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Deliver on pledges

PM urges development partners to release climate funds

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the leaders of developed countries to immediately deliver fund pledged particularly for the least developed countries (LDCs) and most vulnerable countries (MVCs) in Copenhagen summit to cope with climate change impacts.

She made the call at the inaugural session of a two-day meeting of Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF), a consortium of donor agencies, at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Six major areas that came under the BDF discussion were development strategies, governance and human development, energy and power, agriculture and rural development, environment and climate change, transport and communications and ICT and digital Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks after inaugurating the first session of two-day Bangladesh Development Forum 2010 in the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday. Photo: PID

Hasina said Bangladesh has already started some self-preservation programmes for adaptation to climate change.

The measures include dredging of major rivers, land reclamation, homesteads for displaced people, introduction of climate change-tolerant crop varieties and protection of biodiversity.

"Our development partners should also, considering the gravity and grimness of impacts of climate change, now ensure fulfilling their ODA (Official Development Assistance) targets of 0.7 percent of GNI for developing countries, and 0.2 percent for LDCs as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action," Hasina said.

"We have also approved 134 climate change action plans. To meet the costs, we have established a US \$100 million climate change fund; and also a multi-donor trust fund with US \$150 million from friends," she said.

At the inaugural session, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy document (NSAPR 2-Moving Ahead) the government is working for making a five-year plan for poverty reduction to 2011 in an uninterrupted manner.

World Bank Vice-president Isabel M Guerrero confirmed the WB's intention to provide exceptional support of US \$1.2 billion or more for the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project.

Director General of South Asia Department of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sultan Hafeez Rahman said the BDF meeting is taking place at a time when Bangladesh has been registering solid economic growth despite global economic downturn.

But the poverty rate at 40 percent is still very high with significant disparities among regions, Rahman

said adding that the country needs to grow even more quickly and equitably if the government wants Bangladesh as a middle-income country by 2021.

Kazuo Sunaga, deputy director-general of the International Cooperation Bureau of Japanese Foreign Ministry, placed stress on giving utmost efforts by the government in various areas including law and order, governance, basic social infrastructure development and service deliveries.

Economic Relations Division Secretary Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and Department for International Development (DFID) Country Director in Bangladesh Chris Austin, among others, spoke at the session.