

Press Release

2022 Global Food Policy Report: Impact of Climate Change threatens Bangladesh's fishery, increase in malnourishment and loss of ecosystem services

August 17, 2022, Dhaka, Bangladesh: South Asia has been the fastest growing sub-region in the world since 2014 to onset of pandemic in 2020. This trend is likely to continue in the coming years and, while this is clearly a reason for celebration, the region is now confronted with an existential challenge due to the region's climate vulnerabilities. South Asia has turned into a climate change hotspot, posing unprecedented risks to the sustainability of our food systems. Furthermore, the existing vulnerabilities—such as level of poverty, limited access to basic services, and land use management—has been exacerbating the climate induced risks.

The International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) 2022 Global Food Policy Report (GFPR), which was launched today at Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka, highlighted that climate change threatens to impact over 750 million people in South Asia through climate hazards, primarily floods and droughts.

The report notes that food systems are impacted by climate change, and it plays an equally critical causal role. Globally, food systems, contribute more than one-third of the total greenhouse emissions. About one-fifth of total emissions come specifically from agriculture, forestry, and other land use (AFOLU). Investing in food systems transformation could thus result in stabilizing climate in the future.

“There are several promising innovations that can be applied to adaptation but with more warming adaptation will become less effective. Eventually we will all want a stabilized climate,” said Channing Arndt, Director of IFPRI's Environment and Production Technology Division. “The global food sector will likely have to become not just zero emissions but a net sink to offset positive emissions elsewhere. These are the big challenges that we need to address over the next 30 years.”

In Bangladesh, the average annual temperatures have increased in the last six decades. As global warming continues there will be induced increase in monsoon rainfall. Studies

project that extreme precipitation events will be 1.7 times more likely in Bangladesh by 2050.

In Bangladesh, fish provides over 60% of the animal protein in the diet. In recent years, both in India and Bangladesh, increasing salinity in inland and aquaculture ponds has led to fish mortalities. The report says that globally, fisheries productivity is projected to fall both in tropical and subtropical regions like South Asia.

“Climate change is not confined to national boundaries and our member countries must consider trans-boundary action on mitigation and adaptation to address the impact of climate.” said H. E. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General, Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). “Through the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (BCWC), we are encouraging collaboration among member countries on various areas of scientific study and capacity building for weather and climate-related research.”

It is estimated in South Asia that food shortages caused by climate change could lead to a significant increase in the number of malnourished children. In Bangladesh, near-term projections estimate a reduction of up to 17 percent in total calorie consumption by 2030 due to climate change.

“Climate risks in South Asia are amplified by existing vulnerabilities, which have been further compounded by the impacts of Covid-19. It has led to reduction in national income, overstretched social safety net programs, and disrupted livelihoods of millions of smallholders,” said Shahidur Rashid, Director South Asia, IFPRI. “The COVID-19 along with the climate change will make it extremely difficult for the region to achieve the SDG goals of zero hunger by 2030.”

The report cites that climate change is also negatively impacting agriculture GDP and trade. Economic projections for Bangladesh for the short term estimate a modest decline of 0.11 percent of GDP by 2030 and a 1.23 percent fall in agricultural GDP. If no adequate measures are taken, the projected loss of ecosystem services because of climate change could range from \$18 to 20 million by 2050 in Bangladesh under low- and high-emissions scenarios.

Minister of Planning Muhammad Abdul Mannan, MP who served as the chief guest for the launch event, laid out the national commitments on climate change. “Government of Bangladesh is committed to promote sustainable agriculture. We are working to strengthen capacity, improve early warning systems, invest on climate smart technology and develop heat and salinity tolerant crop varieties.”

“As the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), our honorable prime minister has actively worked on promoting the interests of 48 climate vulnerable countries, and successfully advocated in turning into resilience and prosperity. Government has established climate trust fund and adopted a transformative plan called Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan.” said Ahmad Kaikous, Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister, Prime Minister’s Office.

Rationalizing on food, fuel, and fertilizer policies could help support both adaptation to climate change and mitigation of GHG emissions in the region. Some policy recommendations for South Asia highlighted in the report include increased investment in agricultural R&D, improved budget allocations towards promising sectors which are growing their share in agricultural GDP, reforms on fertilizer subsidies, changes in energy policies to avoid wasteful usage of electricity and water for irrigation, and reforms in agricultural support to avoid over production of specific crops. Looking forward, greater attention to the role of AFOLU as an emissions source and sink will be necessary to achieve a stable climate.

For the full report, synopsis, and more information on the report, click here: <http://gfpr.ifpri.info/>

To speak with chapter authors about the content and themes of the report, please contact Md. Shafiqul Karim: mshafiqulkarim@gmail.com, + 8801732822411

#####

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) provides research-based policy solutions to sustainably reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. It is a research center of CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development. visit global website www.ifpri.org and country website <https://bangladesh.ifpri.info/>