

Special Conference on Sustainable Urbanization: Challenges and Solutions

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 civic society organizations

January 12-13, 2024

(Possible) venue: Science Annex Building, Dhaka University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Background

Over time, Bangladesh has become more urbanized, with about 40 percent of its population currently living in urban areas. With more than 20 million people, Dhaka City alone accounts for more than one-fifth of the country's GDP. Besides 12 city corporations and 327 municipalities, there are a total of 570 urban centers in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics defines an urban center with a population of 100,000 or more as a "city". The population size in these urban centers has been rapidly increasing due to relatively more availability of jobs, services, medical facilities, educational institutions, and other amenities. Besides, the urban centers are home to millions of environmental refugees who were displaced from their places of origin due to natural disasters caused by climate change and riverbank erosion. The urban population in Bangladesh is projected to reach 86.5 million by 2030, with a further increase to over 100 million by 2050.

To meet basic criteria for sustainable urbanization, citizens living in urban centers should have access to clean water, clean air, affordable housing, adequate network of public transportation, plenty of open spaces and playgrounds, effective waste management system, effluent treatment plants for all industries, access to healthcare facilities, affordable educational institutions, adequate stormwater and sewage drainage network, and cultural hubs for recreation. Unfortunately, most of the major cities and urban centers in Bangladesh lack these amenities, facilities, and utilities at levels that would be considered adequate for sustainable cities and communities, as prescribed in the SDGs formulated under the UN 2030 Vision. For example, Dhaka City was ranked as one of the worst capital cities in the world to live in. The Global Livability Index 2021 ranks Bangladesh's capital Dhaka as the fourth least livable city in the world. The situation in other major cities and urban centers is not that different. Also, there are concerns whether urbanization in Bangladesh is occurring in a geographically balanced fashion. Researchers have pointed out that overgrowth of Dhaka City is now having a negative effect not only on the Dhaka City itself but also on the economic growth of the country as a whole.

In this backdrop, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN) are organizing a two-day special conference on "Sustainable Urbanization: Challenges and

Solutions” to be held in Dhaka on January 12-13, 2024. The conference aims at exploring the state of sustainability of Bangladesh’s urbanization and at formulating solutions to the problems and challenges that uniquely plague the urban areas of the country. It is hoped that through presentations and deliberations at this conference, a set of recommendations will be formulated. These recommendations will serve as a guideline for future activities of BAPA and BEN and other social forces interested in achieving sustainable urbanization in Bangladesh. In particular, BAPA and BEN will present the recommendations to the government, urging it to pay attention to and act on them.

Objectives of the conference

The main objectives of the conference are as follows:

- 1) Provide a forum for resident, non-resident, and foreign experts and activists to have a collective discussion on the state of urbanization and the steps that need to be taken to make it sustainable.
- 2) Provide an opportunity for the government officials to present their views of the state of the urbanization and inform the conference participants, and through them the nation as a whole, about various governmental policies, plans, and projects, aimed at improving living conditions in the urban areas of Bangladesh.
- 3) Provide a forum for BAPA activists and leaders engaged in the struggle for protecting the rights of urban citizens to present their experience and express their views about ways to intensify the struggle and achieve more success in the future.
- 4) Provide a forum for representatives of various cross-sections of society to express their views regarding the state of urbanization in the country and to offer their suggestions about what could be done to improve the situation.

Topics of the conference

The topics that aim to cover include the following:

- (1). Air, water, and noise pollutions in urban areas
- (2). Effluent treatment and waste management problems
- (3). Traffic congestion and public transportation issues
- (4). Waterlogging and flooding problems of the cities
- (5). Deficiency of public spaces, water bodies and playgrounds
- (6). Urban heat islands
- (7). Affordable housing
- (8). Affordable clean energy

- (9). Safe drinking water and sanitation
- (10). Public health and healthcare
- (11). Detailed Area Planning (DAP) for urban centers
- (12). Information about Environmental Metrics in Urban Centers
- (13). Other issues of urbanization

Call for papers

Papers are called for submission at the proposed conference on the topics listed above. The papers should address urban issues of Bangladesh. They may include discussions of the international urbanization experiences, provided they are relevant for Bangladesh. The schedule for papers is as follows:

One-page abstract: **October 30, 2023**
Acceptance of abstracts: **November 15, 2023**
Full-length paper: **December 15, 2023**

\Papers by authors residing outside Bangladesh are requested to send the abstract and full version of their papers by e-mail to:

Papers by authors residing in Bangladesh are requested to send the abstract and full version of their papers by email to:

Conference office

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

9/12, Block D, Lalmatia, Dhaka 1207
Tel. +88 02 58152041
E-mail: bapa2000@gmail.com

For information about the conference, please contact:

Name:
Designation:
E-mail:
Mobile: