



Stakeholder Dinner for the Workshop on “Use of Weather and Climate Information to Inform Disaster Preparedness Activities in Rohingya Camps”



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| Title: | <i>Stakeholder Dinner for the Workshop on “Use of Weather and Climate Information to Inform Disaster Preparedness Activities in Rohingya Camps”</i> |
| Date & Time: | <i>Sunday, March 11, 2018, 7:30pm-9:30pm</i> |
| Organizers: | <i>International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI)/Columbia University, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).</i> |
| Funded by: | <i>USAID</i> |
| Venue: | <i>Asia Pacific Hotel, Dhaka</i> |
| Moderator: | <i>Dr Saleemul Huq, Director, ICCCAD</i> |
| Author: | <i>Anne-Laure Pilat</i> |
| Photographer: | <i>Noor Elahi Nahiyon</i> |
| Editor: | <i>Tasfia Tasnim</i> |

Participants' List (Arranged as per the registration form)

| Name | Designation |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Mr. Andrew Kruczkiewicz | IRI |
| Ms. Melody Braun | IRI |
| Mr. Manuek Brahm | IRI |
| Ms. Sonya Syafitri | IOM |
| Mr. Dr. Saleemul Huq | Director, ICCCAD |
| Mr. Laskar Maqsudur Rahman | FAO |
| Mr. Shammunul Islam | Manager, Data Science, Environment & CC/ERI |
| Mr. Noor-E-Elahi | Programme Assistant, ICCCAD |
| Mr. Dr. Khalid Hossain | Oxfam |
| Mr. Tapash Ranjana Chakrabarty | Oxfam |
| Mr. Raquibul Amin | IUCN |
| Mr. Rezaul Karim | Prog. Head, DMCC BRAC |
| Mr. Marshed Ahmed | Senior Advisor, Norwegian Embassy |
| Mr. Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah | IUCN, Program Coordinator |
| Mr. Md. Emdad Hossain | Project Leader/ World Fish |
| Ms. Dr. Nurun Nahar | Deputy Chief, Programming Division |
| Ms. Lamiya Mahpara Ahmed | Analyst/ Start Fund BD |
| Ms. Anne-Laure Pilat | Visiting researcher, ICCCAD |
| Ms. Tasfia Tasnim | Research Officer, ICCCAD |

Event Agenda:

| Time | Activities | Responsible person |
|------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 07.30 - 08.45 pm | Discussion | ICCCAD, IRI and IOM |
| 08.45 - 09:30 pm | Dinner | ICCCAD |

Report on the Stakeholder Dinner Meeting for the Workshop on “Use of Weather and Climate Information to Inform Disaster Preparedness Activities in Rohingya Camps”

On the 11th March, 2018, the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI)/Columbia University and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) co-organised a closing stakeholder dinner for the workshop on the “Use of Weather and Climate Information to Inform Disaster Preparedness Activities in Rohingya Camps”. The dinner event held at the Asia Pacific Hotel was attended by 19 experts from various national and international organization, NGO’s and the Ministry of planning, to further understand the need and the use for climate and weather information in the Rohingya camps for a better preparedness for the upcoming monsoon period as well as future potential natural hazards.

The dinner was designed to stimulate discussion among the different decision makers and the climate and weather information providers to find synergies between the needed information and those already available and their potential use in the camps activities.

Summary of the Discussions

During his opening remarks, **Dr. Saleemul Huq**, Director of ICCCAD at IUB, set the tone of the discussion by reminding the two upcoming threats for the Rohingya camps, the pre-monsoon and the monsoon seasons. As he reminded the assemble, the question still remain on what needs to be done inside the camps to help them face the monsoon in the best possible way. “It is a question of emergency management and for that we need to understand who



Dr. Saleemul Huq's opening remarks at the stakeholder dinner meeting

is doing what and the kind of collaboration that can exist among the different present actors to create a short and long term synergy of actions” he stated. He also took the opportunity to emphasize on the need to move towards a long term view for the monitoring of the environment inside and outside the camps. As he underlined, “we need to understand that the Rohingya are going to be present in the camps for a long time”. Thus, not only an emergency response is needed but also a long term collection of environmental data and the creation of a monthly environmental report for the decision makers. Finally, Dr. Huq expressed his concerned for the tension that could arise between the Rohingya and the host community which will also require an ongoing national dialogue, between the government and the civil society, to address them.

Following those remarks, **Ms. Mélody Braun**, from International Research Institute, Columbia University, referred to IRI work on ways to improve access to climate services for the different sectors in Bangladesh and among others the Rohingya Camps. As explained by her, “we have to understand the kind of information that is available and which is useful to help to prepare the camps for the upcoming threats and in the long term”. She pursued by saying that right now they want to discuss the realistic activities

that can be done in the camps if the correct information is available, and understand how the people responsible for life saving decision within the camps can use those information in their

work and the other kind of data they need. Furthermore, **Mr. Andrew Kruczkiewicz**, from IRI, mentioned the recent launch of the NASA 4 years program, “Earth Observation Applications”, and which will focus on Bangladesh for the next two years. The main goal of the program is to improve the use of satellite data to gain a better understanding of global flood risks and pattern of hazards.

Following these highlights, **Ms. Sonya Syafitri**, from International Organization for Migration (IOM), reaffirmed the urgency for Monsoons preparedness and highlighted the fact that “there is a tight schedule due to the risk of an early monsoon which adds a lot of pressure on what to do and how to do it. IOM is currently working on the reinforcement of slopes, retrofitting of facilities and houses”. Moreover, due to space limitation, the possibility of evacuating people from the camps is severely limited. Hence, “IOM is hoping that with the help of science, we can get information about the location that are the most vulnerable inside the camps and locations where we can move people safely and effectively”, stated Ms. Syafitri. Finally, she also hinted at other area of work related to the environment (ex: elephants, deforestation etc.), where a proper use of the available scientific data could help move forwards the already undertaken actions or to start new necessary activities.

Following the opening remarks, **Mr. Raquibul Amin**, from International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), opened the discussion by expressing IUCN engagement to move towards a long term vision for environmental rehabilitation inside and outside the camps. To make this switch to a long term thinking “we need to understand the environmental issue if we do not want to get stuck in the crisis positions”, he said. He also articulated the differences in speed work between the humanitarian NGOs, who are in need of information “right now”, and the environmental NGOs how are in need of information on a long term basis. He ended his intervention by mentioning the work provided by IUCN to help with the elephant problem within the camps as an example of a long term environmental activity in the camps area.



Ms. Braun, Ms. Syafitri and Mr. Kruczkiewicz are discussing the issues regarding Use of Weather and Climate Information and disaster preparedness activities

The discussion continued with two questions asked by, **Dr. Haseeb Md. Irfanullah**, from IUCN: “Firstly, if the situation is stable enough in the camps for the early monsoon, will the government listen to us in this situation? And secondly, if we evacuate people from the vulnerable places in the camps, how will the climate and weather information still be of benefit to them?”

The answer to the first question was provided by Dr. Huq, who started by mentioning the optimistic belief of the Bangladeshi government in the fact that for some part the Rohingya will go back and in the possibility of a relocation on an island for the others. However, “this also means there will still be people left for the long term which means that we still need to understand the existing different dynamics despite the fact that there might be less people” he stated. The answer to the second question, was provided by Ms. Braun, who started by reminding that the evacuation of



Stakeholder dinner meeting participants

all the camps is not possible due to limitation of space. Thus, she explains, “with better information you can target the kind of preparedness you need and you can priorities your work and actions” in response to natural risks.

The discussion was pursued by **Mr. Rezaul Karim**, from BRAC, who highlighted the work of his NGO within the camps in the area such as school and elaboration of plans for risk management for houses in vulnerable locations. He also confirmed the problem of existing tension between the host community and the Rohingya, which according to him, calls for a better data coordination between the various organizations working there.

Thereafter, **Dr. Khalid Hossain**, from Oxfam, presented its work focused on sanitization and more precisely on water services and distribution channel. He mentioned the possibility of future challenges in this area, linked to potential water scarcity. Therefore, he precise that Oxfam needs to also think about the host community water related activities in their water distribution plans, to prevent further tensions between the two communities.

Ms. Syafitri confirmed the necessity to take into account how the local population is affected by the large arrival of Rohingya in the region. Thus, the available information are important for all the people present in the camps area as well as for states agencies such as the Bangladeshi forest department and his future reforestation activities with IOM. Hence, “we need to focus on cultivating collective effort of sharing information between the different actors for a better advantage for everyone” she added.

The exchanges continue with **Ms. Dr. Nurun Nahar**, Deputy Chief, Programming Division, Planning Commission who affirmed the support of the ministry in form of resources and planning for proposal received from the ground.

The discussion ended with Dr. Huq closing remarks, where he reiterated the need for the different actors to work together to improve the flood of information between them. Following the discussion part, Dr. Huq then invited all the guests to attend the dinner event.

Takeaway messages from the Event

Bangladesh has done a lot of efforts in looking after the Rohingya. Nevertheless, there is a need to start thinking from a long term point of view about the global ecosystem of the camps area and their future preparedness for monsoons seasons. To achieve it two requirements were put in the spotlight: First a better collaboration between all the actors from the private and public sectors. Secondly, a better understanding of the type of information that is needed and which ones are already available.