

# Special Conference on “Delta Plan 2100” and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh

Organized by

**Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA)** ✓  
**Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN)** ✓

In association with universities, research institutions, professional organizations, and other pro-environment non-government and civil society organizations

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Krishibid Institution, Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Background

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) of the Bangladesh Government has recently approved the “Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100.” It is a wide-ranging and far-reaching plan, aimed apparently at formulating a holistic strategy for better utilization of Bangladesh’s land and water resources, in the light of the adverse effects of climate change. Almost entire Bangladesh -- including the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Baring Tract of North Bengal, Haor area of the northeast, and the coastal belt -- has been brought under this plan. The sectors covered by the plan include land and water resources, agriculture, forests, water transportation, etc. It is stipulated that about 2.5 percent of the GDP will be spent each year on the projects under this Plan, the absolute amount of which will stand at about \$30 billion in 2030. The sheer size of the proposed investment reflects the ambition and scope of the Plan.

Given its importance and relevance for public interest, thorough nation-wide discussion is warranted before this Plan is taken up for implementation. Earlier, in 1964, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) accepted and by and large implemented a “Master Plan” prepared by a foreign consultancy firm for water development in the country. Unfortunately, many projects of that Plan failed to achieve the desired results. It is good that authors of the BDP-2100 made an effort to consult with different groups of people in the process of the preparing the plan and also made the draft plan documents available for comment in their website (<http://www.bangladeshdeltaplan2100.org/>). Some experts indeed have made use of the opportunity and expressed their views on the plan. However, the collective national discussion of this important that is necessary is yet to take place. The proposed conference is aimed at allowing such a discussion.

From the very beginning, BAPA and BEN have been engaged – both domestically and internationally -- in protecting and developing further the deltaic character of Bangladesh. Beginning with the “Buriganga Bachao Andolon” (Save the Buriganga River Movement) in 1999, they have organized river protection movements all across the country. To unite these river movements, they held in 2006 the National River Conference, which adopted the comprehensive “Resolution on Rivers.” It also launched the “Jatiyo Nodi Rokkha Andolon” (National Movement to Save the Rivers) to coordinate the river movements of the country. As a result of decade-long efforts by BAPA and BEN, it has been possible to free up partially the Baral River, the important river of North Bengal, connecting the Padma and the Jamuna Rivers and passing through the Chalaan Beel. To ensure the regional cooperation necessary to restore and preserve the natural flows of Bangladesh rivers, BAPA and BEN organized two international conferences in 2004 and 2013. Attended by large numbers of experts and activists from India and other countries of the region,

these conferences held elaborate discussions on ways to save the rivers of the sub-continent and adopted important resolutions. Given the above long-standing engagement with delta related issues, BAPA and BEN consider it to be their duty to arrange a national level, collective discussion on the proposed Delta Plan 2100.

### Objectives of the conference

The main objectives of the conference are as follows:

- 1) Inform the public about the Delta Plan 2100;
- 2) Provide an opportunity for the authors of the Delta Plan to present the Plan to the members of the environment movement of the country and other concerned citizens;
- 3) Provide a forum for resident, non-resident, and foreign experts and activists to have a collective discussion on the proposed Delta Plan 2100;
- 4) Provide a forum for representatives of various cross-sections of the public to voice their opinions and suggestions regarding the proposed Delta Plan 2100;
- 5) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Delta Plan 2100 and suggest ways to overcome the weaknesses in order to improve the Plan.

### Topics of the conference

In discussing the Delta Plan 2100, the conference will focus on the following topics:

- 1) Delta Plan's review of the sixty years of water development efforts in Bangladesh;
- 2) Relevance for the Bengal Delta of the experience of management of the Rhine Delta;
- 3) Reflections of the adverse effects of climate change in the Delta Plan;
- 4) Appropriateness and application of the concept of "Hot Spots" in the Delta Plan;
- 5) Discussion and consideration in the Delta Plan of the implications of the current and likely future interventions by India and other upper-riparian countries in the rivers flowing through Bangladesh;
- 6) Reflections of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Delta Plan;
- 7) Data, information, and models used in the Delta Plan;
- 8) Delta Plan's portfolio of 15 projects for immediate execution;
- 9) Size and financing of investment proposed by the Delta Plan;
- 10) Interrelationships between the Delta Plan and the National Plan;
- 11) Interrelationships between the Delta Commission and the Planning Commission;
- 12) Other related topics.

### Participants of the conference

Following previous BAPA-BEN conferences; the proposed conference on the Delta Plan will be open to the public. Instead of being limited to discussion by experts, the conference will make special efforts to allow discussion by activists and representatives of different cross-sections of the society. Those who are expected to play an important role in the discussions of the conference include:

- 1) Authors of the Delta Plan 2100;
- 2) Resident, non-resident, and foreign experts;

- 3) Resident, non-resident, and foreign environment and river activists;
- 4) Representatives of people affected by flood, river erosion, and waterlogging;
- 5) Representatives of the hilly people;
- 6) Representatives of the Haor areas;
- 7) Representatives of the people of the Barind Tract;
- 8) Representatives of the coastal people;
- 9) Representatives of various urban communities;
- 10) Representatives of universities and various research institutions and academic organizations;
- 11) Representatives of various professional organizations, non-government and civil society organizations;
- 12) Leaders of various political parties;
- 13) Representatives of various government policy making and implementing organizations;
- 14) Representatives of various foreign missions and organizations interested in the Delta Plan;
- 15) Representatives of the print and electronic media;
- 16) Other relevant persons and organizations.

To facilitate participation by both experts and non-experts, the conference, following the tradition of BAPA-BEN conferences, will organize two types of sessions, namely

- a) Expert Sessions, and
- b) General Sessions.

Experts sessions are meant for presentation and discussion of papers submitted by experts. General Sessions, on the other hand, are meant for presentation and discussion by non-experts.

BAPA and BEN appeal to all universities; research organizations; relevant non-government and civil society organizations, professional and other organizations to become associated organizers of this conference.

### Call for papers

Papers are called for submission at the proposed conference on the topics listed above. The schedule for papers is as follows:

**October 30: Submission of one-page abstract**

**November 30: Submission of the full paper**

**December 15: Decision regarding acceptance and presentation of the paper**

Papers by authors residing in Bangladesh are requested to send the abstract and full version of their papers by e-mail to Prof. Shahidul Islam, Department of Geography, Dhaka University. E-mail: [shahidul\\_bd@yahoo.com](mailto:shahidul_bd@yahoo.com)

Papers by authors residing outside Bangladesh are requested to send the abstract and full version of their papers by e-mail to Md. Khalequzzaman, Professor of Geology, Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA 17745, USA. E-mail: [mkhalequ@lockhaven.edu](mailto:mkhalequ@lockhaven.edu)

Conference office

BAPA office, located at the address below, will serve as the office of the conference:

9/12 Lalmatia, Block D, Dhaka 1207

Tel & Fax. 02-58152041

E-mail: [bapa2000@gmail.com](mailto:bapa2000@gmail.com)

For information about the conference, please contact:

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**Make the conference a success!**

The "Delta Plan 2100," proposed by the government is a huge and far-reaching plan. Much of Bangladesh's future depends on of this plan. Earlier, in 1964, Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) adopted and followed, by and large, a "Master Plan" prepared by a foreign consulting firm for water development of the country. Many projects of that Plan however failed to produce desired results. Now that Bangladesh is about to start implementation of another big plan, it is important to ensure that the plan is sound and worthy. The conference proposed by BAPA and BEN offers an opportunity for all concerned to examine and express their views on the proposed Delta Plan. We hope that all will come forward, utilize this opportunity, and make the conference successful!

-The End-

NB: Inclusion of all the Universities, Departments, Research Organizations & Professional bodies as the Co-Organizers and NGOs & Civil Society Organizations for this conference is under process now. We shall send the offer letters very soon to all such institutes by e-mail, fax & courier services. We wish your positive response to our offers. Even if your institute/organization does not get our call for any reason within 10 days, but you feel necessary or interested to keep your institute/organization in this glorious task, please communicate us by any means mentioned above.

Circulated by:

Dr. Mohd. Abdul Matin, General Secretary, BAPA

& Member Secretary, Conference Organizing Committee.

15<sup>th</sup> October 2018