, infrastructural safety, protection of women, children, elderly and persons with disabilities at Community, Ward, City and National level.

In the inaugural session the introductory remarks emphasized by Rubayet Mahmood, representative from Habitat for Humanity International - Bangladesh, "Everything starts with a dream, a dream to bring the change, a dream to make a difference. The Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh began with such a dream. A dream to improve the living condition of the urban poor to ensure access to basic services. This dialogue represented a step closer to achieving our dream."

8 Bangladesh government has published the "BNBC-2020" as gazette with amendment. (https://www.jugantor.com/todays-paper/city/396661/)

The ***keynote speaker Dr. Md. Akter Mahmud, Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Jahangirnagar University*** highlighted that "urban resilience is the measurable ability of an urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting towards sustainability". This resilience signifies a city or community's ability to navigate towards sustainability, addressing all forms of threats, whether human-induced or natural. It considers various stressors, including floods, earthquakes, cyber-attacks, and more. Without resilience, city dwellers remain vulnerable, finding it challenging to recover from any disaster, be it natural or human-made. Our guidelines for creating resilient cities in Bangladesh are framed by the National Perspective Plan 2041, the Five-Year Plan, and other specific city guidelines, supplemented by global climate change agreements and frameworks. In his presentation a specific view was portrayed on Dhaka city which is facing numerous obstacles in its journey towards becoming a resilient city such as incredibly high population density, a significant portion of these residents live in slums and struggling with poor living conditions without basic services for better livelihood. Moreover, inefficient drainage system, exacerbated by human interference and unplanned development; encroachment of wetlands and canals are significant contributors to water logging and urban flooding; poor air quality, coupled with inefficient waste management, a crucial challenge, has rendered the living conditions in these cities unfavorable; traffic congestion causes a yearly financial loss of approximately 56,000 crore BDT[9]; being an earthquake-prone city, also lacking in terms of public spaces for its inhabitants, with insufficient and often inaccessible parks and playgrounds. It is anticipated that all urban plans will be implemented, as the realization is crucial for a resilient city to make the city more livable and workable. All development efforts require the involvement of beneficiaries; without which they will not be sustainable or successful.

Moyen Uddin Ahmmed, Program Manager for Humanitarian & Resilience Programme of Islamic Relief Bangladesh, expressed the need to consider the intensity of these threats in the future, to plan urban development and ensure the production of food for the people. He prioritized the practice of performing responsibilities from an individual level and organizational level to make urban development sustainable and inclusive.

Md. Ashraful Alam, Director General of the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI), focused on environmental pollution and how HBRI is trying to mitigate pollution through its research and development of environment-friendly building and construction-related materials. Furthermore, he put importance on following the policies and regulations mentioned in the BNBC to make the city more resilient and sustainable.

9 2018 Accident Research Institute report.

Dr. Muktar Hossain, Director, Social Safety Net Program, Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare, prioritizes the equal inclusion of all people with mainstream society. He thinks sustainable development is not possible without the equal participation of the marginalized community of society. Alongside the rural areas the extreme urban poor also need to be included under social protection programmes.

Sk. Md. Moniruzzaman, Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office, was the chief guest of the dialogue. He insisted on incorporating the expectations and opinions of the people living in low-income areas. They have a lot to contribute to sustainable urban planning by changing their behavior in their everyday life. He praised the operations of NGOs as they have significantly contributed to elevating Bangladesh to a comparatively stronger and better position.




Community participation during the event

During his speech, participants from the community were given the floor to share their opinions, challenges they face, and place their expectations to the authority. They had objections regarding the housing for the poor; they claimed that they didn't get any benefit out of it. Instead, the acquaintances of the local administrators and politically backed groups of people snatched away all the housing allocations which were destined for the poor only.



Sk. Md. Moniruzzaman
Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office



Md. Ashraful Alam
Director General of the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI)

The responsible authority who was present in the dialogue responded to these claims and requested the victims to visit the nearest National Housing Authority office with proper proof. Mr. Moniruzzaman also asked Habitat to collect all the applications from the beneficiaries and submit them to the concerned government authority. He also promised to provide all sorts of required support to make the process feasible, effective, and sustainable while abiding by the government policies and regulations.

Andreas Hapsoro, Interim National Director of Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh, as chair, emphasized the role of safe and adequate housing in providing stability, security, and dignity to people's lives. Highlighting Bangladesh government's multifaceted approach to poverty reduction and provision of affordable housing, he underscored the need for a holistic approach in addressing the cycle of poverty, ensuring equitable access to housing, basic services, and secure occupation. Finally, he expressed his hopes for a successful dialogue to advance the mission of providing safe shelter and basic amenities for all urban citizens.

Summary of the Inaugural session

The construction of resilient cities is crucial in safeguarding and enhancing the quality of life for residents, ensuring development gains, fostering an investment-friendly environment, and catalyzing positive transformation. The participation of marginalized communities, including wandering tribes, transgender individuals, persons with disabilities, the abandoned and widowed, among others, is integral to the pursuit of sustainable development and the realization of a "smart" Bangladesh. It's essential to keep Social Housing free from corruption to ensure its efficacy. Any incidents of corruption or forgery should be reported to the appropriate governmental authorities. And for better understanding and action plan, INGOs, other development stakeholders, and government entities can collaborate to promote knowledge bank.

Parallel Session – 1

Ensuring Basic Civic Services for Urban Communities

In Bangladesh, 38% of the population live in urban areas, out of which 2.23 million people live in slums across the country while it is projected that (almost 45%) half of the country's population will live in the urban areas by 2030 and is expected to increase to 68% by 2050. This rural migration trend is being driven by rural poverty, natural disasters, adverse effects of climate change, and man-made calamities, driving individuals to cities in search of better livelihood opportunities. The rapid speed of urbanization in Bangladesh has led to unplanned and uncontrolled growth, and heightened the crisis of unemployment, shelter provision, and urban services. This has resulted in a lack of access to basic services including transportation, and water and sanitation facilities.

About 55% of the total urban population lives in slums with inadequate housing and without access to basic amenities such as access to water, health and sanitation, and having good governance, infrastructure, cultural practice and socialization. It appears challenging to provide the urban poor with basic services, compared with what the rural poor get, because of the population density in slum areas, where the urban poor usually live.

Around 40% of the total population are children. In a city like Dhaka, children living in slums lack access to decent housing, clean water, sanitation, health care and quality education. There is a Lack of playgrounds in schools and communities, where people do have access to existing playgrounds, are not suitable and safe for children to play. Children are exposed to a very high level of air and noise pollution; they do not have access to nature. Capital city Dhaka has already ranked second on a global list of cities with the worst air pollution, and 4th most polluted country in the world. Urban facilities and utilities are not child friendly and even child safety is not considered in infrastructure development.

In accordance with a recent national adolescent health and well-being survey in Bangladesh, around one in five female adolescents (ages 15-19 years) reported experiencing physical violence at least once in 12 months[10]. In another survey by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), 48% of the perpetrators of GBV in the host community are unemployed. The economic depression due to Covid-19 and violent behavior are closely related.

In a snapshot of the urban nutrition status, approximately 35% (18.5m) of urban dwellers reside in urban slums (BBS, 2022). Regarding nutrition at a glance urban are faring better, however this considers all urban areas (MICS, 2019). On the other hand, National Nutrition Policy 2015 (NNP) & Second National Plan of Action for Nutrition 2016-2025 (NPAN2) are both more focused on rural nutrition. Limited nutrition services in urban areas due to challenges in coordination & resource allocation. National Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) protocol and National Guideline for Facility Based Management are not fully adapted to Urban settings.

Homes are the foundation on which people build stability in their lives. It provides shelter, security, safety, and privacy that people require and allows them to fully participate in social, educational, economic, and community activities. Housing is also an important determinant of healthy life, with good quality accommodation protecting against extreme weather, fire, flood, and other natural disasters and man-made adversities. A safe shelter with basic amenities is considered as a human right that enables families to prosper and live with dignity.

10 https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/gender-based-violence-in-bangladesh-101070

Objectives of the session

With the vision of ensuring effective coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among the housing sector stakeholders in Bangladesh and achieving the goal of innovative, safe, and sustainable housing solutions, better access to social safety net affordable health and nutrition services for all, the Urban Dialogue envision acting as a stakeholders' platform that works for housing and shelter solutions in urban areas –

- To promote scalable, affordable housing solutions with basic services including health, nutrition social safety net, child day-care service for low-income communities in Bangladesh through market development initiatives.
- To build a sector-wide platform for sharing innovative technologies and practices as well as successes and failures.
- To strengthen regional partnership within, and across development sectors.
- To focus on child friendly cities by promoting safety, security and their basic rights.
- To showcase successful projects and motivate individuals and organizations to improve housing conditions with basic services.

Focus Areas

In this session of the 7th Urban Dialogue, the lenses were focused –

- To promote collaboration among urban actors' networks at different tiers to complement government initiatives.
- To identify and mainstream the urban issues that need to be addressed urgently through engagement of the stakeholders and duty bearers.
- Advocate at policy level so that extreme urban poor issues are addressed, and the evidence-based solutions are used in formulating development policies for sustainable urban services.

Expected Outcomes

To explore windows to collaborate with Governments' existing interventions for ensuring basic rights and services for urban poor especially safe shelter along with water, sanitation, healthcare, and social security through inter-ministerial coordination, and bring them under an umbrella through urban specific policies and programs. Referring national and global pledges, the campaign of enabling equitable access to adequate housing through empowered participation, basic services, climate resilience and secure occupation specifically for residents of informal settlements can be placed.

Lead member organization: Habitat for Humanity International Bangladesh, Save the Children, Concern Worldwide

Parallel Session - 1 Schedule

Time	Event	Resource
13:30 – 13:40 PM	Welcome Speech	
13:40 – 13:50 PM	Presentation on Keynote Presentation: Power Point	Keynote Presenter **Dr. Adil Mohammed Khan** Faculty member, Urban and Regional Planning Department of Jahangirnagar University
13:50 – 14:10 PM		Moderator **S M Mehedi Ahsan** General secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Planners Chair **Sheikh Mohammad Tauhidul Islam** Chief Executive Officer, Chattogram City Corporation,
14:10 – 14:40 PM	Expert Opinion from Panelist	**Tripti Mahaseth**, Advocacy Research Manager, Program, Habitat for Humanity International **Syed Adnan Ibna Hakim**, WASH Officer, UNICEF **Muhammad Mushfiqul Wara**, Country Director, CBM **Sharf Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury**, Chief Executive Officer, Saver Municipality **Dr. Muktar Hossain** Director, Social Safety Net Programme, Department of Social Service, Social Welfare Ministry
14:40 – 15:00 PM	Open Discussion (Q&A)	**Participants**
15:00 – 15:10 PM	Summarizing and Closing Remarks	**S M Mehedi Ahsan** General Secretary Bangladesh Institute of Planners

Dr. Adil Mohammed Khan, in the Keynote presentation, highlighted that various factors, such as calamities, poverty, the hope of better education, and an improved standard of life, drive the gradual increment of people living in slums. Unfortunately, in most cases, people fail to secure their desired and

permanent source of income after migrating to urban areas due to a lack of sellable skills and formal education. Consequently, they end up residing in informal settlements, which lack access to basic services, creating a general problem. Although the 'Five Year Plan' or 'Perspective Plan of Bangladesh' emphasized improving the lives and livelihoods of urban poor people, the associated ministries or organizations have yet to properly implement these on the ground. There is a visible lack of proper planning and policy to encourage the private sectors to contribute to improving the quality of urban low-income settlements and to provide housing and other basic services for them in an affordable and sustainable way. Basic services like water, gas, and electricity are needed to make these settlements more livable. We also need to formulate emergency contingency plans for these settlements and create a housing market for the urban poor, as they have the financial capability to pay for their livelihood.

During the Open Discussion segment, participants raised issues included potential recognition and provision of equipment-based support for volunteers working in slum areas during emergencies, disaster preparation measures in slums and informal areas (e.g., fire), the lack of day care centers in slums for the children of single and working mothers and plans to support Menstrual Hygiene Management in slum areas (e.g., private washrooms, safe and accessible sanitary products). The keynote speaker attempted to address the importance of comprehensive planning and sincere, coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to overcome the challenges faced by slum residents.

Tripti Mahaseth, ***Advocacy Research Manager at Habitat for Humanity International***, elucidated the merits of allocating investments towards basic services. She believes it is always a sound decision to invest in such fundamental provisions. Furthermore, she emphasized the value of partnerships, stating that significant changes are challenging to achieve through individual advocacy, thus collaboration becomes crucial. This cooperative effort between NGOs, public bodies, and government entities can result in mutual enrichment, indirectly enhancing their collective aims. She also recognized the critical role of the media in illustrating real-world situations, guiding the direction of stakeholders, and circulating success stories from various countries.

Serving as a ***WASH Officer for UNICEF, Syed Adnan Ibna Hakim*** focused on the commendable progress Bangladesh has made in the WASH sector. He particularly highlighted the notable reduction in instances of 'open defecation,' especially in urban areas, marking a significant stride in sanitation for Bangladesh.

Muhammad Musfiqul Wara, Country Director for CBM Bangladesh, outlined the complex aspects of disability in Bangladesh. He noted the stark correlation between economic hardship and disability, stating that individuals with disabilities often lack sufficient access to income opportunities. He stressed the necessity of integrating disabled individuals into mainstream society, advocating for tailored efforts to address the unique needs of the disabled community.

Sharf Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Chief Executive Officer of Savar Municipality, offered insights into reasons to emerge Savar, the adjacent municipality near Dhaka, as a popular choice for internal migrants seeking improved financial conditions; its industrial landscape and numerous opportunities for individuals moving from rural areas. However, managing the service needs of this steadily growing populace has emerged as a challenge for local administrators, who have been collaborating with various INGOs to address related issues.

Dr. Mukhtar Hossain, Director of the Social Safety Net program under the Ministry of Social Welfare, shared that the government has extended financial aid to 11 million recipients along with almost 3 million individuals with disability across the country through the social safety net program. From 2022-2023 one lac urban widows in city corporation area will get monthly widow allowance.

Stressing the importance of community engagement, ***Sheikh Mohammad Tauhidul Islam, Chief Executive Officer of the Chattogram City Corporation***, emphasized that without it, developmental efforts may fall short of achieving the desired outcomes.



Parallel Session 1 panel members

Summary of the 1st Parallel session

Partnership between international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), government bodies, and private entities is a crucial strategy for improving access to basic urban civic services within urban communities. The active involvement of beneficiaries in development initiatives promotes long-term sustainability. Legal mandates to support urban poor communities, need to be strictly adhered to and rigorously enforced. An emergency response team needs to be established to minimize low-income and slum areas vulnerability, efforts should be made to prevent corruption within initiatives like 'Social Housing' and 'Flats for Rental Basis for Urban Poor', ensuring that these benefits reach the actual urban poor rather than the politically favored segments of society. Considering persons with disabilities as integral members of mainstream communities, their well-being should be duly prioritized by responsible authorities. The government should extend support to INGOs and development partners to maximize their effectiveness in poverty alleviation and urban development by ensuring basic services in the low-income settlements.

Parallel Session – 2

Revisiting Environmental and Ecological Conservation including Anticipatory Action in present context for City Resilience Building

Bangladesh is one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the world, with average annual rate of urbanization is 5.34 since 1974. As a rapidly urbanizing city Dhaka has been facing innumerable challenges. The rapid growth of the population has been creating pressure on the city's capacity to deliver basic services. Problems of transportation, housing, water supply, sanitation, and waste disposal have seriously affected the livability of the city. Being the political, economic, social, and cultural center of the nation, its protection from climate related disasters is of utmost importance. Without adequate protection, the population of the city will be continuously exposed to risks from extreme climatic events and the high vulnerability of Dhaka to various hazards is a serious problem that needs urgent attention. Climate and disaster resilience may not be the same in all parts of a city. Spatial variations in resilience patterns in a city may result from differences in the strengths and weaknesses of the city's economic, social, physical, institutional, or natural aspects across its various parts.

Understanding such strengths and weaknesses is essential for identifying the areas which are exposed to various levels of risks and vulnerabilities. This is particularly important for a megacity like Dhaka which has been experiencing continuous deterioration in its natural environment due to excessive pressure of population and unbridled exploitation of its land and water resources by the private as well as the public sectors. The current approach to climate

change adaptation in Dhaka is still dependent on national level plans that are not very relevant to the city, given its megacity characteristics. The city is divided into a number of City Corporations each of which consists of a large number of Wards. These wards may vary quite significantly in terms of physical features, land development levels, land use patterns, socio-economic characteristics, and exposure to various types of natural hazards. This underlines the need for an approach that considers micro level variations in the adaptive capacity of a city.

Inspired and supported by nature, environment and ecological conservation measures are cost-effective solutions that harness ecosystem services to reduce vulnerability and increase the resilience of cities to extreme rainfall, drought, and heat–aggravated by climate change. Environment and ecological conservation measures follow the basic principles of conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of ecosystems. These include soft and hard engineering measures to develop green or hybrid (green–blue–grey) solutions that integrate plants, water systems, and green infrastructure. They provide environmental, social, and economic co-benefits and help people adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Resilience means the ability to bounce back in a nutshell. The fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines resilience as “the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation” (Kim & Lim, 2016, p. 1). City resilience seeks to create an enabling environment for centrally coordinated and locally managed Disaster Risk Management (DRM). There are three core pillars of disaster resilience in urban settings; i) effective emergency management; ii) improving structural resilience through reduction of existing physical vulnerability; and iii) risk-sensitive land use planning and safe construction standards and practices to ensure sustainable growth.

The urban poor are some of the most vulnerable populations to these impacts. A study in Bangladesh shows a 20% increase in mortality during heat waves. Particularly in cities including Dhaka, the heat island effect seriously impacts the health of citizens, especially those who work outside. A Heat Early Warning System could give sufficient time to prepare and reduce mortality rates. The Government of Bangladesh has responded to climate risks with a range of policies and programs, that allocate budgets for reducing vulnerabilities and engaging the private sector. However, without decisive action by local governments, these measures cannot be effective.

The citizens of Bangladesh should not be encouraged to migrate into major cities. Rather, they should be incentivized to move to other secondary cities in the country. As climate change worsens, and more people are likely to migrate from their rural homes to urban centers, it is imperative that Bangladesh needs to create space for creating climate resilient cities to disperse the massive influx of migrants moving to Dhaka.

Climate change is the biggest threat and Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, impacts are already evident. Analysis shows major cities of Bangladesh is currently lacking proper resilience mechanisms where combination of multiple climatic factors such as temperature variation and erratic rainfall is causing disturbance in the sound city life. On the other hand, climatic factors such as population density and poverty are affecting city life as well. Socio-economic uncertainties of city dwellers, one-third of whom live in slums, pay a lot because of climate change effects, risks, and hazards.

The process of building urban climate resilience requires an increased awareness of climate change impacts in urban environments and initiates processes that enable cities to adapt by reducing risk. In the context of natural disasters, urban climate resilience is a way to build the systematic capacity of an urban center, so that infrastructural development and land-use management reduces the impact of hazards.

In responding to climate change related risks and vulnerabilities, the major responsibility goes to city authorities. However, on the one hand city authorities have various types of challenges and on the other hand urban adaptation issues still receive limited or sometimes least attention in central government policies. In fighting climate hazards and thus enhancing urban resilience government plans and policies should ensure the implementation of laws combined with the efforts from different stakeholders through a holistic approach. Building awareness on climate and disaster management among people is the most important thing to do. We have many policies regarding disaster management and acts, but people hardly know about all this. NGOs can play a vital role in making people educate on their legal rights.

Policies need to be updated considering the current context. On the other hand, duplicity of polices has to be ignored. Coordination among government offices is also needed to avoid red tape in implanting policies. It's very urgent to have proper urban planning and close monitoring of implementation planning. We need adequate open urban space, modern wastage disposal system and more greenery to build the city as a climate resilient city.

Objectives of the session

- Identify and mainstream the environmental and ecological conservation issues in urban context that need to be addressed urgently through engagement of the stakeholders and duty bearers.
- Advocate at policy level so that environmental and ecological conservation issues are addressed, and evidence-based solutions are used in formulating development policies for urban resilient.
- Facilitate an interface for face-to-face interaction among urban actors and Promote collaboration with stakeholders at different tiers to complement government initiatives.
- To articulate plausible recommendations on the necessity of participatory urban governance, with revisited urban policies

Focus Areas

The session on "**Revisiting environmental and ecological conservation including anticipatory action in present context for city resilience building**" covered climate change implications in urban context specially in Dhaka city, local lead adaptive capacity, anticipatory actions, roles of private sector and means of their engagement in environmental & ecological conservation, present challenges, and way forwards.

Expected Outcomes

To get a set of comprehensive measures highlighting policy recommendations of building city resilience to formulate policy recommendations to facilitate "Way to New Normal Life – Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services".

Lead member organization: World Vision Bangladesh, Islamic Relief, German Red Cross & United Purpose

Parallel Session - 2 Schedule

Time	Event	Resource
13:30 – 13:40 PM	Welcome Speech	
13:40 – 13:55 PM	Presentation on Concept Note	
13:55 – 14:15 PM	Keynote Presentation: Mode: Power Point Presentation	**Professor Ainun Nishat**, PhD. Advisor Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research, BRAC university Chair and Moderator

14:15 – 14:35 PM	Expert Opinion from Panelist	**Prof Dr. Mahbubul Islam**, Sher-E-Bangla Agricultural University **Mohammad Motalib**, PhD, Deputy Director, Air Quality Management, Department of Environment **Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah** Independent Consultant – Environment, Climate Change, & Research System, and Visiting Research Fellow, Center for Sustainable Development (CSD), University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), Dhaka
14:35 – 15:00 PM	Open Discussion (Q&A)	**Participants**
15:00 – 15:10 PM	Summarizing and Closing Remarks	**Professor Ainun Nishat**, PhD.

Dulon Joseph Gomes, the Director of Humanitarian Emergency Affairs and Climate Change Adaptation at World Vision Bangladesh, highlighted that while rural areas are transforming into urban spaces, not all necessary facilities and services are being adequately developed. The issue of migration from rural to urban areas, driven by the impact of climate change, was also raised. He noted that urban areas in Bangladesh are experiencing significant temperature increases. Although there are numerous concerns related to urbanization, he highlighted the challenges faced in efficiently addressing these issues. He specifically mentioned waste management and plastic use as areas requiring attention and improvement. The drainage system and excessive plastic use were identified as factors exacerbating these challenges. Additionally, Bangladesh ranks high in terms of air pollution.

In the keynote presentation, the focus was on the urban environment and the challenges associated with urbanization. The speaker highlighted the disparities between rural and urban areas in Bangladesh over the past five decades, despite celebrating the country's 50 years of victory. It was noted that rural people are migrating to urban areas in search of job opportunities, as urban areas serve as centers for accessing basic amenities. The presentation discussed the various urban problems faced by the population, including the degradation of urban ecosystems, rapid urbanization, natural and man-made disasters, social issues, crime, and vector-borne diseases. The impacts of climate change, such as flooding and waterlogging, were specifically highlighted as significant challenges faced by urban areas. The causes behind

these urban problems were attributed to factors such as rural-to-urban migration, depletion of natural resources, high levels of industrialization, and poor governance systems. Land degradation, deforestation, and desertification were mentioned as specific examples of environmental issues. Water pollution, including industrial waste and marine pollution, was also identified as a significant concern. The presentation further emphasized the impact of disasters on displacement, with Bangladesh. It also focused on the importance of ecology and the impact of urbanization on natural resources and the environment. The speaker emphasized the interconnectedness of ecological systems, highlighting that disturbances in one aspect can have far-reaching consequences. The presentation highlighted the challenges faced by rural communities seeking shelter in peripheral areas, which puts pressure on essential resources such as drinking water, kitchen water, and construction materials. Overuse of these resources not only threatens their availability but also affects human well-being. The speaker also emphasized that resources are often viewed solely through the lens of economic viability, neglecting the importance of the ecosystem. The concept of the urban heat island effect was discussed, highlighting how urban areas experience higher temperatures compared to the surrounding periphery due to the lack of greenery. Low-income individuals, who often lack access to basic amenities, are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of urban heat. To mitigate these challenges, one approach is to make buildings greener by incorporating green spaces and to preserve existing greenery in the city rather than further deforestation. Recycling and reusing resources were also emphasized as important steps towards sustainable urban development. The presentation mentioned the challenges associated with roof gardening and the need to explore technologies that can facilitate its implementation.

Professor Dr. Mahbubul Islam, Sher E Bangla Agricultural University delivered an informative speech on the importance of ecological conservation and greening initiatives in the face of climate change. He began by emphasizing the significance of biodiversity, encompassing genetics, community, and ecosystems. However, he expressed concern over the loss of biological diversity due to the adverse impacts of climate change. He noted that the conversion of non-built areas into concrete structures has contributed to the decrease in greenery and the decline of native species. He discussed the impact of urban temperature increases on habitat behavior. He also drew attention to the harmful effects of sound pollution, particularly in highly populated areas like Dhaka, which further disrupts the delicate balance of the ecosystem. He suggested reserving green spaces, protecting water bodies, promoting the use of rooftop gardening and urban gardening practices for ecological conservation and greening.

The discussion on urban heat waves, anticipatory actions, and adaptation emphasized the importance of proper planning and proactive measures in urban development.

Mohammad Motalib, PhD, Deputy Director, Air Quality Management, Department of Environment highlighted the need for comprehensive planning before the construction of roads, drainage systems, and other infrastructure in urban areas. It was emphasized that such planning should be based on population projections to ensure efficient utilization of resources. One of the key concerns raised during the session was the declining groundwater condition. Besides, the need for implementing robust strategies and policies to reduce air pollution and improve air quality was emphasized. Another critical aspect discussed was the importance of proper management of sewage water. The speaker highlighted that if the issue of sewerage water is not adequately addressed, it can have detrimental effects on the surrounding ecosystem. Soil and noise pollution were also identified as important areas of concern.

Dr. Haseeb Irfanullah highlighted the urgency of addressing these issues and emphasized the importance of aligning efforts to effectively combat climate change impacts. He acknowledged that significant progress has been made over the past 15 years in addressing climate change. However, he stressed the need for accelerated implementation of initiatives to bridge the existing gap. He emphasized that emerging issues, such as climate-induced diseases, pose additional challenges that need to be promptly addressed.

Professor Dr. Ainun Nishat, Advisor at the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research, BRAC University focused on three key issues: urban environment, anticipatory action, and the importance of proper resource utilization. He emphasized the significance of implementing existing laws and policies related to the urban environment and ensuring their effective enforcement. He raised concerns about the government's role in violating these regulations and stressed the need for responsible resource management at all levels. One of the key points highlighted by the speaker was the growing urban land area use in Bangladesh. He underscored the importance of maintaining ecological balance and sustainable practices in urban areas.



Professor Dr. Ainun Nishat, Advisor at the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research, BRAC University delivering his speech



Parallel Session 2 Panel Members

Summary of the 2nd Parallel session

The highlighted points were on the urban environment and the challenges associated with urbanization, the disparities between rural and urban areas in Bangladesh, the various urban problems faced by the population, including the degradation of urban ecosystems, rapid urbanization, natural and man-made disasters, social issues, crime, and vector-borne diseases, concern over the loss of biological diversity due to the adverse impacts of climate change. The importance of maintaining ecological balance and sustainable practices in urban areas were featured and suggested reserving green spaces, protecting water bodies, promoting urban gardening practices for ecological conservation and greening.

Parallel Session – 3

Engaging Private Sector and Media in Disaster Risk Management, in the era of SMART Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a land of resilience. Government of Bangladesh under the progressive leadership of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is investing for increasing the national capacity to withstand future shocks and stresses. These initiatives are appreciated by the global actors as a role model for disaster risk management (DRM). To supplement all these initiatives, the private sector is also stepping onto the track of disaster risk management to make national development sustainable. Following in the footsteps of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (DCCI) has established the first ever Private Sector Emergency Operation Center (PEOC) in South Asia. This PEOC will be connected to the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) and other EOCs in the country. DCCI has also established a Private Sector Emergency Response Team (PERT) to support the operation of the PEOC. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and a guideline has been developed for the PEOC and PERT respectively, once the SOP is developed for the NEOC existing documents will be harmonized with that. For this purpose, since June 2020 DCCI is working with ActionAid Bangladesh, United Purpose and World Vision Bangladesh as part of Strengthening Urban Public Private Programming for Earthquake Resilience (SUPER) Project. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is funding the project.

Besides the PEOC, SUPER Project is also supporting developing Artificial Intelligence based solution for hazard anticipation and supporting to activate Private Sector Working Group under HCTT. Through these activities, the project is facilitating participation of private sector in DRM, as well as developing leadership capacity for managing disaster risks.

Objectives of the session

This session brought together the actors of DRM, policy makers, academia, bi-lateral and multilateral agencies, and private sector to exchange knowledge and learnings to build up on these for a disaster resilient future.

Focus Areas

This parallel discussion was focused on the following issues -

1. Risk financing strategy
2. AI based solution for hazard anticipation
3. Role of Private Sector Working Group and Private Sector Emergency Response Team (PERT)

Lead member organization: World Vision Bangladesh, ActionAid & United Purpose

Parallel Session - 3 Schedule

Time	Event	Resource
1.30-1.35 PM	Opening remarks	**Sagor Marandy** Director – Program Development & Quality Assurance, World Vision Bangladesh
1.35-2.00 PM	Presentation on "Engaging Private sector and Media in Disaster Risk Management in the era of Smart Bangladesh.	**Keynote Speaker and AIBS Demonstration:** **A M Nasir Uddin,** Consortium Manager, SUPER Project, Disaster Risk Reduction at ActionAid Bangladesh
2.00-2.20 PM	Q&A and Open Discussion	**Participants**
2.20-2.40 PM	Speeches of Panelists	**Dr. Khalilur Rahman** Professor, Department of Computer science & Engineering, BRAC University **Abu Sayeed Khan,** Advisory Editor, The Daily Samakal **Khandoker Anwar Kamal** Joint Executive Secretary (Project) Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry
2.40-2.55 PM	Speech of Chief Guest	**Md. Mijanur Rahman,** Director General Department of Disaster Management
2.55-3.00 PM	Concluding Remarks	**Sriramappa Gonchikara** Country Director United Purpose, Bangladesh Country Program

Sagor Marandy, stated that the 7th Urban Dialogue has been referred to as a platform to address the needs of marginalized people in urban areas and provide them with resources through coordination. Rapid changes are occurring, and we need to develop the capacity to fight them. It is crucial to address the issue of disasters, which have a global impact. Resilience is being emphasized, with measurable capacity to combat disasters. Both citizens and the private sector play significant roles. This dialogue will discuss how to improve disaster management capacity.

The ***keynote speaker A M Nasir Uddin and one of the panelists Dr. Khalilur Rahman*** emphasized that Bangladesh, being highly vulnerable to disasters, faces an increasing frequency and intensity of such events. Immediate and coordinated action is crucial in effectively responding to and managing these disasters. The ability to minimize the death toll and damage caused by disasters is a significant indicator of effective disaster management. It is important to conduct cost-benefit analyses to evaluate the effectiveness of actions, ensuring that the benefits outweigh the costs. The involvement of the private sector plays a crucial role in facilitating disaster management efforts. Collaboration with media organizations and the implementation of trial-based projects are necessary to raise awareness and preparedness among the population. It is crucial to invest more in building disaster resilience in Bangladesh.

Khandoker Anwar Kamal detailed the significance of global focus on climate change, leading to increased attention to disaster risk management. Non-Profit Organizations work alongside the government to contribute to disaster prevention efforts. Furthermore, the Fire Service, City Corporations, and other entities actively address the challenges related to disasters. All organizations must establish a disaster fund to ensure preparedness.

Abu Sayeed Khan, the advisory editor of The Daily Samakal, highlighted the natural vulnerability of Bangladesh to disasters due to urbanization and unplanned urban development. He emphasized that the management of these urban areas exacerbates the risks, citing examples such as the Rana Plaza tragedy and the Bongobazar fire tragedy, pointing out the deficiencies in prevention measures. To prevent such tragedies, Mr. Khan suggested tree plantations and the creation of additional water sources. He also highlighted the risks that media personnel take in raising awareness among the public. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of two key elements in disaster prevention: the involvement of local government and the role of media and the private sector. These entities play significant roles in mitigating the risks associated with disasters. In summary, Mr. Khan's insights shed light on the vulnerability of Bangladesh to disasters due to urbanization and the importance of addressing deficiencies in disaster prevention measures. The inclusion of green spaces and waterways, along with the involvement of local government, media, and the private sector, can significantly contribute to enhancing disaster resilience in the country.

Md. Mijanur Rahman emphasized the importance of state systems and the welfare of the people in driving the country's development. It was acknowledged that without the government's focus on the welfare of its citizens, the country cannot progress. The collaboration of the community

with the government was highlighted as a necessary element for development.

Sriramappa Gonchikara, delved into the topic of media technology and its role in creating a smart Bangladesh. He emphasized the significance of the private sector's involvement in disaster management. The high population density in Bangladesh was acknowledged as a challenge, prompting a discussion on the associated problems. He highlighted the visionary concept of disaster management and expressed gratitude to the visionary leaders in Bangladesh. The importance of technology in effective disaster management was underscored. Additionally, he emphasized the need to strike a balance between profit maximization and social maximization. Both aspects were considered equally important in the context of disaster management and overall development.



Parallel Session 3 panel

Summary of the 3rd Parallel session

The issue of disasters, which have a global impact, resilience with measurable capacity to combat disasters, both citizens and the private sectors significant roles were addressed. The necessity of collaboration with media organizations and the implementation of trial-based projects was emphasized to raise awareness and preparedness among the mass community. The need to strike a balance between profit maximization and social maximization is also underscored.

Closing Session of the 7th Urban Dialogue 2023

Declaration of the 7th Urban Dialogue

An urban declaration was prepared from the identified problems and recommendations from each session conducted. The declaration was placed at the closing session of the 7th Urban Dialogue where key government representatives, stakeholders and community representatives to get their opinions, comments and way forward. From the parallel sessions policy recommendations were identified on particular topics to work on for further implementation of declaration points. Later the declaration will be printed and disseminated among the concerned stakeholders.

Declaration Points

The declaration was presented at the plenary session of the 7th Urban Dialogue, having been informed by the parallel sessions that had taken place. Below are the policy recommendations, it contained:

1. The coverage of social safety net programs must be extended to temporary residents of urban areas (i.e. those living on the streets, in shanties/slums) so that they are able to access social services (i.e. education, widow allowance) using authorized proof of identity (national identity card, birth registration, etc.).
2. Comprehensive action plans and their coordinated implementation are necessary to protect and/or increase the existing stock of bodies of water, freshwater reservoirs, parks, and other outdoor recreational spaces in the city.
3. The provision of community clinics, day care centers, health vouchers and other services for low-income families should be institutionalized and their participation made a requirement in urban planning.
4. Structural developments in the city should adopt environment-friendly technologies and have a provision for child-friendly facilities.
5. Policy formulation must involve public participation and adequate budget appropriation to ensure the rights to sustainable and safe housing of homeless and floating urban populations are realized.
6. Effective monitoring systems that will track progress on sustainable and resilient urban development and capture the contributions of both the private and public sectors must be developed.
7. Significant investments in SOD (Standing Orders on Disaster) implementation in urban disaster risk management should be made and reflected in budget allocations at every level of government.

8. Specific policies on green-building that consider the protection of natural resources and wildlife must be formulated and implemented through the cooperation of government, development agencies, construction companies, and the urban population.

9. "The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence Bangladesh, 2019-2024"[11] needs to be updated in the long term in light of the new vision.

M. A. Halim, Director, Disaster and Climate Risk Management, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, stated that in Dhaka city, there is a significant population influx from other districts as people seek better livelihood opportunities. The city offers numerous conveniences and benefits to its residents. If we fail to extend similar urban amenities to rural areas, fully urbanizing Dhaka will pose a challenge. It is crucial to contribute to building disaster resilience in rural regions. Advocacy efforts are necessary to ensure that areas receiving less attention also receive adequate focus and support.

Sriramappa Gonchikara, Country Director, United Purpose Bangladesh, said, safe food encompasses the concept of providing solid and secure food produced with safe ingredients. To promote safe food, a crucial step is to establish a connection between safe food and the local market, thereby transforming the overall food system. However, it is important to acknowledge that the availability of safe food is currently limited mainly to elite individuals. The ultimate aim is to make safe food accessible and affordable for every person. This entails implementing strategies and measures that enable safe food to reach a wider population, ensuring that it becomes a viable and affordable option for all.

Suresh Bartlett, National Director, World Vision Bangladesh, emphasized children as an essential component of the future and empowering them to bring about positive change is of utmost importance. This highlights the wide reach and impact of the program dedicated to supporting and empowering children in providing meaningful experiences and support them throughout Bangladesh.

Situated in a geographically vulnerable location, Bangladesh often suffers from severe natural disasters, with low-income individuals being disproportionately impacted. These disasters often lead to homelessness and loss of income, triggering internal migration. As ***Kamrul Islam, Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR)*** said, it is essential to prepare year-round to mitigate these calamities, not just respond when they occur. He applauded the government's initiative to develop disaster-resilient housing for the ultra-poor, particularly in rural areas, and expressed gratitude to INGOs

11 https://www.academia.edu/44450021/National_Strategy_for_Artificial_Intelligence_Bangladesh

aiding in implementing these disaster resilience policies. Also added, while the government plays a vital role in disaster management, it is equally important to foster collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders. Comprehensive government support should be complemented by the active participation and support of individuals, communities, and organizations to maintain livable conditions in urban areas.



Dr. Enamur Rahman, State Minister of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief



Kamrul Islam, Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

The State Minister of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Dr. Enamur Rahman, the chief guest of the concluding session, detailed government initiatives promoting information technology usage nationwide and employment programs for youth. He noted significant improvements in zilla and upazilla level hospital capabilities, with the addition of primary healthcare facilities. To reduce Dhaka's population density and enhance its livability and sustainability, the government has developed a Detailed Area Plan (DAP), which includes guidelines for inclusivity for urban poor. It is crucial to emphasize that effective disaster management cannot be achieved without the active participation of the people. Therefore, engaging the public in disaster preparedness and response efforts are of utmost importance. He highlighted that the government recognizes the importance of a "whole of society approach" and emphasized the collaboration between the government and its citizens. Encouraging INGOs' initiatives targeting urban poor, Dr. Rahman assured government support in all possible manners from every possible authority. Lastly, like other speakers, he emphasized the need for comprehensive efforts from all stakeholders to enhance urban livability, sustainability, and resilience.

Andreas Hapsoro, the Interim National Director of Habitat for Humanity International Bangladesh, delivered a thanksgiving speech during the concluding session of the 7th Urban Dialogue. Expressing gratitude towards key attendees, including the state minister, special guests, keynote speakers, panelists, and representatives from members and other organizations, he

emphasized their contributions to enriching the dialogue. The Urban INGO Forum, Hapsoro explained, focuses on bridging gaps, ensuring efficient responses to urban sector issues, and fostering inter-sectoral synergy with relevant networks and stakeholders. The forum seeks to collaborate more closely with government interventions for urban poverty, promote safe shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare, and social security through inter-ministerial coordination, and unify stakeholders under urban-specific policies and programs. Hapsoro expressed hope to share lessons learned in the next Urban Dialogue for further knowledge generation.



Closing Session panel

Way Forward

The specific directives and opinions of the dialogue come up from the comprehensive declaration would be new windows to go ahead for the sustainable urbanization. The areas of interventions need to be focused on administrative decentralization for land management, effective and sustainable urbanization, urban governance within limited resources and ensuring adequate availability of basic services for the community. The mentioned areas could lead the sustainable urbanization which is related to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Advocacy actions need to be taken to influence government's initiatives on policy and strategy formulation along with operational practice for the Urban Agendas to manage all the risks and opportunities for our vibrant and growing cities. Nothing can replace face-to-face diplomacy and decision-making. And there is no better approach, than a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, that addresses challenges, and includes policymakers at the global, national and local levels. Greater cooperation such as public-private joint ventures with potential realistic solutions and active involvement of relevant stakeholders, knowledge-sharing and capacity support among the stakeholders is now prime needs for active and integrated coordination.

About the Organizers

ActionAid Bangladesh

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty. We believe everyone has the power within them to create change for themselves, their families and communities. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change. We envision a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity. To that end, we work in over 45 countries with more than 15 million people worldwide. We have a 'bottom-up' approach to decision making, and uniquely, our head office is located in Africa. We have hubs in Asia, The Americas and Europe too. We strongly believe we can achieve our goals by working collaboratively – locally, nationally and globally – with people in poverty, our supporters, partners and colleagues. In Bangladesh since 1983, ActionAid has carried out development interventions across the country. Working with women, youth and community-based organizations, we reached out to 187,717 people in 2015.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society was established as an auxiliary to the Public Authority. Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) – part of the world's largest humanitarian non-governmental organization, The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The Bangladesh Red Cross Society was constituted on 31 March 1973 by the President's Order No.26 of 1973 with retrospective effect from the 16 December 1971. The Society was recognized by ICRC on 20 September 1973 and admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on 02 November 1973. The name and emblem were changed from Red Cross to Red Crescent on 4th April 1988 vide Act 25 of 1988. The BDRCS has 68 Units. A Unit is constituted in each district and in the Metropolitan cities of Dhaka. Chittagong, Rajshahi & Khulna. To strengthen leading role as a humanitarian organization by mobilizing the power of humanity, it works as a volunteer-based humanitarian organization, endeavors to prevent and reduce human sufferings and save and improve lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups by providing effective and efficient services through mobilizing resources in emergencies and normal time. They have stood beside the Bangladeshi population throughout history and have played a crucial humane role in the relief, rescue and rehabilitation of hundreds and thousands of victims of flood, cyclone and other natural disasters in Bangladesh.

Concern Worldwide

Established in 1968, Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organization dedicated to tackling poverty and the suffering of extremely poor people in the world. CWW started working in Bangladesh since 1972 through working with poorest people to transform their lives. Bangladesh country program have evolved to tackle the multi-dimensional nature of extreme poverty addressing hunger, primary education, maternal and child health, inequality and disaster resilience. The current urban program aims to improve the livelihoods, assets, food security and social protection of urban extreme poor living in pavement, squatter and undeveloped settlements in Dhaka and Chittagong cities. Through its multipurpose centers, the program works to increase income and financial assets, reduce malnutrition, ensure access to basic rights and services, reduce violence against women and girls and create positive societal attitude towards the urban extreme poor. Concern urban health intervention aims to improve the health and nutrition status of 876,226 extreme poor and poor people urban poor in Bangladesh through sustainable service provision, managed through a coordinated, national urban health delivery system. The major policy advocacy interventions are conducted through partnering with city corporations, Coalition of Urban Poor (apex body of 50 organizations working in urban) and All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in Bangladesh Parliament to protect rights and entitlement of marginalized urban extreme poor populations. Concern is closely working with different line ministries, departments, LGIs, academia, research institutes and CSO platforms.

German Red Cross (GRC)

The German Red Cross (GRC) is part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement assisting victims of conflict, disaster and people affected by social or health-related crisis. The German Red Cross has been collaborating with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) since the 1970s and has an in-country presence since the 1980s; mainly in the fields of disaster management, water and sanitation, health, and mother and childcare. Together with BDRCS, GRC is currently implementing projects on DRR and CCA in Dhaka, Bogura, Noakhali, Panchagarh, Tangail, Chittagong, Laxmipur and emergency support is given to the displaced people from Myanmar in Cox's Bazar. To enhance the institutional and community capacity on Earthquake Preparedness, GRC along with its consortium partners (BDRCS, Christian Aid, Action Against Hunger, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent, American Red Cross) is currently implementing Dhaka Earthquake and Preparedness Project (DEEP) in Dhaka South City Corporation.

Habitat for Humanity International - Bangladesh

With the slogan "We build strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter", a branch of HFH International, was established in 1999. It currently operates in 5 locations across the country, aiming to break the cycle of poverty that comes with poorly constructed homes in Bangladesh. HFH Bangladesh is presently working in the areas of Khulna, Satkhira, Noakhali, Cox's Bazar, Kurigram and Dhaka, with the national office situated in the capital Dhaka. Each working area has an established Habitat Resource Centers (HRCs) office that focuses on local research and initiatives, and appropriate technology to deliver the necessary housing solutions to low-income families. HFH Bangladesh takes a holistic approach to development, working closely with communities, partner organizations and other Non-Government Organizations. Local and international, corporate and community volunteers work alongside the homeowners to donate their time, labor and money to help build houses. HFH Bangladesh started implementing DRR projects since 2007, WASH projects since 2011, Urban projects since 2012. HFH Bangladesh is a pioneer in urban INGO forum and maintains very strong network with the government and non-government stakeholders. More than 17,528 low-income Bangladeshi families have partnered with Habitat to improve their housing, water, sanitation, and general living conditions. Above 96,883 people have also received training in household financial management, improved water and sanitation, appropriate construction technologies, and disaster response and mitigation.

Islamic Relief Bangladesh

Striving for a Caring, Resilient and Poverty Free Bangladesh. Islamic Relief Worldwide is an independent humanitarian and development organization. Founded in 1984, with headquarters based in Birmingham, UK, we have a presence in 47 countries. Islamic Relief has been working in Bangladesh since 1991, when we provided emergency relief and supported communities to rebuild in the wake of a devastating cyclone. Since then, we have expanded our programs to focus on both humanitarian and development challenges. Our program is Climate Change and Disaster Resilience Program, Humanitarian Program, Livelihood and Community Development program, Orphan and Child Welfare Program and Health and Nutrition Program. IR,B envisage a caring world where communities are empowered, social obligations are

fulfilled, and people respond as one to the suffering of others. Our innovative integrated approach sees us work closely with the vulnerable communities that we serve. They identify the problems and are part of the solutions. As a result, our programs often encompass many interlinked areas. We are guided by the values and teachings of the Qur'an and Prophetic example. In particular: Sincerity (Ikhlas), Excellence (Ihsan), Compassion (Rahma), Social Justice (Adl) and Custodianship (Amana)

Save the Children

Save the Children

In Bangladesh, it started their journey 53 years ago in 1970 in response to the devastating cyclone that hit Bhola island. Save the Children works for a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development, and participation. They began by providing children and their families with emergency food supplies and medical assistance. Since then, they have been actively working across the country with the government, civil society organizations, businesses, and others to give children the opportunities they deserve- to grow up healthy, to learn, and to be safe. When a crisis strikes, they are among the first to stand beside and support children and the last to leave. With 1200 dedicated staff and over 850 volunteers across the country, they respond to major emergencies, deliver innovative development programs, and ensure children's voices are heard through campaigning to build a better future for and with children. It also works for providing critical maternity services along with other emergency responses during natural disaster time, empowering communities through sustainable agriculture, climate campaign, digital equity, marginalized youth, girls rights, Rohingya crisis response etc.

United Purpose
Beyond aid

United Purpose

United Purpose is a UK based international NGO created in 1976. United Purpose has been working in Bangladesh since 1994 and helps around 1.2m people each year. It works in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts in the South-East, the Haor area in North-East and the flood prone area in North-West, where two million ultra-poor families are affected by regular floods. United Purpose (UP) works in partnership to ensure effective service delivery and to build local organization capacity; focus on the community-level risks driven by natural disasters and climate change; and promote Holistic Sustainable Development. UP also seeks to share knowledge, serving as a resource center and facilitate a consortium of complementary organizations (including the

private sector). Our work covers: water and sanitation (Particularly in schools); education; primary healthcare; disaster preparedness, humanitarian emergency response; rural livelihoods and adapting to climate change. Beyond rural areas UP also has been working in 10 wards in Dhaka North City Corporation and all nine wards in Savar municipality on disaster risk reduction for urban vulnerable people.

World Vision

World Vision Bangladesh (WVB)

World Vision Bangladesh, a Christian humanitarian organization is dedicated to the wellbeing of children, especially the most vulnerable children, their families and communities. It is committed to serve and partner with people in need regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender and ability. At present World Vision Bangladesh is serving around 5 million people under 31 administrative districts. With active presence in 80 locations at sub-district level, the organization is working for fulfilling its objective 'Building a better life for girls and boys in Bangladesh'. For achieving its current objective WVB laid emphasis on 4 major strategic areas: Improve health and nutrition status of mothers and children; Improve access to and quality of education; Ensure children are protected and cared for and Increase community resilience. World Vision first involved with Bangladesh by responding the cyclone victims of Bhola in 1970 during devastating tidal surges in the coastal areas of the country. Later the organization carried out relief operations in refugee camps in India in 1971. Following Bangladesh's independence in 1972 it started relief and rehabilitation programs as per invitation of the Bangladesh Government.

Contributing Forum Members

Other Forum Members

