

Project Update: June 2010

The south-west coastal zone is located at the mouth of the world's largest delta which provides a unique environmental feature in Bangladesh. The lands of the region are barely 1 m above mean sea level with a large numbers of interconnected rivers, estuaries and natural environment. The world largest mangrove forest is situated in the region which is rich in natural resources and biodiversity. In the Sundarbans there are about 200 islands, separated by about 400 interconnected tidal rivers, creeks and canals. These rivers and water ways work as the blood circulation system in mangrove Sundarbans as a whole.

Although the south-west coastal zone is regarded as a zone of multiple opportunities, it is also known as a zone of multiple vulnerabilities because of its dynamic geo-physical and hydrological settings. Unsustainable human development activities, conflict among resource users and natural disasters have further increased the management complexity in the region. According to the IPCC (2007), this region is one of the most vulnerable to climate change and its subsequent impact and it is already proved by the past destructive messages we found. Now, scarcity of freshwater resources for agriculture and food security, increased saline front towards lands, degradation of the natural resources (land, water, forest and biodiversity) and conflicts among agriculture and shrimp farming are also to be found as common problems in this zone. Over-exploitation of the natural resources for the last few decades and absence of proper land use planning and management have also made this region more susceptible resource scarceness. Thus, human rights are flagrantly violated in this region we have ever found.

To protect the sensitive environment, human security and development in south-western Bangladesh, it is vital to introduce long sustaining environmentally friendly projects. Although many development projects have already been implemented by the IFI agencies, they ignored the people's choice for their own development strategies and choice. As a result all these development projects failed to understand the real needs of the society. Moreover, most of the projects were just replication of the developed world's projects. That's why the implemented projects were not feasible under the local environmental condition of the south-west coastal zone of Bangladesh. Furthermore, there was no accountability of the donor recommended projects and for their actions. This also harms the democratic process in policy formulation which was a basic error of earlier projects.

For the peoples and environmental safeguard of south-west coastal zone, researchers, activists NGOs and civil society have been conducting peoples' movements. Citizens' March for Conservation of the Coastal Environment (CMCCE) is a result of such human realization in south-west coastal zone of Bangladesh. From the very beginning, peoples' mobilization for nature conservation, conducting advocacy for policy change have been conducting by the forum to raise community voice for enhancing environmental sustainability. CMCCE organized several events such as wetlands day, mangrove day, etc. This common people forum is now gradually improving its status as a pioneer network in the region. In line with the forum activities, CMCCE plan to observe the World Environment Day 2010.

World Environment Day 2010

As a part of continuous activities, CMCCE plan to organize World Environment Day 2010 including local and national NGOs, civil society and professional organizations working on environment issues. With the cooperation and support of the large number of local, regional and national organizations, CMCCE plan to observe the day including rally, exhibition, stalls, brochure, souvenir; video shows discussion and seminars/workshop and cultural function.

CMCCE Member organization: AOSED, BELA, Bhrab River Area Water Partnership, Humanity Watch, Durbar, IDF, IRV, LoCOS, LEADERS, Muktir Alo, NEEDS, NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Paribartan-khulna, PROGOTI, Pothikrit, Rupayan Ranner, SPS, Unnayan Onneshan-The Innovators.

Goal: observing World Environment Day 2010 for strengthening network for conservation of coastal environment.

Objectives:

- Identify the environmental degradation issues in this region and raise the awareness of all stakeholders in respect of the same.
- Create mass awareness and strengthening peoples voice for conservation of the coastal environment
- Strengthen the linkage among GO/NGO/civil society actors and academicians and facilitate their coordinate initiatives.

Rationality: Though the World Environment Day is focused mainly on environmental issues, activists and organizations share opinions on environment, ecology, natural resources, several seminars and workshops. In addition, various NGOs exhibit their promotion materials at the fair.

Major Activities:

1. Press conference.
2. Issue-based seminars/workshop.
3. Cultural functions.
4. Exhibition of promotion materials.
5. Video Documentary.

Description of Activities:

Press conference: The CMCCCE will organize a Press Conference on boat in the Bhairab River on June 4 by means of this planed activities of the committee will be shared.

Issue-based seminars: Issues-based seminars on environment especially on Sundarbans, salinity, shrimp farming, water, river management, CEP and Aila, IFIs, forest management and IPAC will be organised.

Cultural programmes: The cultural team will present issue-based cultural programmes at the inaugural session and at the close of every day including the closing ceremony. Besides cultural programmes highlighting conservation of environment will be performed.

Exhibition of promotion materials: A fair of promotional materials will be held close to the seminar venue of the programme, and the activist organisations will exhibit the promotional materials produced by them on the issues on which they are active.

Closing ceremony: A closing ceremony will be organised at the end of the programme.

Printing and publications: A brochure will be published.

Souvenir: All the documents of the total programme will be compiled and will be published on the eve of World Environment Day 2011 as a souvenir.

Guests of the programme

Talukdar Abdul Khaleq, Mayor, Khulna City Corporation, Khulna, Md. Akbor Hossain, Conservator of Forest, Khulna region, Khulna, Amiya Kumar Ghose, Joint Secretary, Addl. Divisional commissioner, Khulna, Ashok Kumar Biswas, Director, Environment division, Khulna, Md. Abdullaha, Managing director, Khulna, WASA, Khulna, Dr. Dilip Kumar Datta, Head, Environment Science Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna, Professore Meshba Kamal, Dhaka University, Dhaka, Engineer Reba Poul, Executive Secretary, Bangladesh Water Partnership, Jannat-A-Ferdaus, Director, RDC, Nilufer Banu, Advocate, Suprim court, Dhaka, Halima Khatun, Councilor, Khulna, City Corporation, khulna, Hider Gazi Sallauddin Runu, Secretary general, Greater Khulna Development and struggle coordination Committee, Jakia Aktar, executive director, Banaful, Pavel partha, environment researcher, BARCIK, Dhaka, Palash Baral, Director(Program), UBINIG, Ad. Firoz Ahmed, Citizen's leader and convenor, Citizens Manch for Conservation of Coastal Environment.

