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Climate Change and Sustainable Development

An LKI Roundtable with H.E. Md. Shahidul Haque
Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh

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August 2017

***Myra Sivaloganathan** was a Global Associate at Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI) in Colombo. These *Takeaways* summarise the insights and discussion at a recent LKI event. They are not the views of the reporting author or the institutional views of LKI, and are not a complete report of the event.

Three key takeaways from the round table discussion with Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque -

1. Climate change has resulted in a loss of 400,000 lives per year, and USD one trillion in damage over the last two decades.
 2. Bangladesh has established a National Climate Change Fund of USD 400 million, and spends 1% of its GDP a year on measures to address climate change.
 3. Bangladesh prefers local funding to global financing mechanisms, and hopes to maximise access to affordable, energy-efficient technologies.
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Introduction

- H.E. Md. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, addressed a Foreign Policy Round Table at LKI on “Sustainable Development and Climate Change: Perspectives from Bangladesh” on 29 August 2017.
- The roundtable was attended by the High Commissioner of Bangladesh and the Ambassadors of Brazil and Thailand; representatives from other diplomatic missions, the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister’s Office, the World Bank, and the UNDP; and representatives of nonprofits and think tanks.
- The roundtable was moderated by Dr. Dinusha Panditaratne, Executive Director of LKI.

Takeaways from H.E. Md. Shahidul Haque’s Presentation:

Climate Change and Economics

- Between 1998 and 2009, [Bangladesh lost 5.9% of its GDP](#) due to severe storms attributed to climate change.
- If sea levels rise as predicted, at least [2% of the GDP](#) of member countries of the [Climate Vulnerable Forum](#) (including Bangladesh) will disappear.

Adaptation and Mitigation in Bangladesh

- Adaptation measures for Bangladesh are estimated to cost [USD 127 million per year](#).
- If these adaptation measures are not pursued, annual losses attributable to climate change could rise to 3% of Bangladesh’s GDP (Bangladesh’s GDP in 2016 was approximately [USD 221 billion](#)).
- In 2009, Bangladesh mobilised [USD 400 million to establish the National Climate Change Fund](#). Bangladesh also finalised and adopted a climate change strategy and action plan that year.

Embracing a Future of Green Growth

- In 2007, Bangladesh has formulated a [National Implementation Plan](#) to counter climate change, focusing on agriculture, fisheries, livestock, health, climate-resilient infrastructure, disaster management, and biodiversity.
- Bangladesh’s [Intended Nationally Determined Contributions](#) (intended policies and actions to fulfill the aims of the Paris Agreement) are to reduce GHG emissions in power, transport, and industrial sectors conditionally by 15%, and unconditionally by 5% from ‘business as usual’ levels, by 2030.

- Bangladesh hopes to increasingly incorporate affordable, accessible, energy-efficient technologies into communities. For example, Bangladesh hopes to access the [LDC technology bank](#) in Turkey to facilitate technology transfers on voluntary and mutually agreed upon terms.

Key Points from the Round Table Discussion:

Opportunities from Climate Change

- Bangladesh's government has begun investing in solar energy.
- Bangladesh has begun [investing in genome sequencing](#), in order to develop heat-resistant and flood-resilient seeds.
- A kilogram of rice, which traditionally requires 3500 litres of water, is [now being produced with 1800](#) litres; this will have a significant impact on water management and GDP.

Climate Change Financing in South Asia

- Bangladesh prefers to work with local NGOs over global financing mechanisms such as the [Global Climate Fund](#).
- Bangladesh has engaged with The Netherlands on climate-change related development since 1965, and will collaboratively manage its coastal areas under [the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100](#).
- Bangladesh hopes to pursue trilateral climate change funding with Nepal and India, given that floods in the three nations occur concomitantly and impact one another.

Climate Change and Migration

- The relationship between climate change and migration is inadequately addressed in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- To address this relationship, [109 countries](#) of the [Nansen Initiative](#) have adopted an [action plan](#) and applied a [platform on disaster displacement](#). The Nansen Initiative is a consultative process led by Norway and Switzerland to address the needs of displaced persons in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change.
- Bangladesh has proposed addressing external displacement due to environmental factors (earthquakes, floods, climate change etc.) as a migration issue, which the Secretary General should raise in a zero draft at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly.

Suggested Readings:

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Tirpak, D., Brown, L. and Ronquillo-Ballesteros, A. (2017). *Monitoring Climate Finance in Developing Countries: Challenges and Next Steps*. World Resources Institute. [Online] Available at: http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/wri13_monitoringclimate_final_web.pdf [Accessed 1 September 2017].

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World Bank. (2017). *Bangladesh: Building Resilience to Climate Change*. The World Bank Group. [Online] Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/10/07/bangladesh-building-resilience-to-climate-change> [Accessed 1 September 2017].

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