

MIT-Bangladeshi Students' Association With South Asian Alumni Association and Drishipat Hosts:

Climate Change in South Asian Region – Real Stories from Bangladesh

What is Climate Change Justice? What are “agricultural crimes against humanity”? Discuss the repercussions of climate change that don't always strike us at first blush – rising oil prices, food scarcity, impact on trade, migration – and how all of these can become disruptive forces in geopolitics, international relations and peace.



Talk is not all that we will do though. This full-day event is designed to be part of a campaign series, designed to kick-off a year long action plan to lead up to the Fifteenth Conference of Parties at Copenhagen in 2009, where the negotiations on strengthened international action on climate change are set to conclude.

What can we do to ensure that these talks and negotiations take into account the interests of all types of different stakeholders – including those whose voices remain unheard: the rice farmer in Vietnam, the fisherman in Bangladesh and the wheat farmer in Australia? In addition to awareness raising campaigns, there is a need for structured and targeted alignment of various interest groups to influence their representatives, governments, and leaders in technology, innovation and business.

Photo exhibit:

9am – 5pm (MIT Stratton Student Center Lobby), 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge.

This is a photo exhibition of 12 photograph/poster printed work based on Bangladesh and climate change. They were taken by a French photographer who has waived his rights to the photos for the nature of the cause. There are a couple of photographs on the Sunshine Walk in Canada – several environmental activists walked from Toronto to Ottawa over 15 days to raise awareness of the issue of climate change in general and in Bangladesh in particular.

FILM: "Who Cares If Bangladesh Drowns?"

6:30 – 7:00pm (Stata Center, Room # 32-141)

This documentary premiered internationally at the United Nations Climate Change Conference on November 2007. The film was produced by Afsan Chowdhury, 2008 Oak Fellow at Colby College in Maine. Afsan's blog: <http://oakfellow2008.blogspot.com>. See Afsan's full bio below.

Panel Discussion:

7:00-8:30pm (Stata Center, Room # 32-141)

Panelists will include:

Afsan Chowdhury:

Afsan is currently a 2008 Oak Fellow at Colby College in Maine. He has had a parallel career in development work and the media. He has been active in multi-disciplinary research, media relations, journalism, and program development for two decades, and is one of the editors of an authoritative work on Bangladesh's War of Independence. He held a high position in UNICEF, but left to become a freelancer and social activist. He was also the BBC's correspondent in Bangladesh but left to concentrate on development-related work. These two resignations are indicative of his personality. Both were extremely prestigious jobs, but he gave them up to pursue social activism. In 1994, he established, HASAB, a funding nonprofit for organizations working in the area of HIV, STDs, and AIDS. Afsan has had remarkable success in designing communications materials that appeal to both the youth and elders alike. In 1995 he developed a fifteen-part sex education series for the BBC entitled "Sexwise," which aired in 1995-96. The first broadcasting of such a program in Asia, the series reached ten million listeners and became the most successful radio series in Bangladesh. The companion book to the series completely sold out of stores. His reputation as a media professional and development worker is firmly established. Afsan says that he cherishes freedom most and that is why he has dropped out of the conventional career tracks to do work that he finds directly relevant to his and other people's lives.

Dr. Sajed Kamal:

Dr. Kamal teaches “Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development” in the Sustainable International Development program at Brandeis University and has been involved in the field for more than thirty years. He has been a lecturer and consultant on renewable energy internationally, setting up projects in the United States, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Armenia and El Salvador. His work has also provided the basis for projects in Latin America, Europe and Africa. Dr. Kamal is the president of the International Consortium for Energy Development, a Boston-based nonprofit corporation, a Board member of the Boston Area Solar Energy Association, a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the Coordinator of the Solar Fenway Committee of the Fenway Community Development Corporation in Boston. He is also an award-winning poet, artist, educational consultant, translator, psychotherapist and published author of a dozen books and many articles in a wide range of areas. In 2007, he was awarded Boston “Mayor’s First Annual Green Award for Community Leadership in Energy and Climate Protection” and a “Regional Heroes Award” by AltWheels: Creating a Sustainable Transportation & Energy Vision for the 21st Century, and in 2008, a “Lifetime Achievement Award” by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, New England Region. “The Greener Issue” of The Boston Sunday Globe Magazine on September 28, 2008, featured him as one of the “Six local heroes whose work is having rippling effects—at home and far away—in making the world a better place.”

Albelee Haque:

Albelee is currently working for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), Division of Watershed Management (DWM) as an environmental scientist. She is with the DWM’s Watershed Planning Program and responsible for review and preparation of TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Load), landuse and other water quality modeling and TMDL research projects as well as database tracking of EPA approved TMDLs for Massachusetts. Ms. Haque is in her current position since 1999 at the MassDEP central regional office. Prior to this appointment, she worked at the DEP’s northeast regional office for about six years reviewing and writing air quality permits for wide variety of industrial-commercial combustion (fuel-burning) and non-combustion sources in greater Boston area. She has a BS in Civil Engineering from UMassLowell and MS in Environmental Engineering. She also did graduate work in Environmental Chemistry. Albelee worked extensively for the sewer extension and connection projects for eighty communities in central Massachusetts during her earlier days at DEP. She worked in the private sector for a short while reviewing Environmental Impact Reports for cogeneration facility in Mount Hope Bay area of Massachusetts for issuance of NPDES permits and preparing review comments of impact on air, water, wildlife, soil and natural resources. She is an active member of the Bangladesh Environment Network and published article on wetlands, impervious cover and stormwater pollution based on her recent TMDL research projects and Massachusetts Nutrient TMDL case studies.

OUR GOAL:

Create awareness and highlight urgency of Climate Change Justice so that countries attending the UN Climate Change Conference (<http://www.cop15.dk/en>) in December 2009 will be sufficiently pressured to enact REAL policies to battle this urgent global problem.