



National Environment Policy, Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and Bangladesh

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What is Meant by “Environment” ?

- ❖ Environment means our surroundings, which comprises of land, water and air and other bodies. Environment is affected by the physical properties of these components. It is also affected by the changes in interrelationship prevailing between an among the components ranging from micro-organism to human bodies (ref: section 2 (d), ECA, 1995)



Why is the Environment so Important ?

Our life-support system's is maintained by all the species that make up the biosphere-biodiversity. The survival of all these species are interconnected and dependent on each other. Human being is also a part of this biosphere, extinction of one species is really the extinction of many species and the decline of our life-support system for ourselves and future generations. So, all the components of the environment are equally important for human being as well as for the other species.



What is meant by “Development” ?

- ❖ Development is intended to bring a positive change for human beings and its surroundings. Development may take place by bringing about a change in policy, projects and legislation



“Sustainable Development”

- ❖ Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (ref: Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)



Background of Environment Policy

- ❖ Initiatives for protection of environment in Bangladesh dates back to 1972 when United Nations Conference on Human Environment took place in Stockholm, Sweden.
- ❖ The conference brought leaders of the industrialized and developing nations to chart an Action Plan on Human Environment.
- ❖ Realization of various adverse impacts on environment as evident from water pollution, air pollution, soil degradation, depletion of forest resources, unplanned urbanization, discharge of untreated industrial effluents, etc. and deterioration of environment.
- ❖ Acknowledgement of the integrate linkage of poverty, population pressure, illiteracy, inadequate health care facility, lack of public awareness – have a serious impediment to the environment.
- ❖ Acknowledgement of the need to address these situations in an integrated manner lead to the establishment Ministry of Environment and Forests in 1989 and felt the need for an well defined national environment policy.



Environment Policy 1992

- ❖ Bangladesh National Environment Policy approved in May 1992, sets out the basic framework for environmental action, together with a set of broad sectoral action guidelines.
- ❖ **Key elements of the Environment Policy are :**
 - Maintenance of the ecological balance and overall progress and development of the country through protection and improvement of the environment.
 - Protection of the country against natural disasters.
 - Identification and regulation of all types of activities which pollute and degrade the environment.
 - Ensuring proper Environment Impact Assessment prior to undertaking of industrial and other development projects.
 - Ensuring sustainable use of all natural resources.

Coverage of Environment Policy 1992

Environmental activities encompass all geographical regions and development sectors of the country. As such, policies towards realization of the overall objectives of this Environment Policy are delineated in 15 sectors. These are –

1. Agriculture
2. Industry
3. Health
4. Energy
5. water Development, Flood Control and Irrigation
6. Land
7. Forest, Wild Life and Biodiversity
8. Fisheries and Livestock
9. Food
10. Coastal and Marine Environment
11. Communication and Transportation
12. Housing and urbanization
13. Population
14. Education and public Awareness
15. Science, Technology and Research



The policy recognizes that –

- ❖ Since global and regional environmental pollution and degradation affect the nature, environment and resource base of Bangladesh, it is essential to have coordinated vigilance and undertake necessary action programme to address such issues.
- ❖ It is necessary to undertake activities at local and national level. It is also feasible and essential to ensure improvement of national environment and thus global environment at large, as well as environmentally sound and sustainable use of resource through regional and global cooperation in relevant fields.



Legal Framework of Environment Policy

- ❖ The policy directs to amend all laws and regulations related to protection of environment, conservation of natural resources, and control of environmental pollution and degradation with a view to meet present day's needs without compromising the ability to meet future needs.
- ❖ Frame new laws in all sectors necessary to control activities concerning environmental pollution and degradation.
- ❖ Ensure proper implementation of all relevant laws/regulations and create wide spread public awareness in this regard.
- ❖ Ratify all concerned international laws/conventions/ protocols which Bangladesh considers ratifiable and amend/modify existing national laws/regulations in line with the ratified international laws/conventions/protocols.

Environment Policy and Sustainable Development Linkages

- ❖ The ultimate objective of 'Environment Policy' is to ensure environmentally sound development in all sectors.
- ❖ Thus Environment policy is to provide the basic premise to define the goals of economic and social development in terms of sustainability in the respective sector and in overall national planning.



What are MEAs ?

International instruments that:

- ❖ have a goal of environmental protection
- ❖ are concluded between a large number of states or international organizations as parties
- ❖ concluded in written form
- ❖ governed by international law
- ❖ can be embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments (framework agreements)

Milestones in the evolution of MEAs (cont.)

- ❖ Stockholm Conference on the Human Development (1972):
 - first attempt to address inter-relationships of environment and development at global level
 - adopted first global action plan for environment
 - established the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)
 - accelerated development of modern MEAs: more than 60% of existing MEAs are adopted after Rio



Milestones in the evolution of MEAs (cont.)

- ❖ 1989 : World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) or the “Brundtland Commission” in it’s report titles Our Common Future gave a clarion call for addressing global environmental problems for protecting life on earth.

Milestones in the evolution of MEAs (cont.)

- ❖ 1992 : United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Also known as “Earth Summit” or “Rio Summit”. Following five international documents were signed :
 - UNFCCC
 - CBD
 - Earth Charter
 - Forestry Principles
 - Agenda 21



Major clusters of MEAs

- ❖ MEAs are internationally agreed environmental treaties
- ❖ Some are negotiated on a regional basis and some are global

Main clusters of MEAs are:

- Biodiversity
- atmosphere
- land
- chemicals and hazardous wastes
- regional seas and related issues



MEA Commonalities

- ❖ Shared Goal:
 - Sustainable Development

- ❖ Cross-cutting issues:
 - Air and Water pollution, Land Degradation, Biodiversity and waste management etc.



Strengths of modern MEAs

Strengths:

- Growing commitment to explore synergies
- Increased attention to principles of precaution and prevention



Weaknesses of modern MEAs

Weaknesses:

- Lack of synergies among MEAs
- Inadequate implementation and coordination of MEAs at the national level
- Inadequate compliance and enforcement
- Lack of environmental and performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of MEAs
- Inadequate funding for selected MEAs
- Weak Relationship with other Multinational Agreements. For example- WTO, IPR etc.



Financial mechanisms

- ❖ Regime Budgets
 - MEAs can establish one or more of mandatory or voluntary trust funds, most often administered by the international organizations that provide the Secretariats. Budgets are proposed by Parties and approved by the COPs
- ❖ Development Assistance
 - Funds can be provided via foundations (e.g. UN Foundation), bilateral arrangements, private sector donors and NGOs
- ❖ Other multilateral financing mechanisms
 - Global Environment Facility, The Kyoto Protocol climate-related mechanisms, the World Bank, UNDP, UNEP



MEA Implementation

Mechanisms for Implementing MEAs –

❖ Enacting laws

- enact a domestic law that incorporates what has been agreed upon at the related MEAs
- Many international agreements are not legally binding in nature. However, when provisions of these agreements are incorporated in domestic law, they become legally binding in the country

Bangladesh Position on MEA's

- ❖ It has signed, ratified or accessed a good number of International Conventions, Treaties and Protocols (ICTP's)
- ❖ The major ones include –
 - The Climate Change Convention
 - The Biodiversity Convention
 - Montreal Protocol on the Control of Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer
 - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
 - BASEL Convention
 - RAMSAR
 - CITES
 - Stockholm Convention on the Control of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- ❖ MOEF is the responsible Ministry to undertake national actions under these Conventions & Protocols and also to take part in international meetings and negotiations concerning these ICTP's
- ❖ My presentation on MEAs therefore shall be limited to the abovementioned ICTP's.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992

❖ Basis for Action

- Green House Gases (GHGs) are emitted due to faulty burning of fossil fuel; like petrol, diesel, kerosene, gas, coal, etc. The GHGs are Carbon dioxide, Nitrous Oxide, Methane, Ozone, etc. They cause global warming.
- In view of global warming and concomitant sea level rise, Bangladesh with its low-lying coastal areas is likely to suffer worst economic & rehabilitation problems.
- The IPCC report has mentioned that half a meter sea-level rise will permanently inundate 10.9% of our territory, displacing 5.5 million of our people, Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a World Heritage Site, will be at stake.

Kyoto Protocol to UNFCCC

❖ Control Measures

- Adopted in 1997
- Industrialized countries to reduce GHG emission by 5% compared to 1990 level
- Established flexible mechanism (Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation & Emission Trade) for meeting the reduction target
- 55 countries, including developed countries accounting for 55% of total 1990 Carbon dioxide emission are to ratify to bring it into force
- Expected to be in force soon



Issues of Importance for Bangladesh

❖ NAPA –

- Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA).
- Project undertaken with assistance from GEF.

❖ CDM –

- Establishment National Designated Authority (DNA) and CDM board.
- Initiatives undertaken.

❖ Capacity Building –

- Development of predictive capacity for risk & vulnerability assessment.
- Project undertaken with assistance from DFID



Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992

❖ Basis for Action

- Conserve biodiversity and its sustainable use.
- Ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.
- “Cartegena Protocol on Biosafety” 2000. The Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by transboundary living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.

❖ Initiatives Undertaken

- National Biodiversity conservation plans and strategy is currently under preparation with assistance from GEF. MOEF is also implementing another GEF financed project for preservation of coastal wetland and biodiversity.
- The on-going Sundarban Biodiversity Conservation Project is being reshaped in the light of the real situation of biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism.
- Programmes under the RAMSAR Convention have been undertaken to conserve Tanguar Haor, improve fish resources, create room for the migratory birds and protect overall biodiversity.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992 (Cont.)

❖ Issues of Importance for Bangladesh

- Preparation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).
- Preparation of Bio Safety Framework and Guidelines.

❖ Action Undertaken

- Project undertaken with assistance from GEF to prepare NBSAP.
- Coordinated efforts undertaken in cooperation with Agriculture & Science & Technology Ministry to Prepare Bio Safety Framework and Guidelines.

Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) that deplete Ozone layer

❖ Basis for Action

- To Protect Ozone layer in the Stratosphere which act as shield for mankind and all kinds of flora and fauna from harmful UV rays of the sun.

❖ Global Action

- Protocol enter into force in 1989.
- Control measures include phasing out of all ozone depleting substances in different time frame including CFCs.
- By 2010, the world to be totally free from major Ozone depleting substances including CFCs.

❖ Action in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh has reduced its 60% consumption of ODS through Aerosol Sector phase out.
- Country programme has been prepared for meeting the 2010 deadline.



Basel Convention for Controlling illegal international traffic in toxic and hazardous wastes

❖ Basis for Action

- With weaker regulatory regime, Bangladesh could become the dumping ground or be located in the route of transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.
- Bangladesh therefore needs to take actions under the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous wastes and their disposal (accessed).

❖ Action required

- Develop national policy and regulatory regime to restrict the movement of hazardous wastes through Bangladesh.

❖ Action Undertaken

- Technical assistance has been sought to prepare Rules under Environment Conservation Act 1995.
- A reconnaissance survey has been completed on the generation of hazardous wastes.



United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- Adopted in 1994.
- Mainly to combat desertification in the African countries.
- Have provision for anti-desertification programme in land degraded countries.

❖ Initiatives undertaken

- Project undertaken for preparation National Plan of Action.
- Further projects shall be submitted to the convention secretariat based on the National Plan of Action



Stockholm Convention on the Control of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

- Adopted in 2001.
- Identified 10 persistent organic pollutant chemicals.
- Targets control measures on the use of these substances.

❖ Implication for Bangladesh

- Bangladesh does not produce these chemicals. Few of these restricted chemicals have their limited use in our industries and in public health. These are concern for public health.

❖ Action Undertaken

- Initiated a project with GEF assistance to make a detailed survey on the use and identification of their potential substitutes.

Recent Events that took place

- ❖ **WSSD :**
 - World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 26 August-4 September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa. The summit took stock of developments since the Earth Summit, 1992 and implementation status of Agenda 21. The outcome of the summit was the “Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”.
 - WEHAB initiatives of UN Secretary General 2002 (Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity).
- ❖ **UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – Target for 2015**
 - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
 - Achieve universal primary education
 - Promote gender equity and empower women
 - Reduce child mortality
 - Improve maternal health
 - Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 - Ensure environmental sustainability
 - Develop a global partnership for development

Accomplishments in the Global Forum on ICTP's

- ❖ Bangladesh is currently the Chair for the year 2002-2003 of the ten-member implementation committee of Montreal Protocol
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected Vice President of Seven member CBD bureau in the last COP held in the Hague
- ❖ Role of Bangladesh as an alternate member of the Governing Council of GEF has been activated
- ❖ Bangladesh is currently the Vice Chair of the LDC Expert Group under the UNFCCC and has emerged as the leader of the LDCs in the Climate Change negotiation process and a lead member of Group 77 for negotiations with other groups. It has successfully organized a three day International Workshop at Dhaka last September 2002 on Capacity Building for the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) for the LDCs
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected as the Chairman of the Global Tiger Forum for second time
- ❖ Bangladesh has been elected Vice Chairman of the Conference of Environment Ministers of Islamic Countries in its first conference held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 10-12 June, 2003

MEA's and Capacity Building needs

- ❖ MEA's are the basis of national actions towards addressing global environmental problems. Thus, the success of implementation of the MEAs depend on local actions by respective country.
- ❖ MOEF considers that Capacity Building is a high priority for effective implementation of MEA's in Bangladesh, where national efforts need to be supported and reinforced by international cooperation.
- ❖ Bangladesh like other developing countries & LDCs lack capacities and financial resources in many cases to meet its obligations under different MEA's. MOEF is trying its best to get its due share of funding & technical assistance from GEF and other protocol funds to overcome the challenges faced with.
- ❖ The MOEF considers that Expertise significantly lies within the NGOs and Academic sectors. The Government is always active in tapping these resources whenever required and members of the civil society have been included in the Government delegations.
- ❖ MOEF is also planning to establish a MEA Cell in the Ministry to coordinate the activities on MEA's.



Conclusion

- ❖ Efficient and equitable management of the natural biological resource base and the life support systems, globally, regionally, nationally and locally are the basic principles of our Environment Policy and well as of all MEA's for the safeguard of our planet 'Earth'.
- ❖ We all owe to the future generations for such acts and deeds.

PLEASE REMEMBER :

**WE HAVE NOT INHERITED THIS
EARTH FROM OUR ANCESTORS,
WE HAVE BORROWED IT FROM
OUR CHILDREN !!!**

Thank You