



Earth in crisis: environmental policy in an international context

Bangladesh: Who Will Pay?

Narrator

Bangladesh has suffered from yearly floods and storms, but many scientists have concluded that climate change is now making these events worse.

[Khulna District, Southern Bangladesh]

For hundreds of years, Bangladeshi people have fished these rivers and farmed the surrounding land. For people living in the village of Paikgacha, in southern Bangladesh, having to adapt to climate change is not a future possibility but a present reality.

Villager (translation)

Before 1988, even in the rainy season, this was dry land. Children, boys and girls, would come and play here, they used to fly kites here, in the afternoon, they'd bring their animals, like cows and buffaloes, and let them graze. Everybody was happy and could walk about here.

Narrator

The increasingly frequent storms in this area are contributing to the rise in salinisation in the south. Strong winds blow salt water off the now saline rivers onto the land, further reducing the quality of the soil.

Shaymol Dali (in translation)

We used to grow crops here before. And the yield used to be good. Eighteen years ago, we started salt water shrimp production. I myself have been shrimp farming for four years. Initially, it was good, but it has been gradually getting worse. We cannot get rice crops now at all. Salt is killing it and shrimp production is also declining. There have been viruses and other problems like storms and the weather. Because of this shrimps are dying. Facing all these problems, we can't carry on shrimp farming anymore. We've had to look for alternatives, and I've chosen pig farming.

Narrator

Climate change presents a serious threat to food production in Bangladesh, as many Bangladeshis are subsistence farmers, any further loss of food sources could have severe implications.

Mohammed Reazzudin, Department of the Environment

Climate change is posing several problems. It is threatening our development, it is threatening our human security, it is threatening our health security, it is threatening our, to reach our poverty production targets.

Narrator

The people living here don't benefit from the energy produced by burning fossil fuels.

Villager (translation)

We don't have electricity here. We have a solar panel ...it powers 3 fans, our lights and our television.

Sabihuddin Ahmed, Former High Commissioner to UK

Bangladesh is a country whose global emission per capita is the lowest in the world. So, basically, Bangladeshis are not responsible for what is happening today.

Narrator

The financial, social and environmental costs of adapting to climate change will be substantial. Rising sea levels in the south and increased drought in the north are likely to displace millions of people by the end of the century.

Shaymol Dali (in translation)

If the area becomes submerged it's going to be a big problem for us because we don't have any alternative. There's nothing else apart from the cyclone shelter. This is my birthplace so it will be very painful for me and for all of us to move out from this place. It's impossible to express how much pain we would all feel.

Sabihuddin Ahmed

And I tell you, in my country, many people are facing, slowly, the impacts of climate, but they don't really know what it is. So, they see some – those who are responsible for this, should pay for it, simple as that.