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Bangladesh may have more tragic flood than Asia's recent one: World Vision warns

BANGKOK, Oct 6 (BSS)- An increase in the frequency or intensity of floods would be catastrophic in several places around the world and no country is more vulnerable than Bangladesh in terms of flood as a physical consequence of warmer atmosphere.

Already millions of people in Bangladesh were displaced in the past few years due to flood in Bangladesh where over 17 million people live at an elevation of less than 3 ft (1 m) above sea level and millions inhabit on the flat banks of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers.

“So increased flooding might have tragic results in Bangladesh in coming days than any other Asian nation, including China, Vietnam and Philippines and India, now having flood experience,” said Madeleen Helmer, head of Red Crescent Climate Center.

Ms Madeleen was talking to media fellows arrived here from the countries vulnerable to climate change to cover UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sponsored climate negotiation meeting following launching of a World Vision report on “Reduce Risk and Raise Resilience” at UNESCAP Building here today.

World Vision's director of Risk Reduction and Community Resilience Richard Rumsey launched the new report saying the typhoons and floods that devastated parts of Asia last week was a '60-day wake-up call' to world leaders ahead of Copenhagen climate summit to devise a global strategy to address climate change.

He said an increase in the frequency and intensity of floods would be catastrophic in several places around the world in the coming days with increase average rainfall.

The World Vision said over the last 30 years the wind speed and duration of tropical cyclones has increased by 70 percent and destructive capacity of the tropical storms increased by 60 percent from 1958 to 2001.

They called on developed countries to commit to serious emission reduction target and significant public finance for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries in addition to current aid pledge.

World Vision's Chief Economist and Climate Change Policy Director Brett Parris said the wealthy developing countries also need to see more ambitious emission reduction target.

The report said the international humanitarian agencies are now being stretched to respond to the alarming rise in climate-related disasters than development. Potential economic benefit of disaster prevention work is being lost to the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, he said.

Brett Parris said expenditure on emergency response increased significantly with rise of natural disasters. In 1998, the report said the World Vision spent only 15 percent of its overall expenditure for relief activities, but after ten years it accounted for 35 percent.

Rumsey said they are finding practical solutions of the emergency response to natural disasters with case studies in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines and Thailand.

Laying importance on developed countries' commitment for significant fund for disaster reduction, he said one dollar spent on disaster risk reduction activities can save nearly seven dollars in emergency response funds.

Only a fair, just and equitable decision that can be made in Copenhagen is a commitment to help the poor vulnerable countries for risk reduction and adapt to and mitigate the shocks of climate change. Otherwise, it would a dangerous failure to protect the right of our children, he said.