

Study: Bangladesh has green policies but lags in execution

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Dr Atiur Rahman speaks during a session of the fourth annual Gobeshona Conference at Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) on Tuesday, Mehedi Hasan

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According to a study, commissioned by UKAID, Bangladesh is rich in terms of green policies –policies for economic growth that use natural resources in a sustainable manner – but has been poor in their implementation, resulting in slow progress towards sustainability despite millions of dollars in investment.

The research report, titled “Green Growth Diagnostic: Bangladesh,” was presented by environmentalists Remeen Firoz and Salma Islam at a session of the fourth annual Gobeshona Conference at Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) on Tuesday. Transparency International Bangladesh Senior Programme Manager (Climate Finance Governance) M Zakir Hossain Khan moderated the session with former governor of Bangladesh Bank Dr Atiur Rahman in the chair.

Although there were several high level policy documents which reaffirm Bangladesh's commitment to sustainable development and safeguarding natural resources for future generations, as well as Article 18A of the Bangladesh constitution, the government was yet to formulate a strategy for green growth, the study said after reviewing 40 national environmental policies.

“The Government of Bangladesh does not have a separate green growth strategy, but rather a number of initiatives that collectively contribute to framing the government's approach,” it read.

The study added that a lack of reliable statistics also hampered the monitoring of policy impact, which in turn hindered the creation of new policies tailored to environmental needs. It further said that many of the policies were created as a result of pressure from certain groups such as donors, and there was a lack of political commitment to their implementation.

However, speaking at the session, Dr Atiur Rahman said: “As a nation, we are morally on a higher ground because we, being one of the most vulnerable countries and one of the victims of climate change, instead of waiting for the global resources to come in, have invested our own budget.”

Meanwhile, panelist Abu Sayeed Asiful Islam, editor of strategy and planning at the Dhaka Tribune, said: “We should shift our discussion from the idea of growth by regulation to the idea of growth by

innovation. I think green growth is an opportunity to create new products, services, markets and a total new economy. Everybody should embrace it.”

In addition, Dr Saleemul Huq, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), said: “We need to move forward looking at climate change not as a problem or a challenge but as an opportunity. It is a huge opportunity because the world is moving to a post-fossil fuel world very rapidly and we want to be a pioneer in that.”

“Bangladesh is learning how to tackle climate change faster than anybody else in the world and this is an asset. We have the knowledge about how to tackle climate change and it is an asset that we can turn into money. We can teach the rest of the world how to tackle the impact of climate change,”

The session was hosted by the Economic Dialogue on Green Growth (EDGG), a UKAID funded programme implemented by Adam Smith International.

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