



## **Bangladesh: Climate Change Key Issue During UN Development Chief's Visit**

*Dhaka, Bangladesh, 15 November 2010* — Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change was a key focus of the three day visit of UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

During the visit, Administrator met with the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other senior ministers in her cabinet, the Speaker of the Parliament, and the Leader of the Opposition.

“On the MDGs, Bangladesh has much to be proud of,” said Helen Clark. “Now we must work to ensure that hard fought development gains are not eroded by the effects of climate change.”

Sea levels on the coast of Bangladesh are expected to rise significantly, directly affecting the lives of Bangladeshis living in coastal areas. More land is being affected by increasing salinity, also threatening food security, and livelihood options. Bangladesh's national climate change adaptation plan accepts that climate change will cause increased frequency and severity of climate events, such as flooding, cyclones, and drought which will lead to the loss of assets and livelihoods; reductions in food security; and increasing migration pressures.

To reduce the vulnerability of communities to climate change and to help them adapt to its effects, UNDP is working with Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment and Forest on an innovative project which uses mangrove forests to combat erosion and directly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. During her visit, Helen Clark traveled to the remote island of Char Kukri-Mukri on the southeast coast to speak with communities involved in the project and discuss the poverty reduction programmes associated with it.

The use of digital platforms to advance Bangladesh's development was also a feature of the Administrator's visit.

“UNDP worked extensively on compiling the electoral rolls for the general election in 2008, a process which involved advanced technologies. This can lead to future work on a population registry and on other areas such as digitized land records and local government administration.”

During her visit, Helen Clark jointly inaugurated the creation of 4,501 “Union Information and Service Centres” in all Union Parishad (lowest tier of local government) with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. This is a joint UNDP and Bangladesh initiative to promote access to information as part of the “Digital Bangladesh” national programme which aims to deliver vital public services and livelihood information to rural populations at the local level.

Helen Clark also participated in the International Forum on Human Rights hosted by the newly created Bangladesh Human Rights Commission in carrying out its work.

As well, Helen Clark participated in the regional meeting of the United Nations Development Group and the annual meeting of UNDP Resident Representatives from Asia and Pacific region.

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