



## **COP26 CATALYST FOR CLIMATE ACTION**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Capacity-building Hub COP26 Catalyst for Climate Action Day**

#### **ICCCAD Adaptation Action Event Summary**

Bangladesh may be one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, but experiencing the effects over the decades, they have adapted strongly and have emerged as a strong resilient nation. Very early on they took important steps regarding policy and implementation: Bangladesh was one of the first countries to do the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA), strongly supported by the Cabinet (which is still going, showing climate change is truly a non-partisan issue) in implementing Climate Projects which were self-funded, and carried out using only local expertise.

There is a distinction between awareness of climate change, and knowledge of solutions, which requires critical analysis. The average population have become highly aware, and more importantly, highly knowledgeable in terms of the capacity to adapt to climate change. This can be shown by rice research scientists in Bangladesh engineering saline-tolerant varieties of rice, of which millions of hectares are currently being grown. Also, drinking water becomes saline in some parts, so what they do during the wet season is to harvest rainwater and use it in the dry season.

Bangladesh used to be vulnerable, now they are being resilient, and subsequently prosperous. They are developing the first “climate prosperity plan”, which is not just for planning and adapting for climate change, but prospering despite it. They are already quite strong in locally led adaptation, on a grassroots level, understanding what to do. The examples provided are small compared to the many others that are being put in place – Bangladesh is going up the capacity building ladder faster than any other country. This is why it is important for representatives from other countries to visit and learn from Bangladesh, because the world tomorrow will face is what they are facing today in terms of climate. Also, Bangladesh is currently allocating 8% of the national budget to fight climate change. No other country can match that yet.

There is a mindset that capacity-building is an exchange from Global North-South. However, for adaptation to climate change, Bangladesh can be a role model to the North. This can help them overcome issues they are facing currently, an example being the recent flood in Germany where 150 people lost their lives.





The second speaker focused on the need for local level farmers and workers to have a louder voice in some respects, despite them bearing the brunt of climate change, along with being the frontline in terms of adaptation as well. Expectations were not high though, regarding policy and finance at COP26, but their representation was important.

There are disagreements with scientists and policymakers with farmers at the field level. Adaptation is already there, no doubt, for example, the crop varieties that were adapted. But there is a lack of voice in forums to give their (local-level) knowledge/opinion/stories. An example given was that varieties of crops should be developed to be location-specific, since there are different varieties in different agro-ecological zones, developed according to local climate conditions. Thus, scientists should go to a local level with those specific varieties, with the local people. Then the local people will have ownership of the varieties too, developed locally through their indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices, along with the knowledge of the genetic material – if this is done it will empower the farmers to not rely on external funding anymore. Another important point is that, based on their experience, the “development brokers” – the middlemen between local people and funding – can be difficult to trust since they may have a “hidden agenda”, so there is a need for a new network of more transparent developing partners.