

# Are we ready for Bangladesh 2.0?

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# AABTimes Annual Tabloid 2024

"I've never seen a flood like this - my home is destroyed and we have no food or water"

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Date: 15 December 2024

9th International Water Conference

## Put Water at the Heart of Climate Action

In South Asia, powerful upstream countries do not want to engage in discussions with downstream countries to address the water-sharing issues, said legal experts in January. This was discussed at the two-day-long 9th International Water Conference held in Dhaka, under the theme 'Water, River and Climate Change: Creating Space for Resilience'. While moderating a session titled 'Rights of the River: Integrated Basin Management', Dr Asif Nazrul, a law professor at Dhaka University, said, "In South Asia, major upstream countries do not want to sit with downstream countries." Most agreements are 'reactive' ones made in order to accommodate unilateral projects by upstream or powerful countries, he said. "They usually go bilateral to resolve any water- and river-related disputes. If we look into the South Asian water-sharing treaties, we see that

most of them are periodical treaties for a selective timeframe, which we do not see in other parts of the world," he continued. He also stated that all the basin states must find a fair way of allocating water to avoid disagreement. There must also be a regional framework for comprehensive data sharing, regarding water resource management. First Secretary and Deputy Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, Nayoka Martinez-Bäckström stressed the need for the inclusion of young people in water-related discussion and climate justice movement. She also emphasised the youth-led enterprise for sustainable water management. Dr Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus at the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University, said, "In climate and water negotiations, it's imperative to understand the politics at play.



## Powerful Upstream Countries Reluctant to Address Water-Sharing Issues

Open Letter to Dr. Yunus and Student Leaders

## ActionAid Calls for Prioritising Whitepaper on Inclusion, Equity

Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, Farah Kabir has called for prioritising a whitepaper on inclusion, equity and gender-responsive public service and governance. In an open letter to Dr. Yunus and student leaders, Ms. Kabir paid respect and acknowledged all those who sacrificed their lives for a new Bangladesh. On behalf of ActionAid, the communities and youth activists the organisation represents, Ms. Kabir requested that gender-based violence, harmful social norms and practices be addressed at all levels. Powerful messages must be sent out from the

highest levels indicating that the new Bangladesh, its student leaders, law enforcement agencies and the government will not tolerate any form of violence, exploitation or abuse.

"We want to thank and congratulate Dr. Yunus for agreeing to take on the monumental task of restoring peace and security, protecting the economy and paving the way for free and fair elections," said Farah Kabir. She also said that the priority at this stage in August 2024, is to uphold the spirit of the students' movement, reestablish law and order, revive governance and state institutions and stabilise the economy.

"In this effort, please remember that the issues of feminization, poverty, marginalisation and exclusion must be addressed. Public services and offices need to be supported to



become more gender-sensitive, to move away from a culture of corruption, nepotism, abuse of power, and discrimination, and thus to end patriarchy," said Farah Kabir. The contributions and inclusion of women, youth, marginalised communities, and minorities have never been fully realised. Recognising their potential and bringing them to the table of decision-making is crucial for an inclusive future. "We wish you all the best and we will always be there should you need any support," the letter reads.

## Statement on Quota Reform Protest and Loss of Lives

ActionAid Bangladesh is deeply shocked and saddened by the loss of young lives of our students during the recent protests for quota reformation in July and August 2024. Every life lost is a tragedy, and our hearts reach out to all the families who are grieving this immense loss. ActionAid Bangladesh

condemns all forms of violence.

We firmly support social justice at the core of our work. We believe students and young people are the drivers of change, and their voices deserve to be heard in building a more just, tolerant and prosperous society. We are encouraged by the news that the government has extended an invitation for dialogue with the protestors. This has initiated steps to address the crisis, including the formation of a judicial investigation committee into the recent deaths. We urge the government to ensure a transparent investigation and decisive actions to address the root causes of this unrest, while prioritising inclusivity and finding a solution that respects the rational demands of the young people. Once again, we express our deepest condolences for the young lives lost in this crisis. We urge all parties involved to avoid violence by all means and work towards a peaceful resolution that honours the memory of those we have lost and have faith in creating a brighter future for all.

## Fossil Fuel Sector Receives \$438.6bn in Subsidies Annually in Global South

A new survey conducted by ActionAid International has revealed that over \$677 billion in subsidies is being poured into fossil fuel and industrial agriculture sectors annually, fueling greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries are the primary beneficiaries of these subsidies, which are contributing to a rise in global temperature and an increase in biodiversity loss.

The report "How the Finance Flows 2024", conducted by ActionAid International explains how public funds from the global south are being diverted to fuel the climate crisis, while enriching fossil fuel and industrial agriculture sectors.

The research found that between 2016 (when the Paris Agreement was signed) and 2023, the fossil fuel sector received an average of \$438.6 billion annually in public subsidies from the Global South.

The industrial agriculture sector benefited from an average of \$238 billion per year during the same period. The report further revealed that renewable energy in the Global South was receiving a shockingly low level of public finance, only a fraction of what is being invested in fossil fuels.

The shift towards sustainable and green renewable energy is falling behind. Moreover, an increasing number of countries in the Global South are now at risk of climate-related debt. The amount of subsidies for fossil fuels is more than 50% of the per capita income of people in the most climate-vulnerable countries there.

The report called for an end to fossil fuel financing, increased investment in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, and for public funds to be redirected towards climate solutions that protect people's rights to food, energy, and livelihoods. It urged national and regional governments to regulate the banking and finance sectors to stop financing fossil fuel expansion.

## Special Features On:



**Kalapara's Dulali Begum Takes Her Climate Fight to COP29**

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**Doreen Village: Localisation for Community Resilience**

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**Patuakhali Water Museum Showcases Riverine Bangladesh**

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Dialogue: Anti-Discrimination for Inclusion

## Country Needs Inclusive Reforms

The recent student-led movement has opened new avenues for state reform and reconstruction. Building an inclusive and equitable society has emerged as a new challenge for the newly formed interim government. This journey of state reform must prioritise the demands of marginalised communities at the grassroots level. To build a non-discriminatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and just state, the effective inclusion of women in national development, the creation of a conducive work environment including disability-friendly government services, ensuring the safety of Dalit-Harijan and sex worker communities, and addressing the aspirations and challenges of indigenous peoples are important.

This call was made at a dialogue organised by ActionAid Bangladesh in Dhaka, September 2024. The dialogue

'Anti-Discrimination for Inclusion', was attended by over 20 representatives from different sectors including indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, sex workers' rights activists, youth and women's rights activists, anti-discrimination movement coordinators, climate activists, media personalities, Dalit-Harijan communities, and other marginalised groups. The dialogue began with a minute of silence in memory of those who lost their lives during the student-led uprising. Representatives from various sectors shared their experiences and aspirations for state reform.

The dialogue was inaugurated by Kazi Morshed Alam, Head of Program and Engagement at ActionAid Bangladesh. Other speakers included women's rights activist Dalia Islam, transgender community representative Ivan Ahmed Kotha, Dalit-Harijan community



representative Khillon Robi Dash, child rights representative Bithi Akter, women's rights activist Zinia Afrin Smriti, garment worker Bilki, climate activist Sohanur Rahman, and Morium Nesa, Manager of Women's Rights and Gender Equity at ActionAid Bangladesh. At the end of the dialogue, the guests visited a special cartoon and art exhibition themed around the student-led uprising.



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Over five hundred young climate activists have demanded that world leaders halt harmful and costly fossil fuel financing and allocate climate funds to address loss and damage, ensuring a sustainable future. The demand was made during a climate strike organised by Activista Bangladesh, ActionAid Bangladesh's youth platform, in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka in September 2024.

As part of the global climate strike calling for climate action and finance, including phasing out fossil fuel financing, expanding renewable energy, and increasing investment in sustainable agriculture, young climate activists took to the streets today. More than five hundred slogan-shouting climate activists gathered in front of Shaheed Minar after beginning the protest at the National Press Club. The protest ended with a call for climate justice. The climate protesters stated that developed countries are fueling the climate crisis through fossil fuel financing. Their neo-colonial exploitation, war, and human rights abuses are destroying the planet. Over \$650 billion is annually subsidized to fossil fuel companies, encouraging greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries promote these subsidies. Many businesses contributing to global temperature rise and biodiversity loss receive government subsidies, totaling approximately \$2.6 trillion annually, representing 2.5% of global GDP. This disproportionately impacts

young people, farmers, women, and marginalized communities in the Global South, increasing their environmental debt. To address this, investment in sustainable projects and renewable energy must be prioritized over fossil fuels. Thousands of young people from Activista Bangladesh Platform of ActionAid Bangladesh and more than 20 youth organizations attended the Global Climate Strike this time. Activista volunteers from 19 different



## Global Climate Strike 2024

### Youth Demand for Climate Finance to Fill the Loss and Damage Funding

districts and 7 localised youth hubs also protested in solidarity with the climate activists across the country by participating in local demonstration in Kustia, Jamalpur, Netrokona, Mymensingh, Gazipur, Noakhali, Sunamgonj, Chadpur, Khulna, Satkhira, Syamnagar, Kaligonj, Rampal, Bagerhat, Barguna, Kurigram, Teknaf, Rangpur, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, and many other places.



### Youth Demand to Stop Fossil Fuel Funding



## Climate Justice Idea Competition 2024

As Bangladesh faces the worst repercussions of climate change, negotiations for accessing the Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund will be crucial at the upcoming 29th Conference of Parties (COP29), to be held in November under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The amount pledged at COP28 for the L&D Fund—aimed at compensating loss and damage caused by climate change in order to

access the L&D Fund. Alongside policymakers and climate activists, the youth of Bangladesh have the potential to play a pivotal role in combating climate change and representing the country on international platforms through climate negotiations and advocacy. In light of this, ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star have once again taken an active initiative to advance climate justice by hosting the 'Climate Justice Idea Competition' in August 2024, highlighting innovative solutions proposed by the youth in three categories: energy transition, water rights and circular economy. Following a four-month-long campaign and a nationwide call for ideas through various media, both online and offline, an astounding 156 submissions were received in the aforementioned categories. Two experts in each category meticulously reviewed all submissions to select the



top three ideas from each group, ultimately choosing nine exceptional teams with ingenious and viable solutions.

To prepare the selected teams for the grand finale, a technical session and a grooming session were conducted, during which each team presented their proposal before nine mentors with expertise in relevant fields. These mentors guided the participants and addressed any remaining feasibility gaps in their ideas.

The grand finale took place at The Daily Star Center, graced by esteemed guests including Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh; Ibrahim Al-Zayad, Chair of the Executive Board at ActionAid International Bangladesh Society; and Mahfuz Anam, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star. A distinguished panel of judges, comprising experts from civil society, the corporate sector, and the development sector, had the challenging task of evaluating the prototypes and final pitches, each consisting of a seven-minute presentation followed by a two-minute Q&A session. Ultimately, three outstanding winners were selected, one from each category, each poised to contribute significantly to advancing climate justice.

## Youth COP 2024 Conference

# Youth Activists Unveil 14 Demands for Climate Justice

### Three-day Bangladesh Youth COP 2024 Conference

Over 200 young climate activists from Bangladesh have presented a 14-point manifesto demanding urgent action to ensure climate justice in the newly reformed Bangladesh. These demands were issued at the closing ceremony of the three-day Bangladesh Youth CoP conference, held in September 2024 at the Aloki Convention Centre in Dhaka.

Jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and Brighters Youth Society, the conference aimed to develop youth voices in national and international climate policymaking.

Young representatives from grassroots areas like Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, Kurigram, and Bandarban, focused on pressing climate challenges including water shortages, wetland crises, and hardships faced

### Jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and Brighters Youth Society

by drought and flood-affected communities. The activists engaged in discussions with national and international experts, addressing issues such as renewable energy, climate change losses and damages, and the impact on marginalised groups, especially women and adolescents.

Among the key demands, the activists called for government action on climate-induced health issues, safe drinking water, sustainable dams in coastal areas, and policies to empower youth in creating a green and circular economy. They also highlighted the need for gender-sensitive disaster management, the protection of traditional livelihoods, and greater youth representation in climate policymaking forums.



## Including Marginalised Youth for Climate Justice Action

ActionAid Bangladesh convened a National Youth Conference in March 2024 in Dhaka. Creating a platform for local, national, and global climate justice efforts, the conference aimed to connect young climate activists from diverse regions.

The event featured youth-led climate action initiatives, panel discussions with prominent young activists, and networking sessions. The conference was held under the "Building Agency of Youth in Climate Action" project, implemented by ActionAid Bangladesh and its youth-led consortium partners with support from British Council.

The interactive youth-led panel discussion featuring nine prominent young Bangladeshi climate activists with experience in global climate

justice forums, was the highlight of the event. Panelists included Sohanur Rahman (Executive Coordinator, Youthnet for Climate Justice), Jannatul Mouwa (Executive Director, BINDU Nari Unnayan Sangathan), Amanullah Porag (South Asia Mobilization Coordinator, 350.org), Fariha Sultana Aumi (Chairperson, Brighters Society of Bangladesh), Al Mamun Rakib (Climate Action Focal, Lal Sabuj Society), Mehedi Hasan Bappy (LCOY Bangladesh), Probin Henry Tripura (IID), Zuhair Ahmed Kowshik (Youth Advisory Panel Member, UNEP), and Omar Faruk Joy (Founder, We Can Cox's Bazar). They discussed the challenges and shared valuable experiences from their work in climate activism within Bangladesh.

EXCLUSIVE: Stories captured by ActionAid in September 2024, reveal the devastation caused by the worst flash floods Bangladesh has seen in decades.

Abdul Hai's home has been destroyed, his livestock are dead and his feet are in terrible pain due to a skin condition caused by wading through floodwaters. The 59-year-old is one of 470,000 people in Bangladesh who are living in emergency shelters after the worst flash flooding to hit the country for almost three decades. "I've never seen a flood like this. My home has been washed away. There's no clean water, no proper food. No aid has reached our shelter yet, he said. "Everyone is worried about what will happen next. It feels like we're counting the days until we die here." The crisis began on August 21 when relentless monsoon rains caused rivers to overflow which led to the destruction of buildings, roads, rail lines and communication networks. At least 71 people have died and more than five million are feared to have lost their homes, crops and livelihoods. Around 1.24 million families were left stranded, cut off by floodwaters, according to authorities. Abdul lived in Noakhali Sadar, one of the worst affected district. He and his family of nine found refuge in a nearby primary school, where more than 100 people were seeking shelter. Health officials are concerned about the spread of waterborne diseases and thousands of people have already been hospitalised with

diarrhoea, skin infections and snake bites. Abdul's feet are sore after he developed a skin condition. "My feet have been like this since the flood. They're in terrible pain. Many others here are in the same condition. There's no medical care available, so we're using mustard oil as a remedy. When your life itself is in danger, who has time to worry about their feet?" he said. Tajnahar Begum, 24, fled to a temporary shelter with her five-year-old son after flood water submerged their home. She received a small amount of dry food at the shelter, which is shared with 22 other families but it

## 'I've never seen a flood like this - my home is destroyed and we have no food or water'

was not enough to feed her son. The tearful young mother said, "The water in our home was knee high. I had no money, no way to prepare. I left our home with nothing, hoping to find safety here, but now I can't even properly feed my child." The stories and photos of those affected were captured by ActionAid, which has launched an urgent fundraising appeal. Sanjida Hossain, the charity's administration manager in Bangladesh, said, "The suffering of the community, especially women and the elderly is overwhelming. We are doing everything we can by providing shelter, food, relief, and health services, but the real challenge will come when the water recedes, and people return to what's left of their

homes. Many have lost everything including their homes and their livelihoods. Without proper support, they won't be able to rebuild their lives. The future looks incredibly uncertain without urgent help." ActionAid is delivering emergency aid including food, clean drinking water and medicine, aiming to support around 15,000 families initially.

This will be followed by a long term recovery response as the millions affected try to rebuild their homes and lives. Bangladesh is prone to flooding due to its low-lying, flat topography. But crises like this



are becoming more common due to the impact of climate change, including the increasing frequency of extreme precipitation events and more erratic rainfall. Farah Kabir, ActionAid Bangladesh country director, said, "Families will be left reeling from these floods for years to come. The irreversible loss and damage to livelihoods must be recognised for what it is – the result of a climate crisis which Bangladesh did very little to bring about."

Fears of Waterborne Disease Rise in Bangladesh as Floods Recede Slowly. Authorities in Bangladesh are bracing for the spread of waterborne diseases and racing to get drinking water to people after devastating floods last week that left at least 54 people dead and millions stranded. As floodwaters recede slowly, many people remain stranded and in urgent need of food, clean water, medicine and dry clothes, especially in remote areas where blocked roads have hindered rescue and relief efforts. The Bangladesh Meteorological Department said that flood conditions could persist if the monsoon rains continued, as water levels were receding very slowly. Farah Kabir, director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said that countries like Bangladesh, which contribute minimally to global emissions, urgently need funding to recover from climate-related losses and build resilience for future impacts while pursuing green development pathways.

## Bangladesh Floods Leave 6 million People Affected



rescue and relief operations, authorities said. An analysis in 2015 by the World Bank Institute estimated that 3.5 million people in Bangladesh, one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, were at risk of annual river flooding. Scientists attribute the exacerbation of such catastrophic events to climate change. "Countries like Bangladesh with

negligible emissions and whose people have shown super resilience deserve immediate funds to address the impacts of climate change and frequent disasters," said Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh. "We need to recover from the losses and damage we have faced, as well as build resilience to future impacts and take on green development pathways."

In one of the worst-hit districts, Noakhali, 56-year-old Shukuri Begum lost her home as it was swept into a pond by the floodwaters, according to ActionAid. Terrified, she fled with her grandchildren to a neighbour's house, but couldn't stay there long as it was no longer safe.

"I have a son with physical disabilities, and we couldn't bring him with us. We had to stack beds and leave him on top, hoping he would be safe. I don't know what's waiting for us," ActionAid quoted her as saying.

## Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh Issues 10-Point Demand to End Violence

The Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh has issued a 10-point demand urging the government to intervene and stop the oppression of female sex workers across the country, including Dhaka. The demand was made at a press conference held at the Abdus Salam Hall of the National Press Club in September 2024. Aleya Akter Lili, president of the Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh, read out the written statement at the press conference. The organisation called for swift legal action against those involved in the abuse of sex workers and emphasised the need to ensure the safety and well-being of all sex workers. Lili highlighted recent incidents of sexual abuse against sex workers in various parts of Dhaka, including Jatrabari, the Court area, Shyamoli, Shaheed Minar, Mirpur Mazar Road, Farmgate, Asadgate, Uttara, Kuril, and Badda. She strongly condemned these acts, stating that public torture, violent behaviour, filming and publication of such acts constitute both crimes and gross human rights violations.

## Lesson Learn Sharing Workshop

Today, we organised a workshop to look back on our 'People Centred Risk Indicator Measurement and Engagement' (PRIME) project, a joint intervention by the World Food Programme and ActionAid Bangladesh. Our goal? To share insights, lessons learnt, and discuss the way forward. We had participants and representatives from different stakeholders. Md. Abdul Alim, ActionAid Bangladesh's Head of Humanitarian Programme, offered the opening remarks, and Md Shamsud Douza, Additional Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, joined us as a special guest.



## Making the Climate Change Battle Inclusive

**Equal participation of people of all genders, ethnicities and age-groups will generate more effective and sustainable outcomes.**

Climate change is a global crisis. Raising awareness is not enough; we must provide people with the information and tools to combat the effects of climate change. It is fundamental to engage in activism, campaigns, and advocacy and organise dialogues and conferences to discuss how to reduce the effects of climate change. To be effective and truly transformative, respect for and promotion of gender equality, women's rights, marginalised groups, youth leadership and indigenous community must be central to climate action. Participation in climate and environmental decision-making is a human right and the equal participation of people belonging to all genders generates more effective and sustainable outcomes. Women are underrepresented when it comes to decision-making regarding climate negotiations. At COP 28, there were only 34 percent of women across all national delegations, compared to 31 percent at COP 14 in 2008. Only two percent of the delegations at COP 28 had an equal number of men and women, while 79 percent had more men than women, representing the ongoing disparity in women's participation in climate negotiations.

## Reimagining Primary and Compulsory Education in Bangladesh

It is believed that education, in the midst of global advances and challenges, remains the critical vehicle of empowerment, and this holds true for countries like Bangladesh. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 has recognised education as a core human right, and throughout human history, it has proven essential to personal and social development. In Bangladesh, primary education up to Class 5 is compulsory, according to the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990. Article 17 (free and compulsory education) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh enshrines compulsory education as a fundamental principle of state policies. Along with that, the government adopted the National Education Policy 2010 to cultivate human values, groom them with leadership skills, and progress society. Accordingly, the government has taken a few initiatives, including providing textbooks and a monthly stipend to the students, which are commendable and have made significant contributions, particularly in enrolment in primary and secondary schools. The overall scenario of education in Bangladesh is not relevant to the aspirations of the youth, and much remains to be done in this regard.

## A Feminist Approach to Climate Solutions

Participation in climate and environmental decision-making is a human right, and the equal participation of people of all genders generates outcomes that are more effective and sustainable. Yet, women are under-represented in decision-making in the landscape of climate negotiations, recent data sheds light on the persistent challenge of achieving gender balance within the UNFCCC space. There are 132 UNFCCC decisions regarding gender, with 54 of them specifically referencing gender balance in decision-making processes. Still, gender balance in the UNFCCC sphere continues to fall short. At COP28, there were 34 percent of women across all national delegations, compared to 31 percent at COP14 in 2008. Only two percent of the delegations at COP28 had an equal number of men and women, while 79 percent of delegations had more men than women. These statistics underscore the ongoing disparity in women's participation in climate negotiations, emphasising the pressing need for more concerted efforts to promote gender balance and inclusivity within the UNFCCC framework. Women, girls, and gender minorities often bear the brunt of climate change impacts, facing limited access to resources and decision-making power, carrying out caregiving duties during crises, and intersecting vulnerabilities with socioeconomic status.

## Dhaka Can Be Extraordinary If We Plan for It

Dhaka is special and has been the centre for movements including that by students for the Bangla language in 1952, some other historical moments are 1969, 1971, 1990 and now in 2024. Thus, my focus is on Dhaka this time! People in Bangladesh are vulnerable to extreme events such as floods, cyclones, riverbank erosion, salinity intrusion, seasonal droughts, and other catastrophes. Due to seismic zones in the northern and eastern regions of the country, earthquakes are also a major concern. Of all the disasters, floods inundate up to two-thirds of Bangladesh once every three to five years. Disasters cause vulnerability and increase poverty, limiting the scope for establishing a just, equitable, and resilient society. Whether natural or human-induced, disasters have a disproportionate impact on diverse groups of people, highlighting the importance of social inclusion in breaking the barriers of inequality. Women in Bangladesh face greater challenges compared to men during disasters. Despite challenges, South Asian women have proven to be of incredible potential in effective disaster response and management, which often go largely unrecognized. To build gender-sensitive resilient strategies in the disaster risk reduction process, it is necessary to address gender needs of women and men.



These articles are authored by **Farah Kabir**, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh.



## Are We Ready for Bangladesh 2.0?

We must commit ourselves to work with women, girls, youth, the discriminated, and the marginalised to build their agency and voice in Bangladesh 2.0.

What just happened in Bangladesh is a revolution led and staged by students with people's support. In this historical moment when Gen Z and reformists are driving Bangladesh, I feel charged and would like to reflect on the call made by Dr Muhammad Yunus for people to come forward and work with him. The Yunus-led interim government along with the student leaders have the task for reform and the establishment of justice cut out for them. So let us take a step in the direction of our action and commitment to materialise this agenda.

among others.

"Since I was a child, I have loved engaging with people and helping others," Dulali told The Business Standard after returning from COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. ActionAid Bangladesh facilitated her trip to the conference, where she represented marginalised communities directly impacted by climate change.

Dulali had the opportunity to deliver a speech, interact with people and journalists from around the world, and share her experiences of working in the climate-impacted coastal areas of Bangladesh.

She works with the Kalapara Environment and Public Safety Committee, supported by ActionAid Bangladesh, to protect landless people, promote environmental protection, and advocate for climate justice. She has campaigned for families affected by land loss due to the Payra Sea Port and Ashuganj 1320 MW Coal Power projects and raised concerns about local environmental

Should we call for a new social contract—an agreement among individuals within a social group to abide by rules and laws for collective good—that reflects inclusion and equity? Are we ready to decolonise our minds and refrain from the "fear narrative" across all levels? Can we commit to stop celebrating violence in all possible narratives? If not, can there be a change until we shed old habits and work on our sense of responsible citizenship, moral values, and integrity? Are we ready to stop discriminating based on gender, class, and caste, responding to the movement's call for an end to discrimination? Will we refrain from oppressing the marginalised? Will society commit to ending patriarchy? Can we commit to ending abuse due to structural causes as well as child abuse, child marriage, domestic violence, harassment, and sexual abuse perpetrated by individuals in both private and public spaces? Would this be possible in a society where 51 percent of girls in the age group of 15-18 years in Bangladesh are still being married off? One way to address these will be by taking legal measures and bringing systemic change. However, these efforts will fail if we do not work to end socially acceptable harmful practices, sustained by society. Arguments put forward for harmful practices have always been about the safety and security of the girls and women in society. Did anyone ask if they need protectors or would rather opt for the end of male dominance? Are we ready to acknowledge the toxic traits of the oppressors that have inadvertently infected everyone even though the nation collectively hate them? I, however, understand that patriarchy and oppression by the powerful will take time to wear off. Also, are we willing to restrain from arrogance and self-promotion, self-interest, and power aggrandisement? Experts have repeatedly stated that one of the reasons for the fall of the autocrat is her arrogance that grew from a sense of power over others and intolerance to dissent. Are we ready not to impose our beliefs and thoughts on others and instead work on universal values? Are we ready to rise above our comfort zones and sit at the same table with those with opposing views to be truly inclusive? Can we agree not to force our decisions on children, and respect women and girls? Will we commit not to grab power, business, land, and property? Youth should be aware when the elders try to rationalise these practices as something necessary to secure their future.

damage. In addition to her activism, Dulali engages in organic farming and fishing, as she prefers not to buy from the market. A mother of two, Dulali is grateful for the support of her family in her activism.

Dulali now plans to share the knowledge and experiences she gained in Baku with her community. She believes this will inspire others to work more for the betterment of the community.

**“When world leaders listen to our suffering, it creates an impact. They produce carbon, and we suffer. If they want, they can alleviate our suffering. I delivered a speech there and told them that I am not alone in this suffering — it's the entire country of Bangladesh that suffers. They must compensate us. I told them this. she said. ”**

## Kalapara's Dulali Begum Takes Her Climate Fight to COP29



Kalapara, one of the most climate-vulnerable zones in Bangladesh, has been repeatedly struck by various natural disasters, from Cyclone Sidr to the recent Remal. Dulali Begum is one of the many of its residents continuously fighting against these devastating natural events. Renowned in her community, not only for being a former elected member of the Tiakhali union parishad in Kalapara, Patuakhali, but also for her environmental and social activism, Dulali Begum is widely recognised more for her activism than her political career. This is evident by her membership in various organisations, including the Kalapara Environment and Public Safety Forum, the Women's Development Forum of Kalapara upazila, and the Madhya Tiakhali Community Clinic Committee,



## Doreen Village: Localisation for Community Resilience

Doreen Village is set in the cradle of North Channel Island in Faridpur district, tells the story of resilience and transformation capturing people's enduring spirit and the transformative power of collective action. The island which relied on agriculture faced frequent floods eroding rivers, and heavy rainfall that escalated from 2002 onwards endangering the livelihoods of the marginalised farmers in the village. AAB partnered with the community and tried to work in the North Channel Island to address some of the climate challenges through awareness campaigns, agricultural innovations, and infrastructure improvements. Fortunately, in partnership with ActionAid UK colleagues, we found a patron, Doreen Anderson, for the North Channel village. Ms. Anderson contributed a handsome sum for the villagers. The cluster project equipped each household with a sturdy shelter, livestock, sanitation facilities, and access to clean water. and gradually brought a new life to the community in recognition, the villagers named the village after her. Nobiron Nesa and Shohid Molla, wife and

husband, worked with ActionAid Bangladesh to develop along with 22 other households in the village to try and develop Doreen Village. They received a sanitary latrine, solar power, and a tubewell. They leased out their land, planted crops, and took care of their small livestock. Their efforts paid off and their hard work and determination resulted into a thriving agricultural enterprise that lifted them out of poverty. Their children received education, graduated with higher

secondary certificates, and eventually secured their jobs abroad. The ActionAid team visited the village recently and was pleased to see the transformation of the community. Nobiron reflected on their journey of transformation in the village and how, from being agricultural workers on others' land, they were now in a position to lease out their lands to others. She mentioned that, along with other members of the community, the agricultural ventures were thriving. Nazma Begum, a person with special needs due to physical challenges, overcame numerous hurdles while navigating through life's complexities. However, with AAB's support, Nazma's life improved significantly when she was equipped with resources and opportunities. She made her modest home, ran a poultry farm, and with the support of her sewing machine generated income for herself. Today, two of her children have gone back to resume their education and can dare to dream. Visible in the North Channel Island, improved communication infrastructure has emerged as a key driver of progress, transforming the village into a dynamic hub for cooperation and business. What began with 23 families and their members, spread throughout the entire community. Many of the children who were sponsored under this project are now successful educators, entrepreneurs, and community members. ActionAid Bangladesh and Amra Kaj Kori (AKK), together with the resilient community, today now celebrate a ground-breaking transformation achieved through tireless advocacy and strategic policy initiative.

## Patuakhali Water Museum Showcases Riverine Bangladesh



The museum, situated in Pakhimara village of Nilganj union of Patuakhali Upazila, has a collection of water extracted from 87 rivers from Bangladesh and other international rivers in transparent glass jars. It also holds the short history of those rivers.

The countless rivers crisscrossing the landscape of Bangladesh are said to be its lifeblood, and almost every human settlement in this low-lying delta since ancient times has taken hold and grown along rivers.

Their impact on the socio-economic sphere, and on its culture, can never be overlooked. Right down to the courtesy of acknowledging each river or tributary by its gender, as gleaned from its name. The country is also home to countless beels, and the haors and baors in the country's northern half are unique ecosystems known for their astonishingly rich biodiversity and further entrenching its people's relationship with water, the source of all life in the universe.

As if to cement the depth and importance of the special relationship, Bangladesh also holds the distinction of hosting the first museum in Asia that is dedicated to water.

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Patuakhali Upazila, has a collection of water extracted from 87 rivers from Bangladesh and other international rivers in transparent glass jars. It also holds the short history of those rivers.

Established on December 29, 2014, by Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB), the museum is currently run by Kalapara Coastal Public Welfare Association with support from Avas, a private development organisation.

The premises feature a wooden boat set on sand with two wood sculptures of Ghazal fishes sitting on the base of the boat. The entire exhibition space across two floors of a tin-shed amounts to just 500 square feet, but in that you get the water samples, various photographs and fishing equipment to showcase the traditional



water-dependent culture of the Bengal region.

Notable of these are fishnets, jhanki net, chai, sails, crab hunting tool, clay-made bowls, pots, utensils, and bamboo baskets, etc. The walls of the museum have been decorated with pictures of canals and rivers, fish of different species, fishermen and potters, as well as scenes of coastal people's livelihoods.

The Water Museum contains information on the history of the 700

rivers of Bangladesh alongside several photographs depicting adverse reactions to the environment due to climate change. It also holds detailed information about 57 transborder rivers of the country.

The museum is slowly gaining the attention of tourists heading to Kuakata sea beach as it sees a crowd of 150-200 visitors per day on average.

One of them, Rifat, said he strayed from his tour plan and made time after hearing about this museum from the locals.

"They told me it was one of the tourist spots before visiting the beach so I decided to take a look and I must say I'm not disappointed," he told UNB.

Rifat also mentioned that the museum needs to be visited for everyone to understand the importance of rivers.

According to Action Aid Bangladesh sources, the establishment of the museum has evolved to counter the lack of adequate initiatives to protect the rivers across South Asian nations as the bilateral treaties and government policies on water management do not look at water from a holistic point of view.

They intend to uphold the issue of rivers and their water outside political bias and encourage re-imagining river from a humane and ecological point of view.

Officials in charge of the water museum said that after the museum was established, the arrival of tourists is increasing day by day.

Avas Executive Director Rahima Sultana Kajal told UNB the rivers are endangered and coastal people are among the most affected. "We have to take initiatives now to protect water resources. And that's why we have to be aware. That is why this water museum was built to spread the awareness," she said.

She also suggested that if the government moved the water museum to Kuakata on their own initiative the number of visitors would increase. "People from all walks of life will be able to gain knowledge about rivers and value their contributions," she added.

The museum is open from 10 am to 7 pm six days a week, being closed on Tuesday. The fee for the visitors has been fixed at only Tk 10.

### Child Rights Week 2024

## ActionAid Calls for A New Bangladesh for Children



It is time for us to collectively work towards building a brighter future for our children. We must take concrete steps at the national and global level to ensure quality and inclusive education for children and create a new, child-friendly Bangladesh free from discrimination. Children's opinions must be valued, and their active participation in policy-making must be ensured. These suggestions were made at an event organised by ActionAid Bangladesh to celebrate Child Rights Week 2024, held at an auditorium in

Agargaon today (17 October). The event, held under the theme 'Shono Agamir Kotha (Listen to the Future)', saw the enthusiastic participation of nearly 200 children. Children raised important demands and aspirations for their physical and mental development through a memorandum. They called for the active cooperation of all stakeholders to ensure the rights of children in Bangladesh and their overall development. A panel discussion moderated by Farah Kabir was attended by officials from the Ministry of Women

and Children Affairs, representatives of national and international organisations, academia, government and non-governmental development organisations, and child rights experts. The discussion focused on the responsibilities of the state, society, institutions, and individuals in ensuring the well-being, protection, and fundamental rights of children. The event opened with performances by the children, which included songs, dramas, and dances focusing on social issues such as child rights, child abuse, and protection. The guests also visited an exhibition of art and craft works created by children.



## 12th AGM of AAIBS held ActionAid Approves 6th Country Strategy Paper

The 12th Annual General Meeting of ActionAid International Bangladesh Society (AAIBS) was held in hybrid mode in May 2024. Members of the General Assembly and Executive Board joined the AGM physically in Dhaka and virtually from overseas.

The Board welcomed a newly elected executive member, and two General Assembly members. Fahmeeda Wahab was elected as a member of the executive board, Zarin Zeba Khan and Farhadur Reza were elected as general assembly members. "The new members of ActionAid International Bangladesh Society are integral part of the Board. They will play a critical role for achieving the mission, vision and values of ActionAid and strengthen the management of society with contribution" said Ibrahim Khalil Al-Zayed the chairperson of the ActionAid International Bangladesh Society (AAIBS). Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, and the Ex-Officio Secretary of the AAIBS Executive Board expressed appreciation for the contributions of the Executive Board and the General Assembly Members in fostering strong governance and accountability. The General Assembly Members approved the Annual Audit Report 2023 during the AGM. Additionally last

### 8th Urban Dialogue – 2024

## Call for Timely Master Plan for Sustainable Urban Development

Unplanned initiatives, lack of autonomy, transparency and accountability are major obstacles when it comes to transitioning least developed countries (LDCs). For inclusivity and safety of Dhaka residents, a master plan should be developed to ensure sustainable urbanisation. The demand was made at a session of the 8th Urban Dialogue held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University in May 2024.

The 8th Urban Dialogue-2024 dialogue was jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Science and Climate Resilience of DU, the Urban INGO Forum and a consortium of 20 international non-governmental development organisations.

The parallel session was jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and United Purpose with the theme 'Private Sector in

Resilience Urban Development Towards LDC Graduation'. The session discussed the private sector's contribution to the post-LDC urban development, challenges, and actions.

A total of six recommendations were made at the session – ensuring digital and smart monitoring of inclusive basic urban services, proper implementation of laws for planned and sustainable urbanisation, preparing master plan for village and cities, planning housing projects at the marginal level in view of decentralised industrialisation, planned and safe rehabilitation, stopping unplanned evictions, and providing job or service-based training to urban people

year's major activities and achievements were discussed, and the country strategy paper VI was approved at the meeting. The meeting ended with a condemnation for the ongoing inhumane attacks in Palestine and call for an immediate ceasefire.





### Adviser Calls for Equitable Climate Finance and Strong Adaptation Strategies Ahead of COP29

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change attended a seminar titled 'Road to Baku: COP29 - Position of CSOs in Bangladesh on Climate Change' held at the Department of Environment in Dhaka in October, 2024. She emphasised that climate finance, adaptation, and mitigation strategies must be fair and prioritize the most vulnerable populations. "The promise of providing \$100 billion to address the international funding crisis should be increased. While contributions from developed countries may resolve some financial issues, true climate justice will still remain elusive." Syeda Rizwana reiterated that Bangladesh will maintain a firm stance on limiting global temperature rise to within 1.5 degrees Celsius. As Bangladesh prepares for COP29 in Baku, she emphasised the critical role of civil society in shaping the country's climate policies.

Dr Abdul Hamid, Director General, Department of Environment; Dr SM Munjurul Hannan Khan, Executive Director, NACOM; and Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh also spoke at the event.

The seminar gathered representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs), climate activists, and policy experts, aiming to establish a unified position for Bangladesh ahead of the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan.



### ActionAid Calls for Urgent Climate Finance from Wealthy Nations to Support Global South

At the COP29 opening ceremony in November, ActionAid urged wealthy, high-emission countries in the Global North to increase climate financing to the Global South. The organization emphasized that without adequate funds for adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage, climate goals will be unachievable. ActionAid's Global Climate Justice lead, Teresa Anderson, said, "COP29 is about the new climate finance goal to support climate action in the Global South. Without finance, any talk of climate action remains just that – talk. If we're serious about climate action, we have to fund it." She critiqued the disparity in spending, noting that in 2022, developed countries provided only \$28-35 billion in climate grants to the Global South—less than the \$71 billion spent globally on ice cream that year. "We can't prevent a planetary crisis by spending more on ice cream than on climate finance," Anderson claimed. Bangladeshi community member Mosammat Dulali shared her experience of increasing climate disasters, recounting how recent years, particularly 2024, saw unprecedented storms, causing extensive losses in lives, homes, and livelihoods in Bangladesh. She highlighted the severe impacts of rising salinity and changing weather, which are damaging crops and fish supplies, worsening food insecurity. "We need global action now to address these climate disasters. If this continues, there may not be a community left to protect," Dulali warned.



### Call to Increase Investment in Renewable Energy in Global South

Speakers at the UN's annual climate change conference in Baku, Azerbaijan have urged the countries to increase investment in renewable energy in the Global South. The call was made during a session titled 'Just Energy Transition in the Global South: Challenges for Tripling Renewable Energy by 2030' in November. The session was jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, the Just Energy Transition Network Bangladesh (JETnet-BD), CLEAN, and the South Asia Just Transition Alliance (SAJTA). Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, moderated the session. The speakers observed that the countries in the Global South have fallen significantly behind in comparison to their Global North counterparts in the transition to renewable energy. This disparity stems from various factors, including limited financial resources, technological barriers, and weak policy frameworks. Abul Kalam Azad, Manager of the Just Energy Transition Team, delivered the keynote address, shedding light on the inequities in the energy sector in Global South countries. He proposed actionable solutions to achieve a fair, green, and sustainable energy transition. The session explored a range of impediments to energy transition in the Global South, including limited financing and technological constraints. Panelists emphasised the importance of prioritising vulnerable communities and ensuring equitable access to green energy for all. Speakers highlighted that carbon offsets remain a significant challenge in combating climate change.



### Only Money Will Make the COPs Go Round

As delegates from across the world gathered in Baku to agree a new global climate finance goal on the first day of the annual climate conference, experts and climate activists said the Global North (developed world, mostly) has a legal and moral obligation to compensate the developing states for the damage it has caused to the climate over the decades. As COP29 commenced in Azerbaijan's capital in November, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell agreed it is a tough task to evolve consensus. In his opening remarks, he said, "In tough times against difficult tasks, I don't go in for hopes and dreams. What inspires me is human ingenuity and determination. Our ability to get knocked down and to get up again over and over again until we accomplish our goals." Speakers at an event organised by ActionAid, however, said that without finance, the talk about climate action will merely remain talk. Global Climate Justice Lead at ActionAid Teresa Anderson said the Global South was already paying the climate cost and the whole point of the NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal) was to finally get the Global North to contribute properly for the damage it caused. She called out the wealthy nations for turning this crisis "into an investment framework". Mosammat Dulali, a community member from Bangladesh, said this year alone there were four cyclones, adding that people were living in a state of constant fear, never knowing what disaster the future will bring. "We cannot face this crisis alone," she said, adding that they won't be able to sustain in the long run without help from the wealthy nations.



### Call for Finance: Achieving Gender Equality in Climate Action

Experts made the remarks at a roundtable discussion in October titled 'Integrating Gender Equality in Climate Finance Strategies for Bangladesh.' The roundtable, jointly organised by The Business Standard (TBS) in collaboration with Manusher Jonno Foundation and Sweden Sverige, was held at TBS's office in Eskaton Garden, Dhaka. "Despite discussions on gender-responsive budgeting, have we achieved meaningful changes in the past 50 years? The UN Secretary-General warns it may take 150 to 200 years to see true progress, and while Bangladesh has made strides in disaster management, events like the recent Feni flood underscore gaps in anticipation and preparation," said Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh. Integrating sectors like water, health, and climate is essential, and countries most responsible for climate change must take proactive steps by investing in gender-responsive climate funds. Globally, a \$5 trillion annual allocation is needed for effective climate action, yet current contributions fall short, with fossil fuel and military spending dwarfing climate funding. Questions also linger about the proper use of existing funds for emissions reduction. At the upcoming COP-29 conference, Bangladesh will advocate for \$1 trillion in core public funding. However, political leaders often make ambitious promises without follow-through. With a new government in Bangladesh that has a more people-centered agenda, there is hope for stronger commitments and effective actions in climate finance and gender equity initiatives. While expectations were high for the previous administration, the current government's unique approach raises fresh hopes for meaningful progress.

### NGOs Urged to Strengthen Vigilance Against Money Laundering

Bangladesh's NGO sector is at high risk from increasing threats of money laundering, according to insights shared at a workshop held in November. With foreign aid often directed toward communities in need, NGOs are increasingly at risk of exploitation by groups seeking to misuse financial channels for criminal activities. The workshop held at a Barishal hotel emphasised that NGOs must adopt rigorous verification and reporting measures to prevent funds from being diverted, particularly given the strategic vulnerabilities in developing regions. Organised by the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) in partnership with ActionAid Bangladesh, Concern Worldwide, and Plan International Bangladesh, the event brought together senior officials from local and international NGOs. Through six specialised sessions, the workshop highlighted the importance of following the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Anti-Terrorism Act, and other guidelines to safeguard the sector. Md Mostaqur Rahman, director of BFIU, inaugurated the workshop as chief guest. The workshop's opening ceremony was presided over by Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh. Other guests included Md Anwar Hossain, director of the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), Azahar Ali, assistant country director of Concern Worldwide, and Mamun Ur Rashid, risk & compliance Advisor at Plan International Bangladesh. Md Rafiqul Islam, Head of Finance and Administration at ActionAid Bangladesh delivered the welcome address.

### International Women's Day Celebration Increased Investment in Women's Empowerment

ActionAid Bangladesh has called for greater investment to expedite the empowerment of women in the country, enhancing their rights and opportunities. The call to action came in March during a program held at the Bangladesh Tourism Corporation auditorium in Dhaka to observe International Women's Day 2024. The program highlighted the achievements of three women who were awarded the "Nasreen Smriti Padak

the importance of this theme in his address. The day's events included an art camp, a prize distribution ceremony, and a panel discussion titled 'Celebrating Women Leadership: Are We Investing Enough?'. Experts from diverse fields participated in the discussion, focusing on the current situation, challenges, and opportunities for advancing women's equal rights and opportunities through increased investment.



2024" in recognition of their exceptional contributions. Emily Hembram was recognised for her efforts in ending sexual harassment, violence, and child marriage; Nasreen Akhter for her leadership in combating climate change crisis and protecting natural resources; and Fahmida Begum for her entrepreneurial spirit. The theme for International Women's Day this year, 'Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Investments for Women' resonated throughout the event. Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, an economist, researcher, and sociologist, emphasised

The session saw participation from Chairperson of ActionAid International Bangladesh Society (AAIBS), Ibrahim Khalil Al-Zayad; Assistant Professor of Law Department of University of Dhaka, Ms. Taslima Yasmin; renowned poet and director, Shamim Azad; and senior consultant and coordinator of the Dermatology Department and Laser Center of Evercare Hospital, Dr. Jasmin Manzoor. Although the overall picture of women's empowerment in the country has progressed, women are still significantly behind in economic development, said the speakers.

### ActionAid Bangladesh launches 16 days Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence

**Dhaka**

**Bicycle Rally**

Dhaka, Bandarban, Naogan, Bagerhat, Kushtia, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Chattogram, Satkhira

25/11/2024 10 am - 12pm

**Rally and Discussion Session**

Robindra Sarobar, Dhaka

25/11/2024 10 am - 12pm

**Cox's Bazar**

**16 Days of Activism Fair**

Laboni beach, Cox's Bazar

25/11/2024 & 26/11/2024 Daylong

**Beach Theatre Festival**

Laboni beach, Cox's Bazar

27/11/2024 4pm

**#NOEXCUSE #STOPGBV**

**Cultural Programme**

Laboni beach, Cox's Bazar

26/11/2024 Daylong

**Football Match & Martial Art Display**

Bir Srestho Ruhul Amin stadium, Cox's Bazar

30/11/2024 3pm

RRP Success Stories on Women Empowerment and Protection

NO EXCUSE

Make Cyberspace Safe for Women and Children

### Empowering Women to Ensure Sustainable Renewable Energy

Although the participation of women in renewable energy sector has increased significantly at the global level and in Bangladesh, gender inequality in the form of employment and inclusion still exists at the national policy-making level. There is no alternative to empowering women in the renewable energy sector to achieve the target set by the government to generate 40 percent of electricity from renewable sources by

2041 in order to ensure a sustainable energy sector. The call was made at a webinar titled 'Empowering Women in Renewable Energy: A Feminist Perspective from Bangladesh and Beyond' organised by ActionAid Bangladesh in May. Ensuring sustainable renewable energy in the country, encouraging women in STEM education and sector to establish women's empowerment and equal rights, providing an environment for women's leadership at the grassroots level, prioritising women's skill development in the work plan, and ensuring gender equality, government policies should be made or amended.

Fund Our Future Campaign Launched

# Experts: COP29 Should Set \$5 Trillion Annual Climate Finance Target

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said: "This report exposes how fossil fuel and industrial agriculture corporations are driving our climate crisis. We must ensure accountability and transparency. We must demand justice and continue our fight collectively."

Ahmed Zubaer, joint director of Bangladesh Bank, said: "We need to think about viable alternatives to green energy. We get funding, but the process is a bit complicated. It has to be made easier. We have to focus more on climate adaptation than climate impact mitigation."

Morshed Millat, former Director of Bangladesh Bank's sustainability finance department, said: "Transparency is more important than using climate funds. Policies in the context of South Asia must be practiced at the field level."

Anwar Farooq, former senior secretary, Agriculture Ministry, said: "Other sources of renewable energy should be increased to optimise the availability of

energy. At the same time, the amount of land is decreasing relative to our population. The green agricultural transition should be accompanied by a plan to maximize the use of land by reducing the use of harmful fertilizers and increasing the use of organic fertilizers."

Florian Höllen, counsellor head, German Development Cooperation, German Embassy Dhaka, said: "Bangladesh's energy sector needs to be restructured. The government should take initiatives to transition to green energy in such a way that people show interest in it. The government can also think about how the fossil fuel-generating power plants in Bangladesh can be converted into renewable energy and biogas plants."

Sabbir Hossain, chief operating officer of Brac Bank, said: "80% of the solar panels used on the roofs of houses in Dhaka have become ineffective. But it is not being reviewed. Now is the time to reevaluate and plan solar differently." Ibrahim Khalil Al-Zayad, chairperson of



## This Report Exposes How Fossil Fuel and Industrial Agriculture Corporations Are Driving Our Climate Crisis.

ActionAid International Bangladesh Society, said: "There is an opportunity now to make a new inclusive and coordinated policy on energy. We need to increase research on climate change, green energy and renewable energy. We need to find new ways to solve the energy problem."

The research found that between 2016 (when the Paris Agreement was signed) and 2023, the fossil fuel sector received an average of \$438.6 billion annually in public subsidies from the Global South. The industrial agriculture sector benefited from an average of \$238 billion per year during the same period. The report called for an end to fossil fuel financing, increased investment in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture, and for public funds to be redirected towards climate solutions that protect people's rights to food, energy, and livelihoods. It urged national and regional governments to regulate the banking and finance sectors to stop financing fossil fuel expansion.

Fund Our Future Campaign Launched

## Building a Sustainable Agriculture System to Deal with Drought is a Matter of Urgency

As the number of rivers in the country is decreasing at an alarming rate, water bodies are eroding and becoming unusable. Groundwater is receding, land pollution is increasing and the entire country is at risk of drought. As a result, the country's agricultural system is being threatened. In such a situation, sustainable agricultural practices are needed for drought resilience. Realistic and well-planned projects should be implemented, considering the needs of marginalised farmers and communities. Only then, can the country's land, farmers, agriculture and environment be saved. The speakers made the remarks at a seminar titled 'Sustainable Agricultural

Practices for Drought Resilience' held at the Directorate of Services in June 2024. The event was jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and Nature Conservation Management (NACOM) and co-hosted by Right to Food Bangladesh, Food Security Network, Kendriya Krishi Maitri and Bangladesh Organic Agriculture Network (BOAN).

Through this seminar, the dynamics of food security and the state of agriculture under the impact of drought in the country were discussed and reviewed. Director General, Department of Environment Dr. Abdul Hamid presided over the function.



## Solidarity With Palestine

ActionAid has a significant history of solidarity with Palestinians in their demands for fundamental human rights, freedoms, and access to basic services. ActionAid has been working in the OPT since 1993 providing crucial support through humanitarian and long-term programmes in the West Bank and Gaza. In October 2023, ActionAid took immediate action in response to the rapidly escalating violence and humanitarian crisis in Gaza because of Israel's military action which affected 2.2 million civilian population, majority women and children. ActionAid International formed a Palestine Advocacy Group to develop an International Influencing Strategy and take critical action to secure political, financial, and social support, to pressure key actors to call for an urgent ceasefire, end violence towards civilians and their forced displacement, and deliver lifesaving humanitarian assistance. In line with ActionAid Bangladesh's long-standing position on the

issue the Country Director and Senior Management joined in the Federation's efforts. This included providing dedicated staff to the Palestine Advocacy Group to support federation-wide and country specific advocacy and campaigns, based on the latest situation in Gaza, and analysing national, regional, and global positioning and movements. ActionAid Bangladesh has also supported National Solidarity events and supported the strong position on the issue by the Bangladesh Government. To address the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, ActionAid has been raising funds through a global Gaza Crisis Appeal and working with local partners to deliver food and other critical assistance to families in Gaza.



## Child Development Centre: Shishu Bikash Kendra

Child Development Centres, known as SBKs, are vital of LRP for children's growth and learning during their early years. These centres provide a nurturing environment where children can develop trust, confidence, and essential skills. They focus on holistic development, addressing health, nutrition, education, and psychosocial needs within the family and community context. Parents or caregivers play a crucial role in a child's development and SBKs emphasise their involvement. Children's rights, as outlined in 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are also taught in these programme, ensuring children are respected, protected, and educated about their rights. ActionAid Bangladesh runs SBKs as part of their Child Sponsorship Programme, benefitting thousands of children, particularly those from marginalised communities. These centres offer activities for psychosocial development and serve as spaces for education, cultural learning, and advocacy for child rights.

# ActionAid Bangladesh in Partnership with Children

Bangladesh is vulnerable to both disasters and climate change and ranked the seventh extreme disaster risk-prone country in the world. This has an adverse and disproportionate impact on children, who frequently face extreme weather conditions. One in three children, approximately 20 million face significant climate threats, with 12 million at risk from fatal flooding near rivers and 4.5 million affected by strong cyclones in coastal areas. ActionAid Bangladesh conducted a survey in January 2023 in eight districts: Satkhira, Gaibandha, Dinajpur, Sunamganj, Patuakhali, Kurigram, Bandarban, and Chittagong to understand how climate change affects children in these districts. Access to education, salinity and water crisis, disruption in livelihood in areas highly dependent on agricultural and health issues have been cited as major impacts. Unfortunately, rural communities, often fail to grasp the importance of climate change awareness, and educational institutions neglect to raise awareness among students. We believe that engagement of children and youth in climate justice initiatives is vital in realising their rights by empowering them as agents of change to foster a sustainable and resilient future. By instilling a sense of responsibility for the planet in children, we are grooming a future generation better equipped to

tackle climate issues. As a part of the Global Climate Justice Campaign, awareness about the impact of climate change among approximately 18,000 children across 11 districts in Bangladesh has been increased. ActionAid Bangladesh also hosted an event titled "Impact of Climate Crisis on Children," emphasising children as the cornerstone of a sustainable future. Distinguished subject matter experts, thought leaders, children, and activists in the field of climate change participated, offering valuable insights and recommendations for understanding the crisis and implementing sustainable solutions. A memorandum was presented to the honourable Minister of the Ministry of Planning of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, as well as to the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Dhaka. This memorandum highlighted various demands regarding the impacts of climate change on children and proposed steps for mitigation. 30,000 children were involved in awareness discussions, distributing saplings and seeds, organising workshops with child



forums to address plastic usage and reduce environmental pollution, providing leadership training for climate action, conducting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and climate action training through demonstrations and simulations, holding sessions on climate change and disaster preparedness, raising awareness about climate change's impact on agriculture and adaptation techniques, and offering climate change education training to 150 teachers.

Media Impressions: **170 million**

**Our Media Footprint 2024**  
Total Media Coverage: 818

- Online Media: 632
- Print Media: 148
- Electronic Media: 69
- International Media: 82
- Special Supplement: 4
- Op-ed: 20