



# NATIONAL RESILIENCE PROGRAMME (NRP)

## Launching Ceremony

15th November, 2018  
Utshab Hall, Radisson Blu, Airport Road, Dhaka

## Executive Summary

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB), two development partners and three UN agencies have jointly initiated the National Resilience Programme (NRP), which was formally launched by the Honourable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), on November 15, 2018. The NRP, a USD 12.4 million programme, aims to sustain the resilience of human and economic development in Bangladesh through risk informed, disability inclusive and gender-responsive disaster management in the public and private sectors. The three-year programme will provide strategic support in building resilience in Bangladesh to develop national capacity to keep pace with the changing nature of disasters in association with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as technical partners. The NRP is financed by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). It is being implemented by the following implementing partners: the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), the Programming Division of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning (MoP), and the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives (MoLGRDC). Each sub-project has been partnered with a participating UN organization: (1) the DDM and Programming Division of the Planning Commission sub-projects with UNDP, (2) the DWA sub-project with UN Women, and (3) the LGED sub-project with UNOPS. The participating UN agencies will provide technical advices, quality assurance and – where requested by the implementing agency - implementation support. The four Project Directors (PDs) are as follows:

- Mr. Meer Ahemed Tariqul Omar, Deputy Chief (Planning-3), MoDMR, and Project Director, NRP Sub-project - Department of Disaster Management Part
- Mr. Ataur Rahman, Director (Joint Secretary) Department of Women Affairs, MoWCA, and Project Director, NRP Sub-project - Department of Women Affairs –Part
- Dr. Nurun Nahar, Deputy Chief, Programming Division, Planning Commission, and Project Director, NRP Sub-project -Programming Division Part
- Mr. Md. Jasim Uddin, Project Director, NRP Sub-project - LGED Part

Speaking as the Chief Guest at the launch ceremony, Mr. Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MODMR) said, “NRP is a knowledge-based programme that will enhance women’s leadership in a gender-responsive and disaster-resilient nation.” Mr. Md. Shah Kamal, Secretary, MODMR, presided over the function, and said, “To sustain economic and human development, it’s essential to form a strong partnership for an inclusive disaster risk reduction plan.” The development partners welcomed the launch of such an innovative and unique partnership and mentioned that NRP builds on the collective successes and lessons learnt in Bangladesh over the past few decades in disaster management. They mentioned that now is the right time to build resilience that is forward looking, risk informed and inclusive of women, girls, and disabled people. Over 200 representatives from different ministries, development partners, INGOs, NGOs, research organizations, academic institutions, and media outlets were present at the launching ceremony.

## Launching Ceremony Highlights

### Remarks by the Chief Guest, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR)

The Chief Guest, Mr. Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Honourable Minister, MODMR, set the context for a multi agency programme such as the NRP by mentioning the changing nature of disasters and Bangladesh’s continued vulnerabilities. He mentioned that with the severity of the disasters, the damage is also increasing. The number and severity of cyclones is increasing. The risks are also increasing. As a

result, the government is taking innovative approaches for reducing the disaster risks, and in this context, the launching ceremony of the National Resilience Program is very important, he added.

The Honourable Minister said, “We have been able to reduce the mortality rate from floods and cyclones considerably. But we are still at risk of mega disastrous like earthquakes. We are also at risk from thunderstorms and fire incidents. We have some way to go in building good practice and better understanding on the risks in those aspects of new disasters. There is a need for real information in real time.”. The Minister commented on the focus on earthquakes in NRP and said that it is the need of the times that we have to work in a collaborative way to share the right information at the right time nationally and internationally at the time of natural disasters. We are thinking about earthquake risks much more seriously now. We are lucky that after the Great Indian Earthquake we have not had any similar mega disaster. However due to our vulnerable position on an earthquake fault line, and increasing urbanisation, there is an increased risk and susceptibility to earthquakes. We have to be constantly prepared to face an earthquake of high magnitude.” The Minister also paid homage to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who in 1973 established the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP). He mentioned the Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has strengthened CPP capacity and has made plans to make it much stronger. In any kind of disaster this community volunteers take huge risks of their own lives, and the Honourable Minister said that their contributions must be acknowledged and praised.

Lastly, the Honourable Minister talked about the challenges in disaster management, such as lack of capacity, institutional and financial, infrastructural shortcomings, and lack of adequate risk informed planning. He expected that, through NRP, the implementing agencies will work together in a coordinated manner to overcome these challenges and shortcomings. He thanked all the Ministries, Departments, development partners and technical partners involved in NRP. The Minister also launched the NRP website.

## **Remarks by the Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief**

Md. Shah Kamal, Secretary, MoDMR, emphasized a better understanding of NRP and its implementation mechanism. He mentioned the global reputation of Bangladesh on disaster management. He paid homage to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who laid the foundation of disaster management including both structural and institutional measures. He added that the Honourable Prime Minister has been emphasizing more on climate change and disaster management. As per our legal framework she is the Chair of the National Council for Disaster Management. That is a milestone for the country. Under her guidance, the MODMR coordinates other ministries in disaster management.

Mr. Shah Kamal said that our 19 districts are affected by cyclones and 35 districts are affected by floods. We are at risk of mega disastrous like earthquakes. We also have a new risk in lightening. There is also a chance of landslide and NRP is the only project under the MODMR that is taking the whole of society and the whole of government approach to tackle these new disasters. He praised NRP for having a sub component that involves the private sector in disaster management; and another sub project for including risk informed infrastructure systems. He lauded the NRP for having a gender responsive approach and said that while the male to female ratio of disaster related deaths has been decreasing, it is still an important reminder that work needs to be done in this regard.

He said that Bangladesh must give emphasis on structural as well as non-structural development. The 7th Five Plan has emphasized the construction of cyclone shelters, flood shelters, roads, bridges and culverts. Resilient infrastructure is going to remain of vital importance for Bangladesh. The Secretary also mentioned that we are used to undertaking environmental impact assessments for development projects and after NRP we will have Disaster Impact Analysis (DIA) tools that will be developed under

NRP. This is an example of the holistic approach of this project. This is expected that the DIA tools will be used by all ministries and divisions that are undertaking development projects.

He also said that since the NRP is a pilot, and the government has a bigger vision behind it, the Government stands ready to give more support to the sub projects if they need it, because it is important to make sure we have good outputs at the pilot stage. He said this will not only meet the NRP objectives, but it will also benefit the disaster vulnerable communities.

## **Speech by the Secretary, Ministry of Water Resource**

Mr. Kabir Bin Anwar began his speech by remembering the lives lost in the aftermath of cyclone Sidr which struck on November 11, 2007 and said that that is why initiatives like NRP is important. He wanted to pay his gratitude and respect to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and referred to his groundbreaking 1970 speech which he had made during the elections, where he said that we need to give priority to our demands and needs in the face of disasters like floods. He also expressed his special thanks to the Honourable Prime Minister, and said, "If you talk about the gender responsive development planning in Bangladesh, our Honourable Prime Minister is leading from the front, and so a gender responsive disaster resilience programme is the need of the hour." He also talked about Delta Plan and its strategic vision for one hundred years, where NRP can play complimentary role.

## **Presentation by Additional Secretary (DM), Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief**

Mr. Md. Mohsin, Additional Secretary, MODMR and National Programme Coordinator (NPC), NRP introduced NRP as a joint programme and talked about the uniqueness of the partnership. He said, "Under NRP, DDM will be working on disaster management that is gender sensitive and disability inclusive especially when it comes to mega disasters. Programming Division under the Planning Commission will concentrate on the risk informed and gender responsive planning throughout the country. LGED will concentrate its strategy designing and constructing gender responsive and risk informed infrastructure systems. And DWA will promote the leadership of women as well as enhance the capacity of women in active disaster management." He said, "Our resilience program practically started right after independence in 1973 when the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman inaugurated the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) after a very severe cyclone in 1970. There are key initiatives that the government has taken since this time. For example, volunteer development, incorporation of disaster management and climate change issues in Bangladesh's school curriculum, strengthening weather observation systems, strengthening flood forecasting, strengthening disaster warning - these are all significant achievements. In the 1970 cyclone more than 10 lakh people died, when the total population of Bangladesh was seven crores. But nowadays Bangladesh has 160million people, but the rate of the casualty from cyclones is within one digit; the ratio of male female mortality used to be around 14 is to 1 in 1970; and even in 1990 it was 5 is to 1, but now it is 2 is to 1. This is now very much recognized all over the world

## **Speech by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs**

Md. Ainul Kabir said that Bangladesh is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world and Bangladeshi women and children are more vulnerable during disasters due to limited access to resources comparing to men and other factors which collectively discriminate against women during disasters. He expected that the NRP will focus on replicable cost-effective and gender responsive models for disaster risk reduction and resilience building. In line with the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and the GOB's 7th-year plan, which has already documented the government's commitment towards a gender responsive national budget, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs has been working closely with the other NRP ministries to ensure the capacity

building of the disaster management professionals and institutions. He said that, "I would like to thank you UN Women who are bringing their expertise and support to disaster resilience and I would also like to thank the other UN agencies; and I would like to convey my gratitude to all the Ministries who have worked very hard to make it happen."

## **Remarks by Additional Secretary, Local Government Division**

Dr. Mahbub Hossain said that the Government of Bangladesh under the able leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, is committed to becoming a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. In this context we have to address two critical development challenges – first, expediting the present pace of development and second, sustaining the progress that we have already achieved. Disaster Management is one of the critical strategies to sustain development through preventing disaster wrecked damages. He said, "The infrastructure system in any country is one of the central pillars for sustainable and resilient development. Infrastructure is also important for protecting the lives and the livelihoods of people during and after shocking events such as floods earthquakes and cyclones. There is a growing global and national recognition that natural hazards and disasters cannot be prevented in most cases what we can do is to strengthen the resilience of development work through application of robust technologies and management strategies. In this backdrop we are happy to see that the National Resilience Program has been designed in cooperation with our time-tested development partners such as UNDP, UNOPS, UN Women, DFID and SIDA. We appreciate and congratulate the MODMR for their leadership role in the process."

He talked at length about the key activities of the LGED sub component of NRP and expressed his hope that NRP outcomes should be institutionalised through strengthening existing mechanisms within LGED so that it is followed across all programs and projects of LGED. Moreover, all the local government institutions over country follow the technical standards and specifications of LGED, and any improvement in and LGED's capacity will have a countrywide positive impact on infrastructure development.

## **Address by the Additional Secretary, Planning Division**

Ms. Kajal Islam talked about Bangladesh's development milestones in the last decades despite significant challenges, and mentioned all the pro poor, inclusive policies and plans that the Government has made, such as the 7th Five Year Plan, the Perspective Plan, and the Delta Plan. She mentioned two specific issues as it relates to the NRP activities to be undertaken by their sub component. Firstly – she mentioned that one interesting area of NRP is to involve the private sector to make them business continuity plans in the face of natural disasters. Working with the private sector in this manner for the Programming Division is a new thing. Secondly, she mentioned that the Programming Division has recently developed a Risk Atlas and a Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment tool (CRVA tool) for 10 natural hazards. The tool will be used to screen development projects under the Annual Development Plan and has also helped develop new appraisal tool to increase efficiency in the public investment management system. It is currently developing a new database management system to allow website-based ADP formulation along with strengthening the knowledge management of the Programming Division. She hoped that the NRP will concentrate on these issues and will emphasise on the sustainability of CRVA tools and the development planning process.

## **Speech by Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator**

Ms. Mia Seppo expressed her satisfaction over the partnership mechanism of the NRP which that engages four ministries as implementing agencies, three UN agencies as technical partners, and two development partners. She said that the sheer number and range of the attendees at the ceremony was evidence to the fact that it takes a joint up coordinated and coherent effort to really deliver on the Sendai Framework. She mentioned that Bangladesh is known for its track record in managing

disasters and making sure that lives are not lost. This impressive track record is now being put under a test under the impact of climate change because of the rapid and unplanned urbanisation and because of the demographic pressures that Bangladesh is experiencing. She referred to the remarks by the Honourable Minister for MODMR who referred to the economic losses that Bangladesh is still experiencing from natural disasters. This program is designed in response to these new threats as well as that going to be new challenges of managing disasters in Bangladesh. Here we are making a clear contribution to Bangladesh in its commitment to the Sendai Framework. Ms. Seppo gave an interesting context to the NRP, “Let me highlight two lessons learnt that have guided the design of this program. NRP builds on the lessons learnt from many successful programs on disaster risk reduction in Bangladesh, one of them being the CDMP which involved 13 ministries and yet one of the lessons learnt was that it actually didn’t manage to deliver on a whole of society approach so this program involving four ministries but having taken time to engage everybody in the design is aiming to achieve that whole approach. Another lesson from the CDMP was that still more needs to be done to ensure an inclusive approach. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during a natural disaster. This is the number that we need to change.” She said that it is important to recognise the lessons and then to see some of the new challenges – it will need new partners beyond the ones in NRP – for example for earthquake preparedness we will need the World Bank, JICA and more Ministries. She said she thought that the component on resilient infrastructure will be particularly important when it comes to mega disasters. The other new element of the NRP is the effort to involve the private sector and to recognize the role of the private sector in disaster risk reduction. This commitment is fully in line with the Sendai Framework. She made a specific mention of the inclusiveness and wanted to assure everyone that the United Nations stands ready to support the Government to implement this program in a joined-up manner. There is a strong commitment from the United Nations to work in a very well coordinated manner in supporting this programme. Based on the mandate of the UN agencies Mia Seppo said she believed that we are in a very good position to support this programme.

### **Remarks by Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden**

Ms. Charlotta Schlyter said in her remarks that Sweden has a long-standing commitment to gender equality and the rights of women and girls. A few years back they stepped up this approach by adopting a feminist foreign policy. This puts gender upfront and they believe that the NRP will do exactly that in exactly the right area. The strong message for gender equality in NRP is fundamental in Sweden’s development cooperation work. She said, “This is based on the insight that gender equality contributes to reducing poverty and contributes towards sustainable development. And it is also based on the insight that poverty and is different for women and men. Women are also disproportionately affected before during and after a disaster. And this also goes to persons with disabilities especially women and girls with disabilities.” She elaborated that gender-based violence is often reinforced and exacerbated by disasters. A challenge identified in Bangladesh is that correct national disaster management mechanisms are insufficient in managing risks in a gender responsive manner. The guiding principle for NRP is that both individuals and institutions need to do support to increase their resilience to climate change and environmental risks. She ended by saying that NRP is a truly strategic collaboration and together with DFID, Sweden is delighted in partnering with the government of Bangladesh and the UN agencies in this important initiative.

### **Remarks by the DFID Representative**

Mr. Omar Farook from DFID said that he was very impressed with the level of interest shown about NRP at the inauguration session and he wanted to bring an understanding to the audience about some of the understanding that DFID brings. On behalf of DFID he congratulated all the partners and the Government of Bangladesh for this grand launching ceremony. This particular project is very important for DFID. He said, “If you look at the investment that DFID has made in Bangladesh is

disaster management, you have seen CDM, you have seen the kind of disaster response, and you can see that we are working hard from the community level up to the government level to constantly improve their lives but this project has a different and limited timeline and resources so it is more about how we are working together. You have strong leadership from the Government of Bangladesh and that is the unique thing that is bringing together all these components of NRP. And that is where we are trying to make a difference and bring a change and that is why we are investing from DFID. We are getting a lot of government support along with the DFID and SIDA, and the government is also contributing a lot of its own resources in NRP and that is to be recognised. There are other key things that DFID recognizes from the UK point of view, and that is inclusiveness.

He said he was happy to see the challenges, but it is a cumulative job in a country like Bangladesh where it is the community that responds when a disaster happens. He said, “NRP will actually try to unpack those things where we are expecting community level understanding where the community will say that this is the risk and this is how we understand the risk. Secondly through this project we will look at infrastructure risk and help the private sector in becoming more disaster risk informed. We are also very happy to be partnering with the Swedish government here and this is also an example that this is a high-priority so thank you Sweden and the government of Bangladesh to become our partners in this program.”

## Open Discussion

A lively and interactive session was held with the participants members asking questions to the panel. Some highlights include:

**Requesting the inclusion of DPOs in NRP:** audience members representing organizations working with disabled persons talked about the risks inherent to disabled people – especially disabled women and the disabled elderly – before, during and after a disaster event. The government now has data on persons with disabilities all over the country, how many women and children there with disabilities, etc. and it was suggested that the NRP try to be as inclusive of them as is possible during implementation.

**Coordination of NRP:** The discussants emphasized on effective coordination of NRP and its engagement with public and private sectors.

**NRP Coverage:** It was also suggested to include Sirajganj, Shatkhira and Khulna as NRP work areas considering the disaster and climate vulnerability of these three districts.

**Resilience data:** The speakers suggested to have accurate data on vulnerability in NRP work areas, which will help other to take the interventions avoiding duplication.

**Resilience Definition and Framework:** It was suggested that NRP could give a definition of Resilience; and perhaps a National Resilience Framework could be developed by the MoDMR in consultation with the stakeholders.

## Response by the Secretary, MoDMR

Mr. Shah Kamal, Secretary, MoDMR requested the all the project directors of NRP to make sure to include DPOs. He also requested that NRP coordination team makes sure that more importance is given to the views of disabled persons. He also responded to the participants that as you can tell by the name of the NRP it is a national resilience program. Step-by-step NRP will cover the whole of the country. But now it is just starting. Starting with only considering the 10 areas. If we get very good outputs, then we will take it to other districts. He ended the question answer session by thanking the audience for their questions and said that he has faith that working together we can come up with a national resilience framework for Bangladesh.

# PHOTO GALLERY



Audience at the NRP Launching Ceremony



Mr. Md. Mohsin, Additional Secretary  
Ministry of Disaster Management and  
Relief & National Programme Coordinator, NRP







Audience Participation Session



Mr. Omar Farook, Humanitarian Adviser, DFID



Audience Participation Session



Mr. Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya  
Bir Bikram, M.P, Hon'ble Minister  
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief



Md. Ainul Kabir, Additional Secretary  
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs



NRP Website Inauguration



Dr. Mahbub Hossain, Additional Secretary  
 Local Government Division



Ms. Kazal Islam, Additional Secretary  
 Planning Division, Ministry of Planning



Ms. Mia Seppo  
 UN Resident Co-Coordinator, Bangladesh



Ms. Charlotta Schlyter  
 Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh



Mr. Kabir Bin Anwar  
 Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources



Mr. Md. Shah Kamal  
Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief



Invitation card



Honourable Secretary, and Honourable Minister, MODMR



The Audience



The NRP Launching Animation



Kyoko Yokosuka, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP  
Shoko Ishikaw, Country Representative, UN Women  
and Stefan Kohler, Country Manager : UNOPS Bangladesh



Tariqul Omar, PD DDM; Naim Mostofa, M&E DDM  
Shahpar Selim, PC, PCMT, UNDP; Aatur Rahman, PD DWA;  
Md Mohsin, NPC NRP and Additional Secretary MODMR  
Nurun Nahar PD Prog Div and Jasim Uddin, PD LGED.