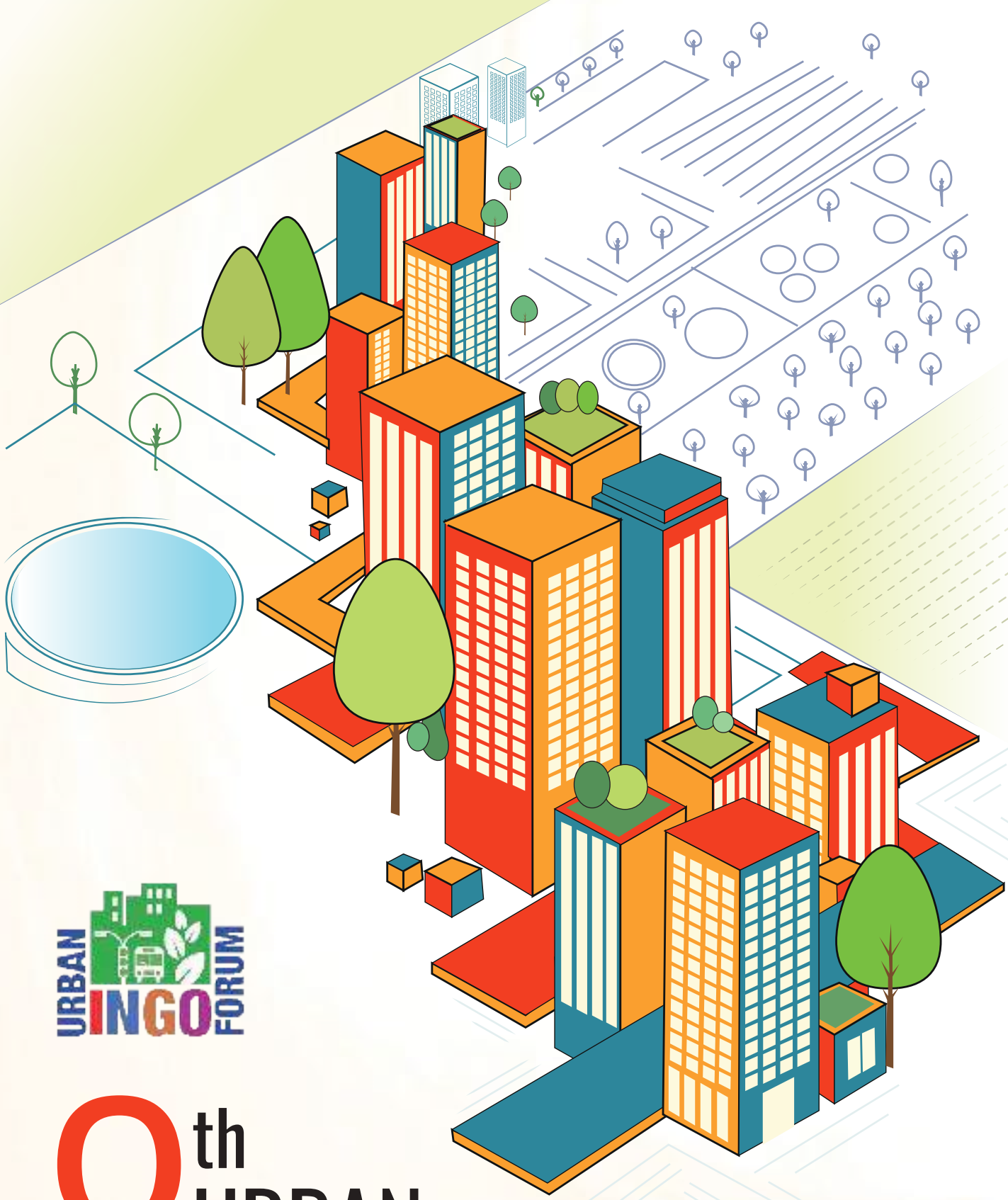


URBAN INGO FORUM

8th URBAN DIALOGUE REPORT

'Resilient Cities towards LDC Graduation'

8th URBAN DIALOGUE 2024

'Resilient Cities towards LDC Graduation'

28 May 2024

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8TH URBAN DIALOGUE: 'Resilient Cities towards LDC Graduation'

"Resilience can be achieved through a bottom-up process with city residents taking the lead in planning and governance issues, forming strong social networks that manifest and reinforce local identity."

(Ercoskun & Ozuduru, 2014; Gunduz, Oner, & Knox, 2016)

Urban INGO Forum Bangladesh is a platform of more than 20 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) working on diverse issues related to urban setting in Bangladesh. The Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh envisages working closely with the Government of Bangladesh, especially with the local government organizations at city and municipality level, relevant ministries, development partners, and international and national organizations.

In Bangladesh, the total population of Bangladesh is 16.51 Crores (165 Million)[1] , urban population is 38%[2] . About 18 lakhs (1.8 Million) people live in slums across the country and 22,185 people are homeless. Every year, 250000 rural people migrate to urban areas in search of employment and improved economic, social, and health services. The Projections show that urbanization, the gradual shift in residence of the human population from rural to urban areas, combined with the overall growth of the world's population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050.

In the urban areas of Bangladesh **18.9% people** live **below the poverty line**

At this moment, more than half of the urban population lives in the four largest cities 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. In Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2010 and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) 2010, it portrayed a deficit of 4.6 million units of housing for 43.43 million city dwellers, which will stand at 8.5 million units for 60 million city dwellers in 2021. The most settle in slum areas that have low standards of living and limited access to basic services. These areas are also usually more vulnerable to climate-induced disasters and are less likely to have water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in place. More often than not, low-income families living in informal settlements would lack social capital as well. The population lives in slums characterized by tenure insecurity and evictions, and controlled by gang-lords who charge exorbitant rates for basic services. Such a situation deters investments for improving living conditions. Poor quality housing is typical and basic public are non-existent or very limited. A combination of human and natural factors results in various urban hazards with serious impacts on the poor. Rapid urban expansion due to rural-urban migration and unplanned extension of cities are the major reasons for urban poverty.

Bangladesh had been categorized as a Least Developed Country by the United Nations in 1975. Graduation from this category had been a national aspiration since then. After 46 years Bangladesh is set to graduate from its status as a Least Developed Country (LDC) in November 2026. Of being enlisted in the category, the country has met all three criteria, GNI per capita, Human Asset Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI), as assessed triennially by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) of the United Nations for the second time in February 2021 and got the final recommendation to graduate. Although Bangladesh is set for graduating LDC status in 2026, it would still enjoy LDC benefits and support for 3 more years to ensure a smooth transition and preparation. This means there are two stages to the transition: the official leap in 2026, and the actual strike in 2029, giving the country 7 more years to get ready to lose all LDC perks. At this stage, policy measures and well-governed public interventions are vital in smoothing the transition for Bangladesh.

[1] The preliminary Population and Housing Census 2022 Report.

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

[3] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS

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

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 in order 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 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 urban needs in Bangladesh towards resilient and inclusive community with safe shelter, basic amenities, livelihood opportunities, safety and security, health, education, gender equality, child protection, women and youth empowerment, climate change adaptation through nature based solution etc.

JOURNEY OF URBAN DIALOGUE

Since the inception of this vibrant national platform on urban development, the urban dialogues have become an advocacy arm aims to foster collaboration among public and private sectors, national and international agencies, and strong positioning in relevant platforms for awareness building, knowledge enhancement and promote practices. 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. The 7th Urban Dialogue has been organized in June 2023, the theme is "Redefining Resilience of Cities and its Services".



The focus in each theme was social inclusion, government and non-government initiatives and learnings highlighting for future opportunity windows on effective partnership, engagement, and collaboration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE

Overall objective of the 8th Urban Dialogue is to articulate acceptable policy 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 & 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 policies and executing for sustainable urban services deliveries.

EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE DIALOGUE

Overall objective of the 8th Urban Dialogue is to articulate acceptable policy recommendations on the necessity of participatory urban governance, with revisited urban policies and institutional outlook to -

Addressed & explored

- To build collaboration between shelters focused organization to raise awareness about the importance of shelter in informal urban settlements and to find out gaps and proposed potential climate resilient housing initiatives through government policy makers and other stakeholders.
- To find potential solutions and ideas to assemble the basic services (shelter, health & nutrition, water & sanitation, education, safety nets, food, security etc.) accessible along with livelihood opportunities for all urban slum communities and floating people in urban.

Provided 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.

Adopted a comprehensive declaration in presence of policy representatives, highlighting policy recommendations focusing the commitment of the election manifesto of the ruling party of Bangladesh to influence them for active actions.

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

Ministers, Secretaries, Mayors, Government officials, Academics and Researchers, Representatives from donors, I/NGOs, Service Providing Agencies, Urban Activists networks, students, informal settlement dwellers, representation from vulnerable and marginalized groups, media.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

09:30AM – 10:00AM

Registration and Refreshment

10.00AM –10:15AM

Inaugural ceremony of 8th Urban Dialogue 2024
Welcome Speech: Urban INGO Forum

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM

Keynote presentation:

Prof. Dr. A. S. M. Maksud Kamal,
Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka

10:45 AM- 12: 45 PM

Chief Guest:

Atiqul Islam, Mayor, Dhaka North City Corporation

Special Guest: Host Organization –

- Dr. Liakath Ali, Director, BRAC
- Mr. Jyoti Raj Patra, Programme Director , Concern World wide

Chair: Urban INGO Forum –

James Samuel,
National Director, Habitat for Humanity International, Bangladesh

12:45 PM -1:45 PM

Lunch break and Break out room preparation for parallel session

01:45 PM – 04:15 PM

Parallel sessions on three different themes -

- Equitable access to Basic services for Resilient Urban Community
- Climate Smart Nature-Based Solutions: Empowering Lives and Enhancing Resilience through Green Approach
- Private sector in resilient urban development

04:15PM – 4:45 PM

Health Break and prepare declaration

4:45 PM – 4:50 PM

Concluding session – Welcome speech - Urban INGO Forum -

Talha Jamal,
Country Director,
Islamic Relief Bangladesh

4:50 PM – 5:00 PM

Dialogue Declaration by Urban INGO Forum

5:00 PM – 5:45 PM

Reflections on Declaration by Chair:

Prof. Dr. A. S. M. Maksud Kamal,
Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka

Chief guest:

Md. Tazul Islam,
MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives

5:45 PM – 6:00 PM

Concluding remarks by Chair

OPENING SESSION

The 8th Urban Dialogue commenced with a welcome speech by Urban INGO Forum Member Organization – Habitat for Humanity International – Bangladesh, that set the tone for the day's proceedings emphasized the critical importance of addressing the pressing issues facing in-country urban areas and charting urgency and a course toward a more sustainable and inclusive future. The speech was highlighted with a vision of building cities through embracing the spirit of collaboration, empathy, and determination that will not only vibrant and dynamic but also equitable and resilient - cities that serve as beacons of hope and opportunity for all.

KEYNOTE HIGHLIGHTS

On the theme of the 8th Urban Dialogue – ***"Resilient Urban Cities Towards LDC Graduation", Prof. Dr. A. S. M. Maksud Kamal, Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka*** presented the keynote. In Comparison to other countries, Bangladesh has a high population density throughout the nation. While the density is similar to urban areas, the available facilities and services may not be as developed. The central discussion points of this Dialogue - Urban Resilience refers to a city's ability to quickly recover after a natural disaster like a flood or earthquake and preparations needed to move Bangladesh beyond LDC status. Urban, Resilience, and LDC Graduation are our 3 keywords where societal resilience, national resilience, and urban resilience work the same way.

By 2050, Over 2 billion individuals are projected to migrate to urban areas, with 95% originating from Global South. Nearly 1 billion people will be exposed to natural disaster risk as many of these urban centers will be located in coastal areas or other disaster-prone regions, rendering them highly vulnerable, Poor and marginalized will suffer more. In the case of Bangladesh, the urban population is growing rapidly at a rate of 0.8% annually.

Among the existing urban challenges, one is increased exposure and risk. Higher population density and infrastructure concentration in urban areas can increase the potential for casualties and economic losses during natural disasters. Building, population, and slum areas are increasing in the urban area. The marginalized population is choosing the big cities to migrate to because of climate change. Then there is infrastructure vulnerability with a lot of mismanagement while maintaining building codes. Ideally, planning first, and then urbanization takes place. Here, in Bangladesh, the scenario is the opposite. It is not possible to plan after urbanization. The situation then is to manage the built environment. And built environment management is very difficult, particularly in a country like



ours. The Urban Regeneration practice, it is understood that based on public-private partnership, creating infrastructure on public assets with more facilities by giving more opportunities to the public. For example, someone has a building on a land of 5 kathas. By taking that land and surrounding land the government created all sorts of facilities there. Based on the person's resources, the government would give assets to them, and security would be ensured. Another urban challenge is limited green spaces. Rapid urbanization frequently results in the diminishment of green spaces, thereby exacerbating the urban heat island effect. Temperature is increasing due to population density, urban infrastructure, a decrease in green spaces, and water bodies. There is a relationship between vector-borne disease and urban heat islands. So, because of limited green spaces, the well-being of urban life is being threatened.

While Bangladesh may not be a major contributor to global carbon emissions, it is undeniably on the frontlines of climate change. Rising sea levels, erratic weather patterns, and extreme weather events pose significant threats to the nation's development and well-being. On a positive note, the current government in the previous election manifesto included "Our village, our town" is to stop migration to urban areas from rural areas. Urban areas and rural areas should not have differences in terms of facilities. LDC graduation does not only mean an increase in per capital income, it also indicates urban health, air condition, and human health improvement. Bangladesh has adopted a whole-of-society approach in urban development following the Sustainable Development Goal 11 for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The National Urban Agenda (NUA) lays out standards and principles for the planning construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas guided by the Interlinked principles. This includes social inclusion and ending poverty. GDP growth acceleration, employment generation, and rapid poverty reduction with a broad-based strategy of inclusiveness, which means leaving no one behind which is a slogan of the current government. To prepare the cities by sustainable use of natural resources and successful management of the inevitable urbanization for the migration from rural to urban is called urban transition. The 8th five-year plan also addresses attaining SDG targets and coping with the impact of LDC graduation. Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041 is a genuine articulation of the government in transforming the country from a lower middle-income country to an upper-middle middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income country by 2041 under the World Bank Classification.

Industrialization with export-oriented manufacturing and the paradigm shift in agriculture to enhance productivity are highlighted here. Moreover, The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan supports the perspective plan vision 2041, from a climate change perspective. And The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) vision is to build a climate-resilient nation through effective adaptation strategies to foster a robust society and ecosystems and stimulate sustainable economic growth.

Dr. Liakath Ali, Director, BRAC, pointed out a critical omission: the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) for Dhaka City, emphasizing the importance of restoring flood flow zones and canals to address the city's waterlogging issues and highlighted the substantial funding requirement to implement different national plans such as Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP), National Adaptation Plan etc. Besides, he called for sustainable urban planning that includes vertical expansion, proper airflow considerations, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from air-conditioned malls and glass-covered buildings. He questioned the feasibility of implementing these big budget plans without a clear strategy for securing the necessary financial resources. This highlights the need for innovative solutions and potential partnerships to bridge the funding gap and ensure the successful execution of these plans. Also, focused on the need for building human capacity to increase absorptive and adaptive capabilities and the importance of collaboration between government and NGOs and advocated for locally adapted plans that are transparent and governed locally, involving communities in the monitoring and implementation process. Dr. Ali



urged everyone to consider climate justice and explore ways to incentivize the private sector to collaborate on climate solutions. He addressed that while smaller-scale plans work well, national implementation becomes more challenging. So Bangladesh's path to resilience and sustainable development towards LDC Graduation, requires coordinated efforts, financial support, and innovative governance.

Mr. Jyoti Raj Patra, Programme Director, Concern Worldwide, shared insights on the country's efforts and the importance of political leadership in addressing climate challenges.
Mr. Patra emphasized the critical role of government innovation and political buy-in for effective climate action. He argued that climate change solutions are inherently political, and that successful implementation requires the right kind of political leadership and commitment from the highest decision-makers. Also highlighted the recent launch of the Bangladesh Climate and Development Platform (BCDP) at the NAP Expo by the honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh. And pointed, this platform, the first of its kind in Asia, brings together various stakeholders, including multilateral financial institutions, to support the government's climate ambitions. In terms of budgetary commitment, allocation of 9 percent of GoB revenue to the climate change action plan demonstrates the highest level of political commitment. He stressed that providing the right solutions to those who are in power—lawmakers, parliamentarians, and decision-makers—requires a participatory and inclusive approach.

The Chief Guest of the inaugural session, Atiqul Islam, the Honorable Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation, addressed the pressing multifaceted challenges due to rapid urbanization and climate change and the need for sustainable urbanization with innovative solutions being implemented to tackle urbanization and climate change; and international support to mitigate climate-induced risks. He pointed that Dhaka's slums are burgeoning with climate migrants, operating businesses on the streets and adding to the city's density. The central and local governments are grappling with these challenges, striving to create sustainable solutions. The Mayor emphasized the disproportionate impact of climate change on nations like Bangladesh, which emit minimal carbon yet suffer greatly from its effects and stressed the need for sustainable urbanization to support Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2026. He proposed raising the height of two bridges to enhance the city's water transport system; transforming areas to recreational spaces; transitioning from an offline to an online taxation



system to streamline the processes and increased tax revenue; and advocated for smart healthcare, agriculture, environment, infrastructure, governance, finance, transport, supply chain, and education. To transform into a smart city, a broader strategy like the Climate Action Plan (CAP) would be a comprehensive roadmap guiding towards net-zero emissions. He underscored the importance of individual and collective responsibility in maintaining a clean environment, and to protect green spaces and improve the city's quality of life. Underlining the importance of leaving a sustainable legacy for future generations, he stated, "The new generation believes in apps, they believe in action. If we work together, we can be good citizens."

Chair of the inaugural session of the Dialogue, James Samuel, National Director, Habitat for Humanity International, Bangladesh, emphasized the critical importance of equitable access to essential services in building resilient cities. "In our pursuits of resilient cities, we must ensure that every citizen has access to essential services. These include water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and reliable infrastructure. They are no longer luxuries; they are the bedrock upon which our cities thrive," he stated. Samuel underscored that true resilience begins with equitable access to these services, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the same quality of services as the more privileged. He stressed, "Homes are the foundation on which people build stability and lives. They provide shelter, security, well-being, and privacy, allowing families to flourish and live with dignity," Mr. Samuel expressed gratitude to the government for its visionary initiatives, addressing that the National plans of government serve as a steppingstone towards accomplishing a vision of resilient, inclusive and sustainable urban development. He emphasized the importance of well-governed public interventions to navigate the transition effectively while Bangladesh is set to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, continued support for a smooth transition and preparation is crucial to ensuring sustainable and inclusive urban growth, benefiting all citizens, and leaving no one behind. He advocated the aim in fostering collaboration among urban actors and bring all stakeholders under a unified approach to urban-specific policies and programs.



FINDINGS FROM THE SESSION

Urban areas in Bangladesh are experiencing rapid urbanization including increased exposure and risk due to high population density and inadequate infrastructure, with significant challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters.

Also projected significant exposure to natural disasters, such as earthquakes and cyclones that will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, particularly affecting poor and marginalized populations in urban areas.

Cities are facing significant environmental and infrastructural challenges, including waterlogging, loss of canals, inadequate waste management, limited green spaces contribute to urban heat islands and pose threats to urban well-being such as increasing vector-borne diseases, air, and water pollution etc.

The importance of a multi-pronged approach, fostering collaboration across all sectors: government, NGOs, private sector, & citizens was emphasized. Collaboration among governmental, international, & non-governmental organizations is emphasized for the effective implementation of Government plans.

There is a need for holistic urban planning approaches that prioritize environmental sustainability, community participation, and social equity.

Though budgetary allocations demonstrate political commitment to climate action and urban development, leadership and community engagement are essential for effective implementation for urban resilience and climate adaptation efforts.

Parallel Session 1

Equitable access to Basic services for Resilient Urban Community

Session Organizers: BRAC, Concern Worldwide, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, Save the Children, World Vision Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, 38% of the population live in urban areas, out of which 2.23 million people (33%) live in slums[5] 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 also 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, nutrition, day care service in low-income communities and water sanitation, and having good governance, infrastructure, cultural practice and socialization. It appears challenging to provide decent housing facilities with basic services to the urban poor, compared with what the rural poor get, because of the population density in slum areas, where the urban poor usually live.

[5] According to the General Economics Division of the Bangladesh Government, 33% of the total urban population is living in slums and informal settlements with inadequate housing (statistics of 2016, reported in 2020).



In a city like Dhaka, children living in slums have lack of access to decent housing, clean water, sanitation, health care, day care service, and quality education. There is lack of playgrounds in schools and communities, even where playgrounds exist, are not suitable and safe for children to play, they do not have access to nature. As of the 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[6] . In another survey by International Rescue Committee (IRC), 48% of the perpetrators of GBV in the host community are unemployed which is reflecting the close relation of economic depression and violent behavior. 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. Rapid urbanization, coupled with the growing threat of disasters and climate change, poses significant challenges for urban communities especially for vulnerable communities. Ineffective solid waste management (SWM) further exacerbates these vulnerabilities.

To reach decent living in informal settlement, Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) is a critical approach to building community resilience that emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in the decision-making processes related to adaptation strategies. LLA holds paramount importance for resilience building specially in urban low-income communities. Engaging residents in the adaptation process ensures that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the community. Moreover, empowering the community to actively participate in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens social cohesion.

It is true that, no easy solution for urban informal settlements. With the vision - the more resilient the community, the better their ability to recover – the safe, adequate, and affordable housing leads to gain in health, education, economic opportunity, social safety, and dignity and these in turn promote broader reductions in inequality while building resilience against disasters and economic crises. Homes are the foundation on which people build stability in their lives. It provides shelter, security, safety, and privacy that are required and allows them to fully participate in social protection, education, economic growth, and community activities. Housing is 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 communities to prosper and live with dignity.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION

With the vision of ensuring effective coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among the basic service providers and sector actors in Bangladesh and achieving the goal of innovative, safe, and sustainable housing solutions, equitable access to social safety nets, health, nutrition, education including livelihood opportunities for low-income communities, this parallel session will identify the key gaps, generate policy recommendation, and obtain commitment for the urban sector actors along with government that will work for the sustainable solutions in building urban resilience -

1. To promote scalable, affordable and climate resilient housing solutions with the basic services in urban poor especially pavement, squatter, and slum dwellers with special focus to children, women and disable, ethnic people through specific development initiatives.
2. To showcase successful projects and motivate individuals and organizations to improve basic services for the city dwellers specially for the urban poor and extreme poor people.
3. To discuss & explore current government & non-government interventions aligned with locally led adaptation (LLA) principles
4. To build a sector-wide platform for sharing innovative ideas, model, and practices as well as successes stories.
5. To strengthen partnership within, and across development sectors

[6] https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/gender-based-violence-in-bangladesh-101070



To find new standards to be followed by the basic service providers in urban context in an LDC graduated country and the way forwards to achieve those. What type of policy supports, and people's participation and engagement (specially, children, youth and women) would be needed to achieve. What would be the role of private sector?

To identify and mainstream the urban basic service especially affordable and climate resilient housing with tenure security, social safety-net, education, health, nutrition, livelihood opportunity etc. issues that need to be addressed urgently through engagement of the GoB stakeholders and duty bearers. Integrating solid waste management (SWM) for urban resilience in the face of disasters and climate-change.

To address the guidance provided in the National Adaptation Plan of Bangladesh (2023 to 2050) to find ways to translate principles into potential actions

Identifying existing policy gaps that hinder the resilience in urban settlements by addressing the critical role of disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and promoting stronger policies, aiming to contribute to the development of more resilient urban communities.

To promote collaboration among urban actors' networks at different tiers to complement government initiatives/efforts and advocate to influence policy level so that urban issues are addressed, and the evidence-based solutions are used in formulating development policies for sustainable urban services.

ADVOCACY MESSAGE

Ensure equitable access of urban poor and extreme poor to affordable housing with adequate basic services to reach the target of leaving no one behind.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Explored new standards to be followed in urban context in an LDC graduated country and the way forwards to achieve those.
- Explored windows to collaborate with Governments' existing and planned interventions for ensuring basic services for urban poor especially safe shelter / housing, water, sanitation, healthcare, nutrition, day care services, and social safety net strengthening inter-ministerial coordination, and bring them under an umbrella through urban specific policies and programs.
- Explored how effective solid waste management can mitigate urban disaster risks and contribute climate-change mitigation.

- Identified policy gaps and opportunities for collaborative actions for resilient urban community.
- Referring national and global pledges and commitment, strengthened advocacy of enabling equitable access to adequate services through empowered poor and extreme poor community's participation specially the pavement, squatter, and un- developed slum dwellers.
- Local Govt. institutions (Municipalities/City Corporations), non-government organizations, development partners and academic institutions adhered locally led adaptation (LLA) principles for enhancing resilience of cities and urban communities and contributes to implementation of National Adaptation Plan of Bangladesh.

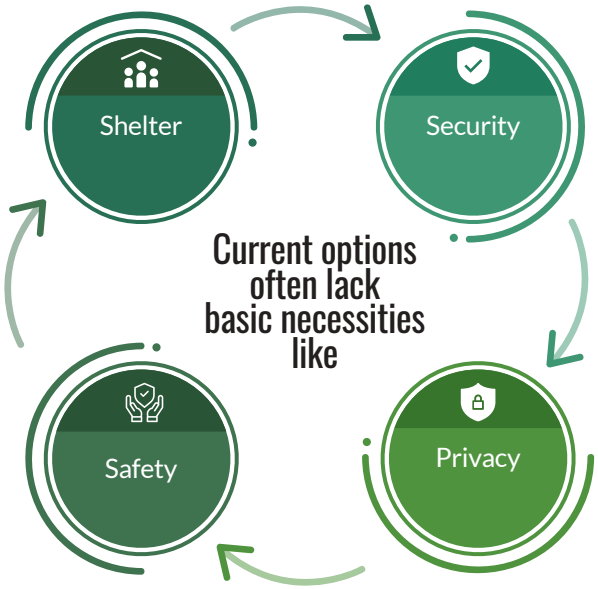
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KEYNOTE

With the theme ***"Equitable access to Basic services for Resilient Urban Community", Dr. Adil Mohammed Khan,*** Faculty member, Urban and Regional Planning department of Jahangirnagar University, presented the keynote. The Keynote was reflected -

The rapid urbanization influx, particularly of low-income residents, has resulted in the proliferation of slums and informal settlements. The lack of access to essential services for slum dwellers raises serious concerns about equity.

The United Nations Habitat emphasizes the need for robust institutional frameworks to ensure everyone receives these services, including transportation, sanitation, and energy. Implementing such frameworks requires not only investment but also land acquisition, highlighting the importance of collaboration between development partners. Public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms can play a crucial role in mobilizing the necessary resources.

Bangladesh's rapid urbanization has resulted in a growing number of slum communities. This unplanned migration strains existing infrastructure, leading to deficiencies in transportation, water, and sanitation. The most significant challenge lies in providing adequate housing for the urban poor.



Providing land tenure security to slum residents is crucial. While Bangladesh has undertaken initiatives to improve slum conditions, a critical challenge lies in the lack of robust policy guidelines. Developing a comprehensive policy framework specifically addressing slum upgradation and formalization of housing for the urban poor is essential. The policy should define clear procedures for slum identification, prioritization, and the implementation of upgradation projects. A transparent and efficient land allocation mechanism is needed to ensure sufficient land becomes available for formal housing projects catering to the urban poor. They need to allocate a portion of land in new urban development projects for low-income housing. Also establishing a standardized model for Public-private partnerships in slum upgradation projects can attract private sector investment and expertise while ensuring transparency and accountability. Budgetary considerations at both national and local levels is crucial for financing slum upgradation initiatives. These funds could be used for infrastructure development, service provision, and affordable housing construction. Public-private partnerships can play a significant role in financing and implementing slum upgradation projects. Private developers can leverage government incentives and collaborate with community organizations to create sustainable housing solutions. A national-level housing program is crucial to address this nationwide concern. The plan can be implemented at the district level. To ensure the housing for the urban poor, rental housing projects can be taken. Besides, the plan has to ensure proper waste collection system, water management and sanitary facilities. The implementation of proper health voucher and nutrition-based programs are needed to. To secure these, the local government has to focus on their capacity building too. By acknowledging the challenges of urbanization, proactively planning for the future, and fostering collaborative efforts, Bangladesh can leverage the trend to create inclusive and resilient cities.

Dr. Mokter Hossain (joint secretary), Director, Social Safety Net Programme, Department of Social Services (DSS), Ministry of Social Welfare, stated that in 2023-24 financial year, 5.8 lakh elderly people have been covered under old age allowance 600 taka per person per month. Out of the people live in the urban area, under the city corporation in next financial year, 2 lakhs more people will be covered under this allowance. He added, city corporation areas are still excluded in the case of widow allowance because they face problems identifying these women's marital status in the urban area. At the same way 29 lakh disabled person also get the stipend from the government, 38% among them are living in the urban area. Government's continuous effort towards integrating everyone into the mainstream reflects into inclusion of all the disadvantaged communities under the Social Safety Net Program.

Dewan Abdul Mannan, Ward Councellor, Ward no-11, DNCC, addressed the challenges and practices undertaken by the city corporation. He noted that while the city corporation has an action plan, its effectiveness is hindered by the lack of cooperation from governmental bodies like RAJUK. RAJUK's practice of granting permission for the construction of unplanned habitats in Dhaka prevents the urban poor from securing specific places to live. He also expressed concern about the insufficient number of playgrounds and green spaces for citizens, including the urban poor. He assured full support for any initiatives by governmental and non-governmental organizations to rehabilitate slum population in designated areas with nominal rent. He also highlighted that the quota system in slum areas limits elderly people's access to old age allowances and requested the Director of the Social Safety Net Program to extend the quota in these areas to allow more people to benefit from these facilities. He emphasized the need to ensure safety and security for slum residents, who constantly live in fear of eviction.

Imamul Azam Shahi, Program Head, Urban Development Program, BRAC, underscored that equitable access to basic needs is a constitutional right for everyone. He highlighted key challenges, such as the economic disparity among urban communities. People live in informal settings also should receive the same services. He noted that government coordination is essential to address unplanned urbanization effectively. The redundancy and lack of coordination among numerous organizations addressing the same issues in the same areas. He concluded by emphasizing the collaboration among the development entities and the government to create sustainable development.

Mr. Jyoti Raj Patra, Programme Director, Concern Worldwide, mentioned the disparity among the citizen of Dhaka city based on their usage of water facilities. He also stated the same condition in the waste management system. He outlined the process for achieving equitable access to basic needs, emphasizing the importance of making information publicly accessible, utilizing this information effectively, and ensuring active participation from citizens.

Mahmuda Alam, Platform of Community Action and Architecture, shared her professional insights on the sector. Drawing from her experience working with communities, she emphasized the need to reevaluate our approaches critically. She questioned whether community engagement has become merely a checkbox for development organizations rather than a genuine effort to work for the communities. Many entities operate within the same community in parallel, creating a superficial give-and-take relationship. She stressed the importance of true communication with communities at the grassroots level, based on their actual needs. She insisted that development entities should act as facilitators, not providers, to truly make a difference.

Enid Madarcos, Senior Manager for Urban, Land, and Policy, Habitat for Humanity International, contributed to the panel discussion via video message. She highlighted that in Asia, over 60% of the population resides in informal settlements and emphasized that improving the conditions of this population could potentially add a 10% contribution to each country's development. By implementing mapping and upgrading initiatives for habitation, resilient communities can be created, ultimately aiding in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She highlighted the importance of collaboration, stating that no single organization or entity can address sustainable development alone.

Ms. Hosneara Begum Raferaz , President, Bosti Surakha Committee, introduced herself as s Low-income individual, who migrated to the city due to natural disasters, feel marginalized despite being essential to urban life. She mentioned fair wages remain elusive, particularly for women. She highlighted concerns about the pressing demand for daycare centers in every ward by the city corporation. The need for housing arrangements through long-term installments was emphasized too. She mentioned interactions with NGOs and government officials are limited to meetings, with little tangible action afterward. Rohingyas are being provided housing, while local citizens continue to struggle for basic housing rights. Ms. Raferaz's remarks underscore the urgent need for action to address these pressing issues faced by urban poor.

OPEN DISCUSSION

During the Open Discussion segment, participants raised various questions and issues. These included the lack of a water and waste management system in Dhaka slums and the absence of day care centers for the children of single and working mothers. Participants also highlighted that widow women are unable to receive their government widow allowance due to the requirement of a permanent address. Furthermore, they pointed out the lack of coordination among governmental bodies when working on development projects and the recycle of the resources. The need for a holistic approach to solve multidimensional problems, in collaboration with development entities, was also emphasized.

The keynote speaker addressed all participants' questions, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive planning and sincere, coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to overcome the challenges faced by slum residents. Among the panelists, Dr. Mokter Hossain, Director of the Social Safety Net Program, also clarified the issues on social SafetyNet coverage and probations for urban settings. Additionally, Ward Councilor Dewan Abdul Mannan assured attendees that he would oversee improvements to the water and waste management systems in the slum areas and placed a proposal to move the discussion forward with city corporation and relevant authority on the KHASH land allocation for the informal settlers.





Parallel Session 2

Climate Smart Nature-Based Solutions: Empowering Lives and Enhancing Resilience through Green Approach

Session Organizers: World Vision, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, Oxfam Bangladesh, Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh, Save the Children, Global One, United Purpose.

Data from the Global Climate Risk Index, which ranks Bangladesh the seventh most affected country by extreme events between 1993 and 2022, shows that Bangladesh lost $3.72 billion and witnessed 189 extreme weather events from 2000 to 2022. This led to an average of 0.8-1.1% of GDP losses for Bangladesh annually. Despite a minimal contribution of 0.35% to global greenhouse emissions, Bangladesh's unique geographical and socio-economic makeup renders it highly vulnerable to climatic adversities.

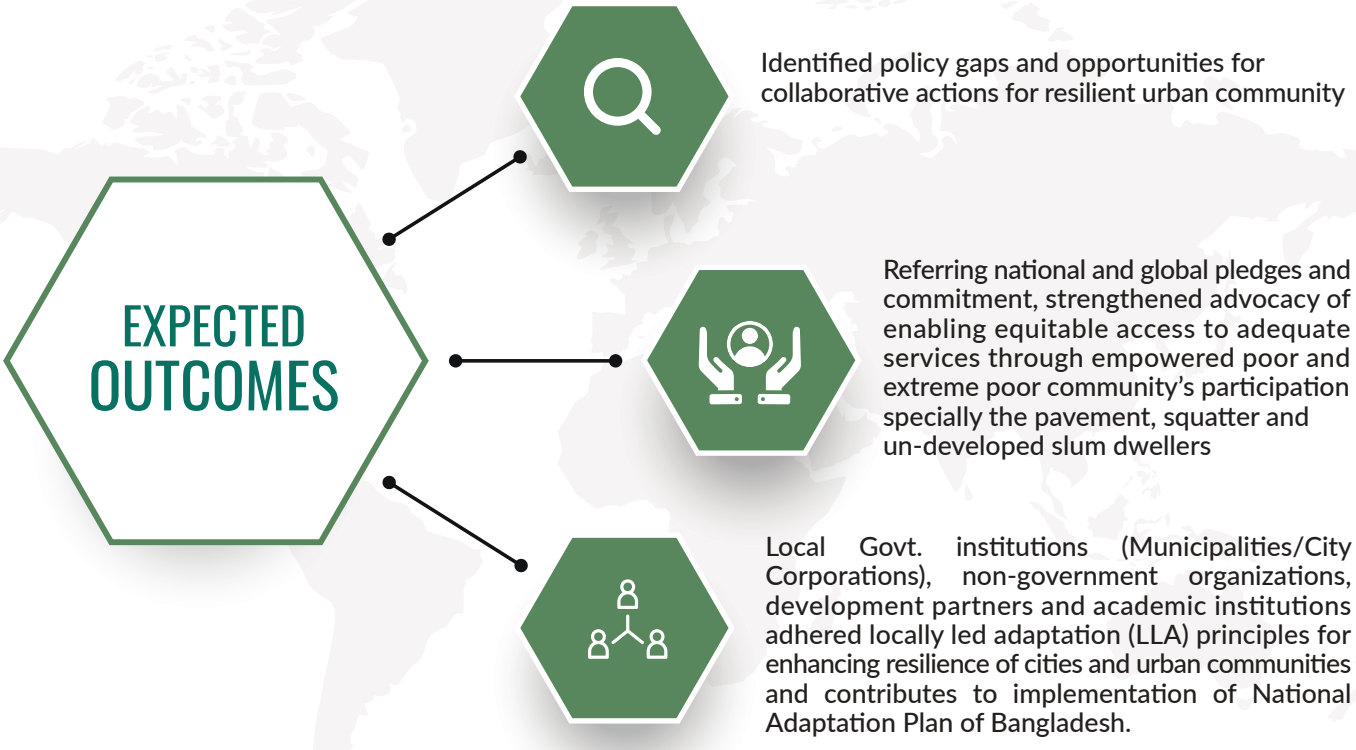
Despite being predominantly rural, Bangladesh is rapidly urbanizing compared to its neighbors. In 2022, 40% of its population lives in cities and towns; the annual urbanization rate averages 6% since the country gained independence in 1971. This rapid urbanization trend is often cited as a key factor behind rapid population growth, unplanned urbanization, rural-urban migration, inadequate service delivery, growing urban poverty and inequality etc. This has resulted in the proliferation of slums across major cities, particularly in the capital city of Dhaka. As of 2020, 52% of the urban population, or at least 35 million people, in Bangladesh were residing in slums (World Bank). These urban dwellers live in overcrowded, inadequate housing with limited access to basic services such as water and sanitation. They are particularly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. Every year, 250,000 people migrate from rural areas to cities in Bangladesh, in search of jobs and other opportunities. These migrating people's

admixtures with the impact of climate change imposes additional adversities to urban dwellers.

Urban areas of Bangladesh are undergoing an unprecedented phase of urbanization. How to ensure safe, productive, and healthy lives for the people that are added to cities every year, is a question of crucial importance to urban future economic and social development. It is a question that will have to be addressed in the midst of unprecedented climate instability. Finding a decent place to live is a struggle, with inadequate housing, water, and sanitation. Pollution and traffic jams clog the streets, while homelessness and sprawling slums become a defining feature of urban life. Moreover, urban poverty is exacerbating due to limited livelihood opportunities as well as social and cultural barriers.

In the heart-city of Bangladesh, Dhaka, lies a network of slums where families dwell in makeshift tin shed houses, grappling with substandard living conditions and the unforgiving impacts of climate change. The extremes of scorching summers and bitter cold winters add layers of challenges, calling for innovative solutions to uplift the community's living standards and fortify their resilience.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KEYNOTE

With the theme ***"Climate Smart Nature-Based Solutions: Empowering Lives and Enhancing Resilience through Green Approach", Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah,*** Expert - Environment, Climate Change, & Research System, presented the keynote. The Keynote was reflected -

Nature-based Solution (NbS) encompasses climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, economic and social development, human health, food security, water security, and solutions to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. NbS as actions that protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems. These solutions aim to address societal challenges while providing benefits to human well-being and biodiversity. The country's struggles were highlighted with climate disasters, poverty, food and water security, and biodiversity loss and pointed out the multifaceted benefits these approaches offer. Such as, urban contexts can benefit from NbS, as demonstrated by the Hatirjheel wetland restoration project, which has improved stormwater retention, reduced flood risks, enhanced water quality, increased green space, and boosted aquatic biodiversity.

Restoring natural drainage paths can improve stormwater passage, reduce waterlogging, and enhance biodiversity. Similarly, riparian vegetation restoration can reduce riverbank erosion, provide a buffer against rising water levels, improve local livelihoods, and offer recreational opportunities. A notable example of urban NbS is the restoration of mangrove forests near the airport area in Cox's Bazar, previously a shrimp farm. This project, led by the Bangladesh Department of Environment, transformed the area back into a mangrove forest, demonstrating the potential for NbS to enhance urban resilience.

NbS must be both effective and cost-effective. It can be compares ecosystem-based approaches, such as slope revegetation and wetland protection, with engineered solutions like dams and artificial water storage. Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement play a crucial role in promoting NbS. Bangladesh has incorporated NbS into its Climate Change Plan (2009), Medium-term Investment Plan (2022), and Climate Change Investment Plan (2022).

Despite their benefits, NbS alone is not sufficient; a blend of green, grey, and blue solutions is necessary for comprehensive climate mitigation. The guiding principles for successful NbS include recognizing NbS as part of

broader climate strategies, maintaining diverse ecosystems, ensuring net biodiversity benefits, and empowering local communities.

To mainstream NbS in urban areas, cities and towns should - Improve awareness and knowledge among leadership, officials, and stakeholders; Build skills and capacity for planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring NbS projects; Incorporate NbS into urban development strategies and location-specific plans through participatory approaches; Implement location-specific NbS following locally led adaptation principles. In urban contexts, community-based natural resource management and equity for informal settlements are crucial. Preparing for future challenges requires flexible, adaptive, and innovative approaches to NbS.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Bushra Afreen, Chief Heat Officer, North Dhaka, Bangladesh - She emphasized that merely focusing on forestation is insufficient. A strategic combination of grey, green, and blue infrastructures is essential to address the city's escalating heat, pollution, and mosquito problems. Historical missteps, including deforestation, incorrect tree species selection, and lack of a multi-stakeholder approach, have exacerbated these issues. The urgent need for a paradigm shifts in environmental management and urban planning was highlighted. She asserts, pointing out the stark disparities in tree coverage across different city areas, "There is an urgency for us to change our ways and our way of thinking. Tree inequity is evident, with affluent areas boasting significant tree cover, while low-income housing and informal settlements suffer from a lack of shade." She notified, that a critical barrier to effective urban greening is the lack of cohesive policy and coordination among city stakeholders and governing bodies. This has necessitated the development of new guidelines for a multi-stakeholder approach that fosters a cohesive solution. Also opined, "NbS is not just about tree planting; we need to change our behavior and mindset," she states, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to urban greening."



Dr. Mohammad Mahbub Islam, Professor, Department of Agricultural Botany Faculty of Agriculture, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University (SAU) – He emphasized on the critical responsibility humans bear in the degradation of natural environments and water bodies, underscoring the urgent need for preservation and sustainable living practices that minimize disturbances to nature. The loss of green cover declination not only exacerbates urban heat and dryness but also diminishes air quality and biodiversity, posing severe threats to environmental and societal well-being. He stressed the multifaceted dimensions of environmental sustainability, societal equity, and environmental prosperity, urging a comprehensive approach to these intertwined issues. The increase in climate migration is a direct consequence of environmental neglect, with rising temperatures being a particularly pressing concern. To combat the challenges, he outlined some strategies - Immediate need to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate global warming and its associated impacts; Increasing urban greenery, such as parks, green roofs, vertical gardens, school gardens, community gardens, and roof-top gardens can significantly lower urban temperatures, improve air quality, and boost biodiversity; Encouraging green transport solution such as the use of public transport, cycling, and walking over private vehicles can reduce emissions and alleviate urban congestion; Collaboration of various stakeholders, including government bodies, private sectors, and communities to identifying problems, developing community-driven solutions, and fostering coordination are crucial steps in this process; Developing the skills and knowledge of individuals and organizations through capacity building; Orientation for effective environmental stewardship and to raise awareness on importance of resilience and environment.

Engr. Nur Azizur Rahman, Chief Engineer, Sylhet City Corporation - He emphasized the critical importance of integrating green infrastructure and restoration projects includes restoring canals, managing waste in rivers, and implementing green solutions like permeable pavements, tree planting, and the construction of retaining walls for waterways into urban planning to enhance the resilience and sustainability of urban areas. To enhance the urban environment and manage stormwater effectively, Engineer Rahman has promoted the use of permeable pavements allows water to pass through, reducing runoff and improving groundwater recharge and the development of green spaces for natural air filters and contribute to cooler urban temperatures. Also focused on protecting waterways through the construction of retaining walls and other infrastructure help stabilize the banks of rivers and canals, preventing erosion and maintaining the integrity of the waterways; significant financial investment for ensuring long-term urban resilience and sustainability.

Ahsan Rony, Founder & President, Green Savers – He provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with urban tree planting and maintenance in Dhaka. His insights emphasize the need for a multi-sectoral approach to enhance the survival and health of urban trees, as well as innovative community-based solutions to promote green spaces in the city. Also stated, "New trees will not survive if we cut down a tree to plant a new one." This practice leads to a net loss in tree cover and undermines efforts to increase urban greenery. One of the critical challenges is the lack of available space for planting new trees; so necessitating a strategic approach to identify suitable locations. Additionally, there is a shortage of personnel dedicated to watering and maintaining urban trees. So, effective tree maintenance requires coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, and the community. Green Savers conducted a project to provide canopy cover over tin roofs in urban informal settlements through collective community work. This initiative aimed to reduce heat and improve living conditions for residents. The tree guardianship strategy, which involves community members in the care and maintenance of trees, has resulted in a 75% survival rate for the trees planted. This approach emphasizes accountability and knowledge sharing, leading to sustainable community-based solutions for urban greening.



Eshrat Sharmen Akand, National Coordinator- Climate Change Adaptation and Eco Village, World Vision Bangladesh – She shared valuable insights into promoting climate resilience and sustainable living through community engagement and innovative approaches. Her emphasis on involving children, implementing green school initiatives, and advocating for nature-based solutions underscores the importance of grassroots efforts in addressing environmental challenges. By engaging children in environmental activities, communities can instill a sense of responsibility and foster a culture of sustainability from a young age. The implementation of green school initiatives aligns with the smart village concept, promoting sustainable practices in education, encompass various approaches - including climate and environment solutions, waste management, hygiene management, and reducing environmental footprints through paperless activities and utility savings. Through workshops and collaborative sessions, communities can identify suitable nature-based solutions to address environmental challenges effectively. Collaborating with NGOs and stakeholders ensures the implementation of nature-based solutions tailored to the local context.

OPEN DISCUSSION

During the Open Discussion segment, participants raised various questions and issues. These included – Understanding the Umbrella Concept; Importance of youth involvement or their responsibility to mitigate climate change fall on everyone; government plans to fund for carbon emission projects; mitigation process of low survival rate of community plantation; process of identifying Problems Before Proposing Solutions.

The keynote speaker addressed all participants' questions, emphasizing – Umbrella concept likely involves a comprehensive approach that includes various interlinked strategies and sectors to address climate change effectively. It emphasizes the need for holistic and inclusive approaches that consider multiple aspects of climate action. And High youth involvement during COP28 highlights the critical role young people play in climate action. While youth engagement is essential for driving innovative solutions and ensuring long-term sustainability, the responsibility to mitigate climate change indeed falls on everyone. Multi-generational collaboration is necessary to address the complex and urgent challenges posed by climate change effectively.

Despite contributing only 0.6% to global emissions, Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Along with knowledge sharing happening all over the world and projects are being funded, many agents in the world are trying to solve the climate crisis not just for their country but for the whole of the world.

To improving Community Plantation Survival Rates through Tree Guardianship, 'Toru Shonchoy Bank' is helping people who want to create roof-top gardens but do not have any means to do so. So, these people can donate money for trees through the Toru Shonchoy Bank and the trees or plants can be given to people who have the space and time for gardening. Through the Sponsor Tree program on Facebook, the program on the tree-planting is implementing in 20 districts across Bangladesh.

Regarding the problem identifying and proposing solutions need to use data and research to understand the local climate impacts and vulnerabilities; involving local communities, experts, and relevant stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing issues, and Implementing mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of solutions and adjust as needed. Solutions should be context-specific, evidence-based, and designed with input from those directly affected by climate impacts. Collaborative approaches that integrate local knowledge and scientific research are likely to yield better results.



Key Findings of the Session

Nature-based solutions offer a promising path to addressing the environmental challenges facing Bangladesh. By integrating NbS with engineered solutions, fostering inclusive governance, and building community capacity, Bangladesh can enhance its resilience to climate change, improve biodiversity, and promote sustainable development. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and promoting sustainable urban greening practices, cities can mitigate heat, enhance air quality, and improve the overall livability of the city. NbS must be part of a holistic approach that includes diverse ecosystems, empowers people, and balances environmental and societal benefits.

Effective waste management practices can reduce pollution and conserve resources while ensuring water security is critical for sustaining life and ecosystems.

By increasing urban green spaces, reducing emissions, and fostering collaboration and education, the way towards a sustainable future that balances environmental health with societal well-being can be paved.

By addressing the challenges and leveraging community-based solutions, it is possible to enhance the city's green spaces, improve environmental quality, and ensure the sustainability of urban trees

PARALLEL SESSION 3

PRIVATE SECTOR IN RESILIENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS LDC GRADUATION

Session Organizers: ActionAid Bangladesh, and United Purpose

Background and rationale of the session

Private sector in Bangladesh is contributing around 82% of national development investments. Consecutive two five-year plans (FYP) of Bangladesh have been emphasizing on more and more private sector investment for the same purpose. In recent years, the government has disclosed a development vision, namely Vision 2041. That has also considered the privet sector as the key player of national development. The Mujib Prosperity Plan (MPP) and Delta Plan 2100 are also accredited the role of private sector in climate and disaster resilience.

In the urban context, this role is more prominent. The 100 economic zones program by the government has created a new window of intervention engaging the private sector, along with the existing large, medium and small cities. Sectoral diversity is ever increasing in private sector, service sector is growing faster in all the cities in Bangladesh, which is creating job opportunities and igniting innovation in entrepreneurship.

At the same time the private sector is also facing a lot of challenges, both in business and sustainability. But private sector in Bangladesh has proven its agility over the time. Recently they have established the first ever Private sector Emergency Operation Center (PEOC), to facilitate business continuity through preparedness for withstanding the hazards and anticipated risks out of those. Besides, the role of the private sector will be crucial in achieving the vision outlined in the 8FYP.

A significant part of the contribution will come in the form of investment and Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan 2022-2041.

In this backdrop, UINGOF is organizing this session to reflect on the progress, critically analyze the current status and draw a few recommendations for future implementation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION

01

Explore the importance of private sector involvement in fostering urban resilience

02

Craft future-oriented strategies to strengthen private sector engagement in resilient urban development

03

Explore ways in creating resilient urban spaces for the marginalized from a feminist lens



FOCUS AREAS

- Leveraging 4th Industrial revolution for Resilience
- The Role of Technology and Innovation
- Building a Culture of Resilience
- Policy implication/way forward



Leveraging 4th Industrial revolution for Resilience: By harnessing the power of Industry 4.0 and fostering collaboration, the private sector can play a critical role in building more resilient cities and communities, ultimately leading to a more prepared and responsive approach to disaster management.

The Role of Technology and Innovation: The frequency of fire incidents in Bangladesh has reached a concerning level. The ongoing trend of rapid urbanization and increasing reliance on technology and electrical components indicates that the number of fire incidents per year is poised to rise further. AI-based Disaster Risk Reduction (AI-DRR) aims to combat this issue by leveraging cutting-edge artificial intelligence technologies to enhance preparedness, response, and mitigation strategies.

Building a Culture of Resilience: Enhancing practices of sustainable business approaches adopting environment friendly technologies to create own business best practices in Bangladesh country context is a necessity of time in the era of post LDC graduation as a lower middle-income category. Being the key driver of the national economic growth, awareness and promoting best practices within the private sector from an inclusive aspect to build resilient businesses and communities will have rapid and vast impact in the society. That will also accelerate the journey towards the middle-income country status. To accomplish the initial target and thrive towards next level we have to emphasis on the following are the areas – settlements, daily basics, service sector, integrated risk informed financing

Policy implication/way forward: The session will draw recommendations to be communicated to the wider audience, in particular to the policy makers. Joint initiatives will be taken to take forward the advocacy agenda on making the recommendations into actions.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

TIME	EVENT	RESOURCE
1:45 pm – 1:55 PM	Welcome Speech and session objectives	Moderator: **Farah Kabir,** Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh
1:55 PM – 2:15 PM	**Keynote Presentation:** **Mode:** Power Point Presentation **Theme:** Private sector in resilient urban development towards LDC Graduation	Keynote speaker: **A M Nasir Uddin,** Expert – Disaster Risk Management & Climate Change
2:15 PM – 2:45 PM	Panel Discussion	**Brig Gen Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah (retd.),** advisor, FBCCI Safety Council, FBCCI **Zakir Uddin Ahmed,** Chief Executive Officer, ZM International
2:45 PM – 3:25 PM	Open Discussion	**Participants** Private sector, policy makers, academia, I/NGO, UN, development partners
3:25 PM – 4:00 PM	Guests Speech	Representatives from FBCCI/DCCI, MoC/MoI/Planning Division (Industry part), JCI
4:00 PM – 4:15 PM	Summarizing and Closing Remarks	Moderator and Host Organizations Country Lead

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KEYNOTE

Farah Kabir, the Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, initiated the panel discussion by highlighting the activities of ActionAid Bangladesh, particularly in the context of urban challenges such as waterlogging and plastic pollution. She questioned the planning of our cities and emphasized the essential role of the private sector in urban areas. The private sector, which lives, moves and conducts business in these cities, must be involved in addressing urban resilience and the economic impacts of climate change. She pointed out that the discussion aims to provide recommendations on how private sector entities, including organizations, corporates, and apex bodies, can enhance urban resilience. She raised concerns about climate migrants who have relocated to cities for livelihood opportunities, noting that research indicates that 48 percent of these migrants have been involved in crimes, including gender-based crimes. She stressed the need for implementing climate action in urban planning, where the private sector can play a significant role.

A M Nasir Uddin, Expert – Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change – The highlights of the keynote -To make the urban areas green, have to avoid doing tasks that decrease the greenery in the city. The green spaces and water flows have to be reclaimed; also positive, economic, social, and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas need to be supported. If there is a difference between urban and rural migration will not stop. The development has to take place thinking about rural areas as well. A ventilation system has to be created in buildings so that airflow is maintained, otherwise, we will be in trouble. Among the principles of the new Urban Agenda one is sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty including the promotion of health and well-being. The last principle is Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development by promoting clean energy and sustainable use of land and resources in urban development, by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, by building urban resilience, by reducing disaster risks, and by mitigating and adapting to climate change. Aligning with these agendas, our target is to reach a middle-income country by 2030 which is 7000 dollars per capita income. To achieve that, the plan has to be participatory for everyone's benefit and so that they can use it. AS Bangladesh is a small country, it does not have much fertile land. When we graduate from LDC we have to be more careful. We could have been a leader in leather export. But due to not making an effective ETP in Savar, we couldn't. We face 1.5 to 2 billion BDT loss from this. We will face a lot of challenges from LDC graduation but a lot of opportunities will open. We have to be prepared to make use of these opportunities. The private sector can play a role in this. If the private sector comes forward thinking of the ultimate profit of the people, then development will happen, and the private sector will also move forward. If a small percentage of people own most resources but not the majority we will fall behind in every sector. We need to pay attention to this case so that women entrepreneurs are formed.

We need adequate electricity provision to keep cities alive. Good public transport eases everyday mobility for city dwellers. Another indicator of a good city is emergency services. We need cybersecurity preparedness for a future digital city. There is a necessity for climate-resilient designs for buildings. We need to practice keeping heat stress under control. There has been a lot of investment in the coastal areas which should keep coastal flood risks in mind. There is a necessity to improve poor air quality. We need early warning systems. A culture of readiness prepares a population to act. Every citizen has to be prepared for climate change. We have to incentivize innovation. The expectation from the private sector is to create opportunities for small entrepreneurs and women are prioritized there. The industry should communicate their needs to institutions so that course curriculum is developed according to that. This will create a skilled workforce. Capacity building of private sector regional and global competitiveness has to be done. Besides, corporate social responsibility and equity are essential.



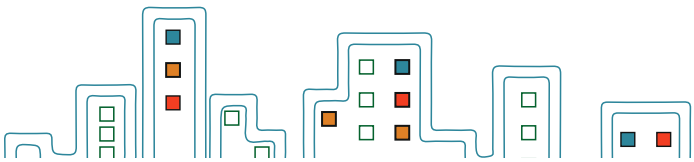
PANEL DISCUSSION

Brig Gen Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah (retd.), advisor, FBCCI Safety Council, FBCCI highlighted that the private sector contributes to 82% of national development and stressed the importance of involving this sector in discussions. Inthe Standing Orders on Disaster (SOD), that was formed in 2010 and improved in 2019, FBCCI's role is highlighted which includes safe storage and transportation of harmful chemicals, preparing updated information, formulating inclusive industrial and security plans, and undertaking innovative activities for risk reduction in collaboration with government and non-government organizations. Also explained that to implement the SOD, FBCCI has formed a crisis management committee that activates during crises. Bangladesh Private Sector Working Committee, including FBCCI and the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), has been established where five thematic groups have been formed for implementing SDGs, with the fifth focusing on women's rights, gender equality, and ending gender-based violence.

Zakir Uddin Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer, ZM International, emphasized that urbanization often precedes development, which is problematic, however the smart city initiatives being undertaken. An integrating fire service alarms with CCTV cameras can enhance surveillance, providing immediate action during emergencies. Existing implementations often use outdated technology, and a shift towards modern solutions is essential. A unified government approach could facilitate hourly parking rentals and a ticketing system, that funds and goodwill are significant factors, alongside mismanagement.

Now is the opportunity to make advanced planning for new cities. There is a lack of coordination, and we have to work together. Smart grid and power management are very necessary. The private sector can take this initiative to handling communication system smartly. Moreover the right to information to all government information exists, but the people responsible are not available there, have no proper guidance, or do not have the time to go there.

OPEN DISCUSSION



The discussion was summarized by stressing that development, technology, and growth must continue but with proper planning. It was emphasized that urban projects that were effective 20 years ago are no longer sufficient. The expectations of urban areas have evolved, and comprehensive planning is now more crucial than ever, especially considering climate change. She highlighted that previous urban projects were often male dominated, overlooking the needs of women, children, and people with special needs. Modern urban planning must be inclusive, considering everyone in the community. Climate change has challenges such as increased temperatures, necessitating the implementation of solutions like shaded areas and improved water supply management. Citizen awareness and cooperation are essential for successful urban development. Also pointed out the plight of informal settlements (referred to as "Bosti"), whose residents are often forced to migrate due to climate change. Proper planning and provision of facilities for these settlements from the beginning would greatly improve their living conditions. The need for preparedness, capacity building, and community awareness are crucial. Also, the lack of planning for the villages to be turned into cities exists. Administrative people who are responsible for the planning, are not doing properly. Permanent projects should have proper planning cause after placement it is difficult to change it and it is not justified to do land causing damage to the environment and community. Inclusive and forward-thinking urban planning is critical, so, collaborative efforts are needed to ensure no one is left behind, for the betterment of urban communities.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SESSION

This session come up with some proposals - Digital and Smart monitoring for ensuring inclusive urban services; Sensitization and enforcement of law for planned and sustainable urban development; Master Plan for Our village, Our town; Rural housing projects should be aligned with the decentralized industrialization; Planned relocation and stopping unplanned eviction; Job/service-oriented training for urban people; Private sector engagement in developing smart affordable hostels and food vending for low middle-income groups in many developed countries.

Concluding Session: In the beginning of concluding session, a set of declaration compiling the key suggestions from three panel discussions, was announced in front of policy makers and influencers for further policy interventions.

THE 8TH URBAN DIALOGUE DECLARATION

1. Ensure basic services (energy, WASH, FSM - Faecal sludge management, and primary health care & nutrition) for low income and communities in informal settlement living in urban areas, to address inequality and building resilience.
2. Develop smart monitoring system for ensuring just and inclusive urban services by public-private investments.
3. Develop integrated and inclusive urban settlement considering climate resilient affordable housing for all income groups, in particular the low-income communities; ensuring facilities/ amenities such as academic institutions, parks, hospitals, daycare center, open spaces and playgrounds in government owned land.
4. To sustain the LDC graduation, develop the risk informed and inclusive Master Plan for "Our village, our town" in an equitable manner complying all the relevant national policies and plans; with cost estimation and sourcing, monitoring and implementation strategy.
5. Ensure alignment of the rural housing projects with the decentralized industrialization.
6. Ensure planned, inclusive, adequate and affordable relocation and stopping unplanned eviction.
7. Ensure social safety net for urban low-income communities by increasing the coverage of program for extreme urban poor to adapt with the cost of living in particular city including health voucher.
8. Ensure job/service market-oriented training and placement for urban people to create sustainable and inclusive livelihood opportunities by public-private initiatives; to reduce dependency on social safety net in the long run.
9. Promote private sector investment to provide smart, adequate and affordable accommodation with all necessary amenities (restaurant/ caffe, swimming pool, gym, laundry, internet, social spaces etc.) for the low- and middle-income frequent traveler groups to the cities.
10. Integration and coordination among the cities and adjacent towns/municipalities need to be streamlined to ensure accessible and affordable urban services based on the identified challenges faced by communities in the both urban areas.
11. Promote national level innovation and research for supporting national development, through partnership among the national academia, public-private sector and civil society; for ultimate sustainability in the post LDC era.
12. Ensure data driven development to sensitize all actors and confirm enforcement of laws for planned and sustainable urban development; while appreciating/ promoting innovation and knowledge generation.
13. Develop a policy with the provision of allocation and monitoring mechanism for implementation of "Nature Based solution (NBS) and Locally Led Adaptation' in urban context involving all stakeholders to promote coordination and stewardship to ensure holistic participation.
14. Incentivizing green practices, i.e. waste to resource-energy-manure, rain water harvesting and waste water recycling, renewable energy, practicing Refuse-Reduce-Reuse-Repurpose-Recycle.
15. Emphasize on urban ecosystem restoration evicting existing encroachments in all the blue spaces ensuring mass engagement; and greening the cities and towns to reduce heat stress and creating livelihoods opportunities by using appropriate species for plantation, as well as promoting organic urban agriculture and rooftop gardening.
16. Finalization of Urban Policy to provide umbrella support in the post 2030 era.

REFLECTIONS ON DECLARATION

Special Guest, Talha Jamal, Country Director, Islamic Relief Bangladesh – He emphasized the significant influence of the continuation of Urban Dialogue to enrich policy discourse, especially in light of the country's anticipated graduation from the status of a least developed country in 2026. He highlighted on several pivotal themes, including equitable access to basic services, climate resilience, smart solutions, nature-based approaches, and the role of the private sector in fostering urban development. Ensuring equitable access to basic services includes secure and affordable housing, healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation, education, and social safety nets remains paramount in our urban development agenda. By integrating robust waste management practices, urban flooding and diseases like dengue can be mitigated, thus bolstering the overall resilience of our urban areas against natural and man-made disasters. And through active engagement with stakeholders and policymakers, aim to devise innovative and enduring solutions to meet the pressing needs of our urban communities, particularly those residing in slums. Additionally, he advocated for public-private collaboration to improve urban well-being.

Prof. Dr. A. S. M. Maksud Kamal, the Chair of the concluding session, summarized the event by emphasizing the importance of nature-based solutions, such as rooftop gardening and forestation, to reduce rising temperatures. He noted that a lack of awareness about rooftop gardening could lead to vector-borne diseases and stressed the need for risk-integrated urban planning to achieve sustainable development. Dr. Kamal advocated for smart waste management solutions, acknowledging that while these would take time to implement, they are more sustainable in the long run. He suggested that the government could pilot a project in an institution, ward, or city corporation with proper planning, which would gradually change people's mindsets regarding waste management. In closing, he stated that the dialogue should not end with the event; instead, the discussions and ideas shared must be actively implemented to make a real impact.



The Chief Guest, Md. Tazul Islam MP, Honorable minister of Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives highlighted significant progress made in food production, electricity generation, healthcare, education, communication, economic growth with GDP increasing from $47 billion to $474 billion. The minister also emphasized the importance of urbanization driven by improved education and connectivity. The government is committed to addressing the challenges of urbanization & sustainable development through long-term planning and innovative solutions. He also notified, “after LDC graduation, many facilities will be withdrawn, and concessional loans will become hard loans. However, this will bring higher fund flow and investment opportunities. Bangladesh must harness these opportunities and make itself a competent global citizen.” He concluded by focusing on the need for continuous progress and effective implementation of plans and policies.

CONCLUSION

The Urban Agendas are not just theoretical concepts but pillars upon which we aim to build a sustainable and inclusive future for all urban dwellers in Bangladesh. Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience through smart, nature-based solutions are critical aspects of our deliberations. Along with Government initiatives the role of the private sector in driving urban development is becoming indispensable. Cultivating an enabling environment conducive to public-private collaboration is imperative. By propelling initiatives that enhance the well-being of our urban populations, we can harness the potential of both sectors to create positive change.

As countries transition from being less developed to becoming hubs of development, connectivity and communication become increasingly seamless. This facilitates the influx of workers from urban areas into cities, necessitating temporary living arrangements as their families remain elsewhere. To ensure their well-being, safety, and security, cities must prioritize affordable hostel facilities. The private sector can play a pivotal role by investing in this sector. Simultaneously, as cities evolve, there's a trend towards eye-catching high-rise buildings. However, this comes with challenges such as heightened disaster risks due to increased usage of glass, particle board, electric bulbs, and ACs. Architects, engineers, and policymakers need to promote the preservation of indigenous practices. They should advocate for natural ventilation and discourage the use of highly flammable materials in interior design, rather than blindly adopting western standards. Furthermore, to support the well-being of urban dwellers, private sectors can take the lead in providing access to healthy food and beverages through food vending initiatives.

These urban dialogues serve as more than just discussions; they are catalysts for action. This provides an opportunity to set new standards, bridge policy gaps, and fortify advocacy efforts to create an urban environment where every citizen is ingrained in the fabric of the communities, and where the voices of the most vulnerable are not only heard but acted upon.



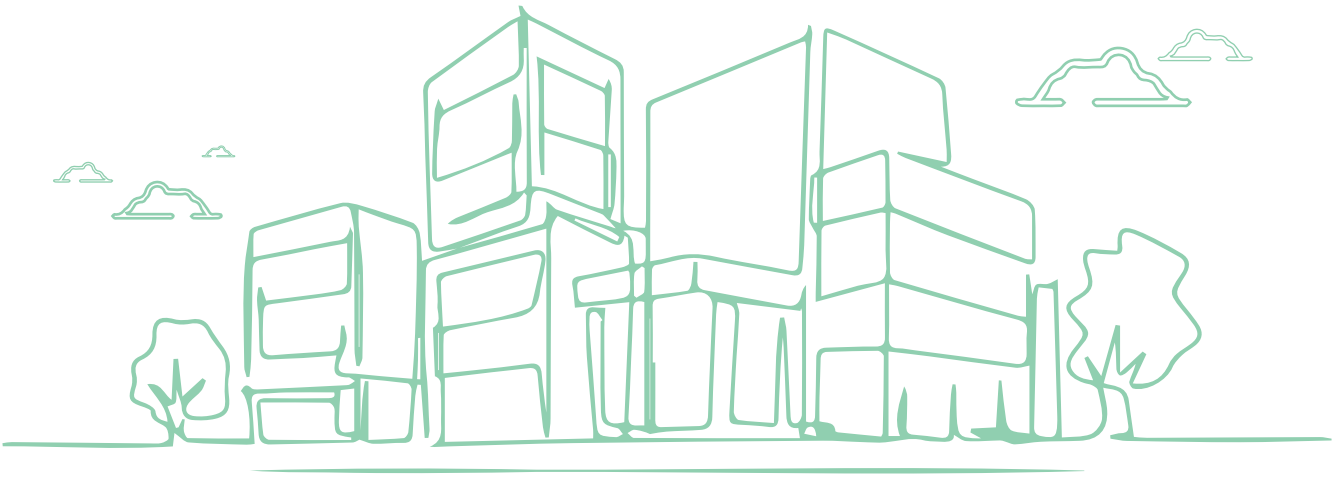
ANNEXURE

Urban Manifesto 2024 : Envision to the government intervention to create and facilitate spaces for ensuring active civic engagement in all spheres of urban life and integration of people's power which will reduce dependency and the cost of development while ensuring just change in terms of development to optimize people's power to make the nation ready for it, Urban INGO Forum declared Urban Manifesto based on 7th Urban Dialogue's declaration points -

Addressing the basic needs of urban people:

- Ensure that urban dwellers have access to adequate, safe, disaster-resilient, eco-friendly, and affordable housing with standard living conditions, as well as adequate public amenities like educational, healthcare, recreation, utility, and community services, with a proper land use plan. This is especially important for low- and middle-income individuals. Landowners should have a voice in the land use plan so that they do not lose their land as a result of it.
- Provide smart city infrastructure for citizens through urban innovation and technology support.
- Ensure that all cities have pro-people, secure, sufficient, and environmentally friendly public transportation options, with a focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI); enact efficient traffic control, road safety, and social protection policies that take into account the diverse populations of these urban areas.
- Create and maintain adequate, inclusive, eco-friendly walkways in cities, prioritizing pedestrians, promoting bicycle use, ensuring dedicated lanes, and establishing a comprehensive non-motorized mobility network.
- Ensure people's friendly, adequate, and eco-friendly public toilet facilities in all cities, considering the inclusivity of the demographic diversity of the cities. Ensure safe drinking water and sanitation for children, especially in schools and public areas.
- Develop an eco-friendly, sustainable, and technologically sound sewerage and drainage system to make it more functional in the urban context, ensuring active people's participation.
- Invest in civic education on WASH and waste management for behavioral change.
- Invest in waste management, safety, and sanitation, including dignified jobs for waste and sanitation workers. Adequate budget allocation for the well-being of municipal waste and sanitation workers is essential.
- Ensure children's safety and security at all levels of urban planning and development by offering essential support and infrastructure.
- Invest in a sustainable and just energy transition, including the waste-to-energy option.
- Ensure accessible and affordable primary healthcare services for all urban dwellers. raising awareness about reproductive health and investing in making relevant health facilities available.
- Inclusion of reproductive health and sex education into the academic curriculum and training of teachers to deliver the courses efficiently. Develop a guideline for doctors to provide reproductive health services considering the problem or disease, irrespective of their marital and motherhood status.
- Enhance and strengthen health and wellbeing services, i.e., easy to access and afford, reliable check-up facilities, counseling, etc., for pregnant women, mothers, newborns, and children, including the institutionalization of daycare services.
- Introducing certificate programs in caregiving to enhance pertinent services, such as childcare facilities, geriatric care, etc.

- Increase civic education on men-women relationships to increase mutual sensitivity and promote a congenial atmosphere in the community and workplace, i.e., a co-working environment, appreciating colleagues, official or corporate manners, guidelines, and laws related to personal behavior.
- A quality and unified single-stream education system to address divisions in society, ensure social harmony, and accelerate overall development. Increase the number of affordable education institutions, considering the standard population ratio.
- Increase the number of affordable technical and vocational education opportunities to promote skill-based education and foster the development of a smart and capable generation. Accessibility to these opportunities for the working-class population. Encourage the creation of trade schools and the incorporation of technical and vocational education in a unified or single-stream education system. Emphasize the importance of technical and vocational education at a national level.
- Ensure the just salary and wellbeing of the domestic workers by providing equitable payment, respectable, inclusive, and safe working conditions, social security, and access to necessities.
- Increase the accessibility of banking services and financial products for the lower middle- to lower-class sections of society.

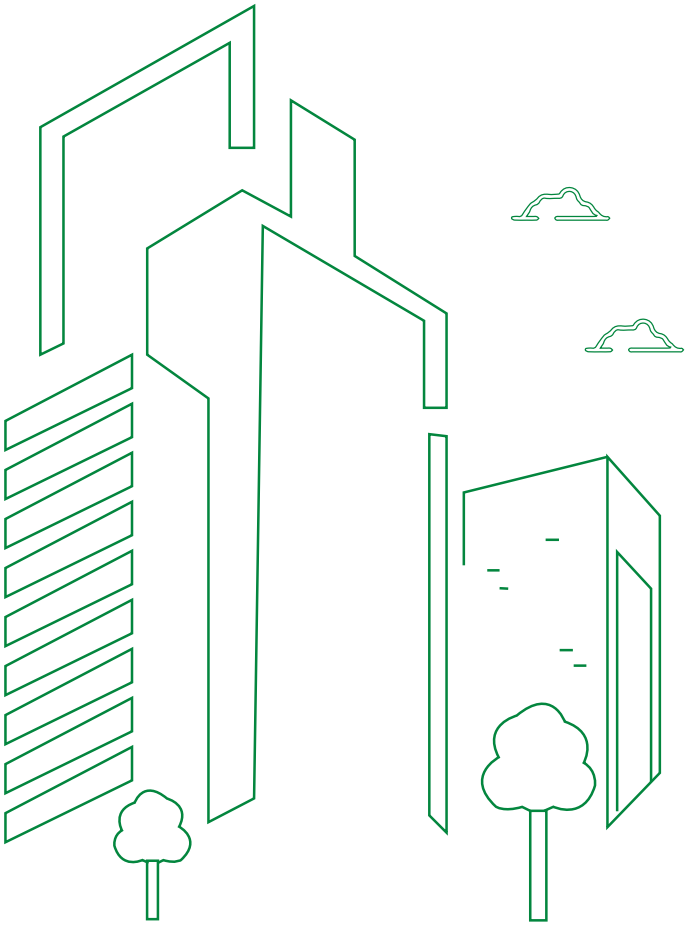


Addressing the issues related to livability and sustainability:

- Creating adequate open spaces in urban settlements and restoring public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and gardens around the city occupied by encroachers.
- Protect, manage, restore, and retain urban biodiversity, particularly canal and river ecosystems, and utilize them for public transportation to prevent encroachment threats. Promote green and blue networks to enhance urban green spaces.
- Promote and invest in the green city and green development concepts, synergizing with the smart Bangladesh concept. Urban pollution such as air, water, and noise should be controlled through legal and policy measures, as well as civic education.
- Creating an authority for implementing BNBC to provide coordination and facilitation support to all the ministries and departments relevant to the BNBC implementation across the country.
- In modern urban planning, recreational areas, spaces and services for urban wildlife, in particular pets, green spaces, civic amenities, educational facilities, safe spaces for non-binary communities, and water features are recognized as essential components of public health infrastructure. It is recommended that these urban services be organized and delivered through a coordinated, ward-based, one-stop service approach. A ward-wise development plan should be prepared and implemented to provide better services and facilities at the local level.
- Conduct vulnerability and risk assessment to build a database of the risk and vulnerability profiles of the cities, towns, and urban settlements. Considering the profile for all sorts of planning for respective urban areas, mandatorily.

Creating opportunities through planned and responsive urban development

- Creating opportunities through planned and responsive urban development Ensure systematic and planned investment in decentralized development, considering local context, resources, and disaster impact assessment.
- Identify and document (with an identity number) the vulnerable urban people and ensure 100% linkages of them with the relevant social safety net (SSN) program, in the case of an existing SSN, easing the process of accessing the services and enhancing the volume of support.
- Optimize the demographic dividend, accomplish the smart Bangladesh goal, and promote technology-based skill development as per the requirements of the country and the external job markets across the world.



DECLARATION OF 7TH URBAN DIALOGUE IN 2023

- 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.).
- 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.
- 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.
- Structural developments in the city should adopt environment-friendly technologies and have a provision for child-friendly facilities.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- "The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence Bangladesh, 2019-2024" needs to be updated in the long term in light of the new vision.



DECLARATION OF 6TH URBAN DIALOGUE IN 2019

- The government will finalize the draft urban sector policy with the provision of delegated authority to implement it.
- The government will enact the revised Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) by the end of 2019 with the provision of delegated authority to implement the code.
- The government must ensure an integrated and inclusive master plan to promote the protection of housing and livable environmental conditions for the urban poor with land tenure security, including satisfactory and acceptable financial arrangements.
- Incentivize eco-friendly and reusable construction technologies and materials with policy support (i.e., reduced income tax for producers and holding tax for users) and ensure compliance with the use of these technologies and materials in government projects.
- Ensure sufficient open and inclusive spaces, playgrounds, amusement parks, and social interaction spaces, considering the number of children and young people in 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 citizens.
- Enhance skills in 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.
- The government will endorse behavioral changes with diversified incentives, i.e., recognition for greening initiatives, waste management, infrastructural safety, protection of women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities at the community, ward, city, and national levels.

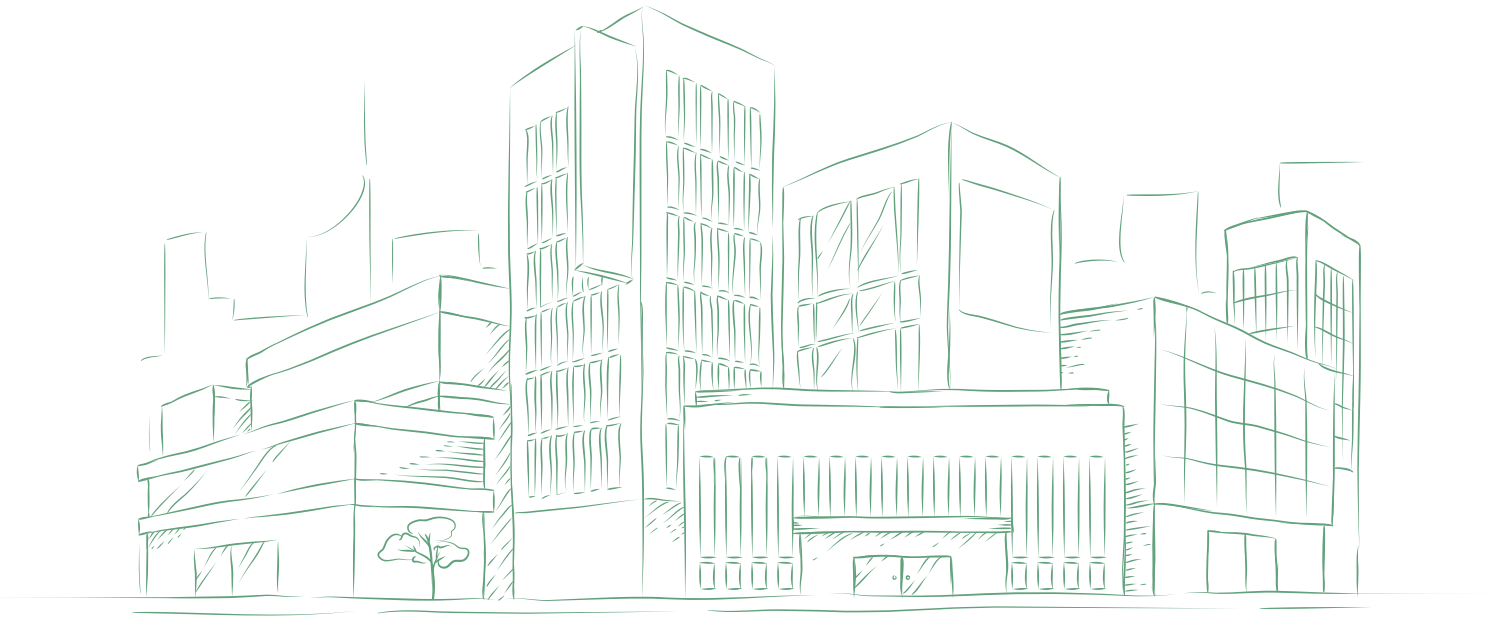
Government initiatives (Policy-level progress that have happened) addressing the Policy recommendations from previous Urban Dialogues (in 2019 & 2023)

- The world's first special shelter project to resettle climate refugee families was launched in Mujib Year. So far, 4,409 families have been resettled under this project in Fadnar Dale, Kutubdia Para and Samity Para near Cox's Bazar airport.

- Construction of 1,04,612 houses has been completed so far through the creation of Housing Fund and lending. Apart from this, hostels have been constructed for women workers in the industry and houses for resettlement of uprooted families.

- The Ministry of Housing and Public Works implemented the project at Mirpur 11 in the capital with its own financing to relocating slum residents to better housing in three 14-storey buildings -- on a rental basis where the daily rent for every 672-sqft flat has been fixed at Tk 150, while the monthly rent is Tk 4,500.

- A total of 334 upazilas under 21 districts have been free of landless and homeless people by providing houses with lands under the Ashrayan project, designed and being implemented by her to alleviate poverty. Under the Ashrayan project and other programmes, a total of 829,607 families have been rehabilitated.



- The National Social Security Strategy Paper has been formulated for more targeted and successful implementation of social security programs to accelerate poverty alleviation. Total expenditure on social security has been increased, which is 2.55 percent of GDP. At present, the total number of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and discrimination programs is around 10 crore people. Government has made a flexibility in Birth Registration process for the floating urban people who do not have specific address / identify to meet the standard criteria of birth registration.

- In 2006, a total of Tk. 2,505 crore (4.01% of the total budget) was allocated to the social security sector, currently Tk. 1,26,272 crore (16.58% of the total budget) has been allocated in the fiscal year 2022-23, which has increased 50 times compared to 2006. In 2006, the total number of beneficiaries in the social security sector was 21,49,356, which has increased by 8 times to 1,81,23,554 in 2023.

- In order to ensure food security for low-income people, the government is distributing food items at low prices in the open market. In the year 2022-23, 1 thousand 720 crores have been allocated to this sector.

- Roads have been upgraded and expanded in each upazila, linking every village to the upazila headquarters and connecting the upazila to the district headquarters, and national highways.

- Computer and internet service centers have been established in every union, providing employment opportunities for village youth, and connecting remote villages with the country and abroad. The unemployment rate, has decreased to 3.6% in 2022 from 6% (2009). The National Service Program has created employment for 1.47 lakh trained youth in various jobs.

- Skill enhancement training has been provided to 3.31 crore youth in 83 trades, with 7.54 lakh individuals becoming self-reliant through self-employment. A total of 4,064 youth organizations have been registered in the last 5 years, receiving financial support from the Youth Welfare Fund.

- The monthly pension amount will be free of income tax. The Universal Pension Law was enacted in January 2023 and on 17 August 2023, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Universal Pension scheme. Currently GoB provides a monthly allowance of 500 taka to the poor elderly above 65 years of age to provide social security and government assistance to citizens suffering from unemployment, sickness, disability or old age and extending a sustainable safety net to the aging population A total 82,503 beneficiaries are under the Livelihoods Improvement of the Underprivileged Communities Program and total of 54,300 people received special allowance.

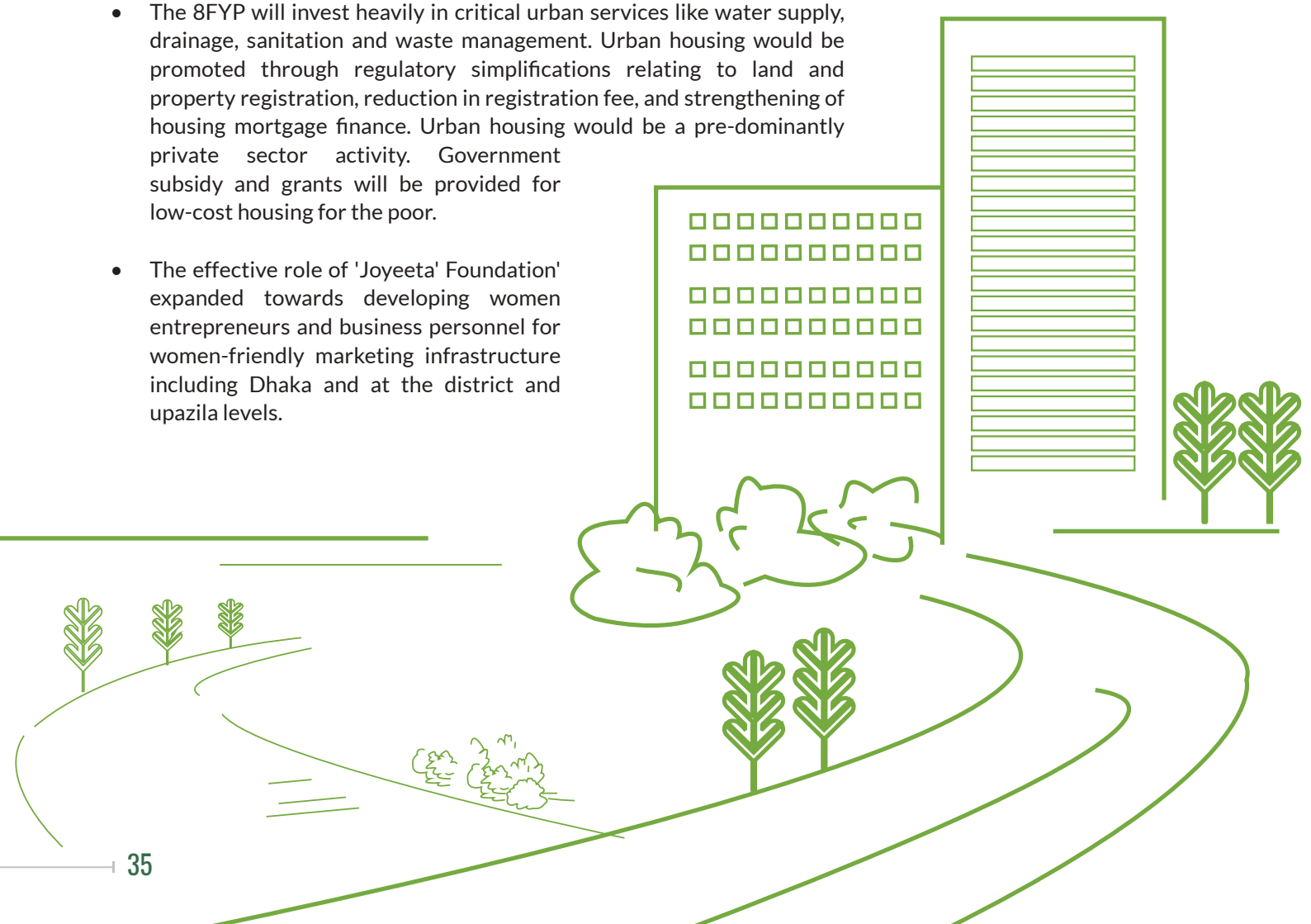
- The Child Welfare Trust Act, 2023 has been enacted to improve the fortunes of underprivileged children. The National Action Plan 2021-25 has been prepared to eliminate child labor.

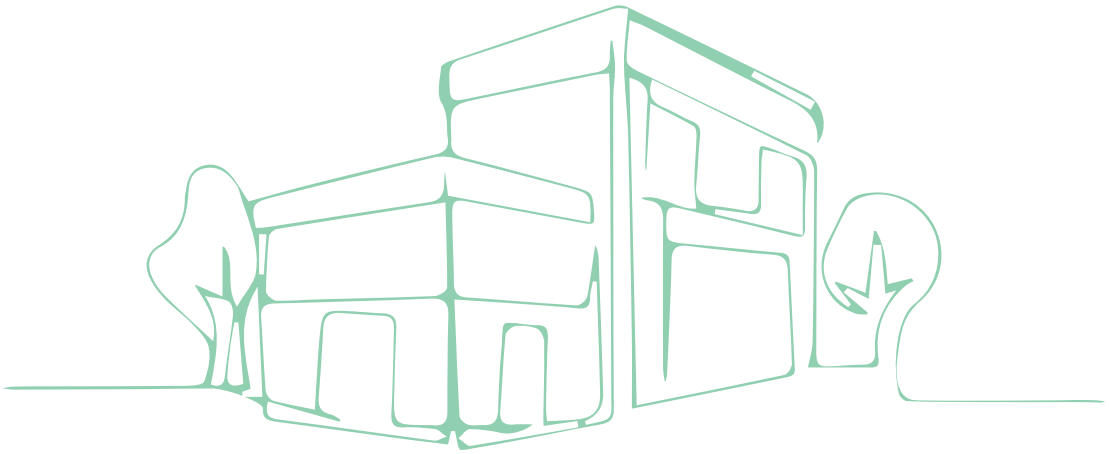
- Services are being provided to abused women and children through One-Stop Crisis Centers and One-Stop Crisis Cells for the safety of women and children. Eight Regional Trauma Counseling Centers have been set up in Divisional and District level Medical College Hospitals.

- Development approach in 8FYP (Five Year Plan) - A sustainable development pathway that is resilient to disaster and climate change; entails sustainable use of natural resources; and successfully manages the inevitable urbanization transition.

- The 8FYP will invest heavily in critical urban services like water supply, drainage, sanitation and waste management. Urban housing would be promoted through regulatory simplifications relating to land and property registration, reduction in registration fee, and strengthening of housing mortgage finance. Urban housing would be a pre-dominantly private sector activity. Government subsidy and grants will be provided for low-cost housing for the poor.

- The effective role of 'Joyeeta' Foundation' expanded towards developing women entrepreneurs and business personnel for women-friendly marketing infrastructure including Dhaka and at the district and upazila levels.





Pledges/Priorities of Newly elected government

- To provide every village with modern urban facilities, including improved roads, communication infrastructure, clean water, modern healthcare and medical treatment, quality education, sewage and waste management, increased electricity and fuel supply, and computer and high-speed internet facilities.

- Implement self-employment schemes in the village to discourage the migration of young people to cities. The government will provide all possible support to encourage youth engagement in agriculture, industry, and business. Include training of rural youth and agricultural entrepreneurs, along with providing loans and investment assistance to marginal and small entrepreneurs in the private sector.

- Target to reduce the poverty rate to 11 percent by 2028, end extreme poverty by 2031, and reduce the poverty rate to 3 percent by 2041.

- Transform the rural agrarian economy into an industrial and digital economy with the help of the future service sector

- The issue of environmental protection will be given serious consideration in the use of various inputs used in agriculture.

- Providing loans on easy terms, necessary subsidies, technical advice, and policy support to establish commercial dairy and poultry farms, increase self-employment and eradicate poverty

- Small, medium and cottage industries, handloom industries will be preserved, and competitiveness enabled to expand employment.

- In Delta Plan 2100, emphasized in ensuring security from floods and climate change-related disasters and optimal integrated use of land and water resources.

- Disabled persons will be provided with government grants and loans on easier terms and appropriate steps will be taken to create suitable employment for them.
- Initiatives will be taken to provide loans under easy conditions and introduce a ration system for income-generating activities of senior citizens.

- Balanced development of all the backward areas of the country including slums, Char, Haor, Baar and coastal areas will be ensured and the quality of livelihoods of the people of those areas will be prioritized.

- The 8FYP prioritized policies and regulations for the implementation of environmental fiscal reforms (EFR) and the development of the green growth strategy. Proper coordination with global climate change programs will be maintained along with stronger efforts to mobilize global climate change resources.

- Social security programs will be continued to improve the livelihoods quality of poor and underprivileged communities. Vocational training will be provided to enhance the skills of the disadvantaged and underprivileged communities. Cash assistance and accommodation programs for the underprivileged community will be expanded across the country.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

actionaid

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.

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. Concern Worlwide started working in Bangladesh since 1972 with a focus on humanitarian relief. Nowadays, Concern's program in Bangladesh has evolved to tackle the multi-dimensional nature of extreme poverty addressing food insecurity, climate change, maternal and child health and nutrition, inequality, diversity and inclusion and humanitarian action. In 2023, Concern Worldwide supported up to 1.5 Million people across Bangladesh. Concern's urban program aims to improve the livelihoods, food security and equitable access to social services and protection schemes of urban population living in extreme poverty. This includes people who are marginalized living in pavement, squatter and undeveloped informal settlements in Dhaka City. 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 population living in extreme poverty. In addition to directly working with the communities in the informal settlements, Concern Worldwide is engaged in advocacy to strengthen urban primary health care services that are accessible and affordable for all people residing in the city. For policy advocacy, Concern collaborates with the City Corporations, Ministry of LFRD&C, UPHCSD project, Coalition of Urban Poor and All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in Bangladesh Parliament to protect rights and entitlement of urban population who are marginalized and are living in extreme poverty. Concern is also closely working with different line ministries, departments, LGIs, academia, research institutes and CSO platforms in Bangladesh and internationally. In the past 15 years of supporting urban population, we have directly supported 90000 people.

Education and Development Foundation – Educo is a global development and humanitarian action NGO with over 30 years' experience working in 14 countries to defend children and their rights, and especially the right to an equitable and quality education. We work with children and their communities to promote just and equitable societies that guarantee their rights and well-being. We envision a world where all children fully enjoy their rights and lead a life of dignity. We are a member of the Child Fund Alliance that acts on behalf of children to defend their rights, particularly their right to receive a quality education. Since 1999, we have been implementing education and development projects in Bangladesh in the marginalized urban and rural areas, and with time we expanded our work to broader geographical areas. We are now working in 10 districts of the country through 16 National and local NGOs as a catalyst organization.



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

Islamic Relief Worldwide is an independent humanitarian and development organization. Founded in 1984, with headquarters based in Birmingham, UK, we have a strong presence in around 45 countries. We support the world's most vulnerable people in the fight against poverty and suffering. We do this regardless of race, political affiliation, gender or belief, and without expecting anything in return. As a registered charity, we are open and transparent. We consistently evaluate our efforts and methodologies to enhance our impact and efficiency. 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. We 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 contribute to solutions. As a result, our programs often encompass many interlinked areas. These include Economic Empowerment and Governance, Child Rights and Protection, Water and Sanitation, Education, Food Security, Health and Nutrition, Community Development, Humanitarian Crisis Response, Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Diversity and inclusion. Islamic Relief in Bangladesh has adopted an integrated approach to address disaster and climate risks. Since the beginning of the influx, Islamic Relief has been working with the Bangladesh Government and other implementing partners to support FDMNs living in Cox's Bazar. We ensure food and non-food items to FDMNs relocated and living in Bhashan Char. Our integrated approach focuses on employment creation, income generation and asset building for the marginalized people to ensure a decent and sustainable living. IRB is implementing Child Rights program in Bangladesh for both orphan & non-orphan vulnerable children through different interventions.

Save the Children

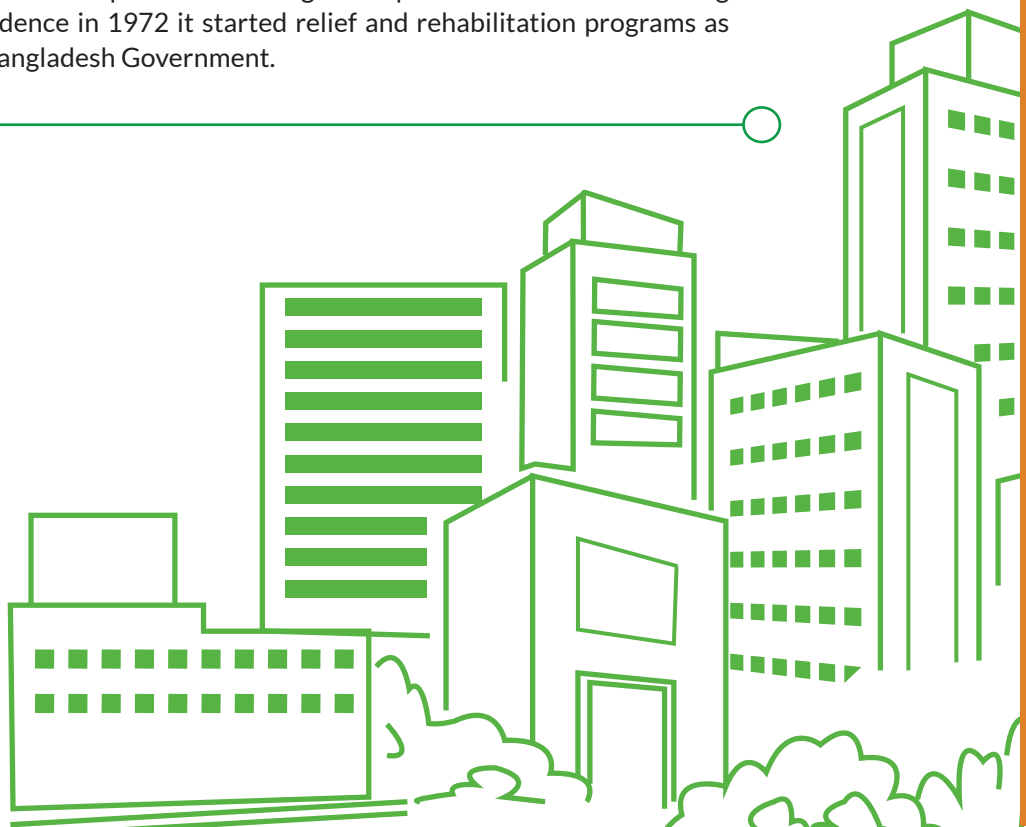
In Bangladesh, we started our journey 53 years ago in 1970 in response to the devastating cyclone that hit Bhola island. We began by providing children and their families with emergency food supplies and medical assistance. Since then, we have been actively working across the country with the government, 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, we 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, we respond to major emergencies, deliver innovative development programs, and ensure children's voices are heard through our campaigning to build a better future for and with children.

United Purpose
Beyond aid

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, 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

actionaid

CONCERN worldwide

হ্যাবিটাট ফর হিউম্যানিটি Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh

Islamic Relief Bangladesh

Save the Children

United Purpose Beyond aid

World Vision

Other Forum Members

brac

care

christian aid

GLOBAL ONE

PLAN INTERNATIONAL

OXFAM

Practical ACTION