



Minutes – Friday, April 25, 2025
Video Conference
9 am to 11 am

Attending: Tom Hirasuna, Paul Moore, Dave Bradley, Brian Eden, Sarah Carson, Hailley Delisle, Ingrid Zabel, Gerrie Wiley, Ray Burger, Savannah Vega, Dan Lamb, Marie McRae, Rebecca Evans, Pete Wirth, George Lorefice, Sujoy Chakma, Peter Bardaglio

Climate Change Awareness & Action – George Lorefice and Peter Wirth
George Lorefice, president of Climate Change Awareness & Action (CCAA), a local 350.org group based in Syracuse, and Peter Wirth, vice president, talked about the work of CCAA and the potential for collaboration between the two organizations.

- Pete W suggested that the CCA&A find ways to collaborate and share resources
- We shared details about the different ways in which our two organizations operate
- Peter B explained the role of the TCCPI steering committee and discussed how TCCPI has gotten more involved in policy advocacy at the state level
- The goal of TCCPI is to provide opportunities for people to share opportunities for both education and action
- He also went into some detail about the flagship program of TCCPI, the Ithaca 2030 District
- Suggested that Syracuse could be a good candidate for a 2030 District
- George noted that CCA&A newsletter goes out to about 1,400 people – “couple of handfals” of active members
- Sharing information about upcoming speakers might be a good place to start – Peter B agreed
- Next part of discussion focused on different ways in which interns work with each organization – Peter B talked about positive experience with Cornell engineering undergrads helping out with Ithaca 2030 District
- Pete W pointed out that more climate activists should be attending the public hearings for wind farm projects – almost all of the people at these hearings are opposed to wind power in their communities
- Peter B observed that largescale solar had made more headway than wind in Tompkins County
- George noted that they had success bringing together high school students, young adults, and older folks around solar power
- George suggested that Pete W, Peter B, and he should get together to talk more about how to work together going forward
- Peter B talked about importance of staying in touch with what was going on regionally outside our local communities

Bangladesh & Climate Change – Sujoy Chakma

Sujoy Chakma is field program assistant for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Bangladesh, and a Humphrey Fellow this year at Cornell University. Sujoy discussed his work in Bangladesh, the impact of climate change on his country, and how Bangladesh is strengthening its resilience in the face of further challenges.

- Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971 – population of 171.2M people – rice is the staple crop
- Muhammad Yunus current interim head of government – world-famous economist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate
- Student-led opposition led to overthrow of previous government – stemmed in part to discontent over policies related to securing government posts
- Sujoy comes from Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern part of country
- Region of great ethnic diversity: inhabited by over dozen different indigenous communities – on borderland of India and Myanmar
- Suffering from widespread food insecurity due to drought, floods, and landslides related to climate change
- Poor transportation and communication systems compared to other parts of country also exacerbate situation
- Sujoy works with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of UN – based in Chittagong Hill Tracts
- Works with smallholding farmers on capacity building around good agricultural practices related to vegetable and fruits, nutrition, horticulture, poultry
- Provide opportunities for farmers and government staff to visit some of more advanced agricultural areas, including outside of Bangladesh (Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries)
- FAO supports farmers in remote areas that are difficult to reach, especially during dry season
- Also works on increasing access to markets through formation of Collaborative Agribusiness Marketing Groups (CAMG) and carries out training of trainers programs for government officials
- Teaches how to engage in rainwater harvesting and provides variety of fruit saplings such as mango, jujube, litchi, Malta (citrus), lemon
- TeleFood projects provide small-scale funding for grassroots projects, with emphasize on women and youth – targets poorest of the poor
- Engages directly with small groups of farmers and villagers in communities located in Chittagong Hill Tracts – sharing information, collecting data, etc.
- Women play huge role in rural communities, engaging in agricultural activities and generating revenue for their families – also experience domestic violence – women not allowed in public spaces and discouraged from pursuing education

- FAO works with women to teach them about better nutrition and its importance for children, among other issues
- Location of Bangladesh makes it very vulnerable to climate change
- Many of Himalayan rivers wind their way through India and empty into sea in Bangladesh – also has very large delta area
- Extensive mangrove forests on coast in southwestern part of country
- Many people in rural areas are unaware of climate change as a concept but they are experiencing the changes and noticing them
- Millions of people live in coastal areas and are vulnerable to rising sea levels and more extreme weather – increased salinity of drinking water also very serious issue
- Emissions that cause climate change come from every part of the world and affect everyone, but some countries produce much more than others
- Six biggest emitters (China, the United States of America, India, the European Union, the Russian Federation, and Brazil) together accounted for more than half of all global greenhouse gas emissions in 2023
- By contrast, 45 least developed countries accounted for only 3 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions
- Impacts of climate change on Bangladesh
 - Higher temperature, variable precipitation, extreme weather events
 - Intense floods, droughts & storms
 - Crop yields fall by 30%
 - Melting of glaciers in the Himalayas
 - Reduced fresh water in dry period due to low river flows and increased evaporation
 - Sea level rise threat to coastal agricultural land
- Some causes of flooding in Bangladesh
 - Monsoon climate
 - Spring snow melt
 - Deforestation in headwater areas
 - Rivers silt up due to increased soil erosion
 - 80% of Bangladesh lies on huge floodplain and delta, most of which is only 1 meter above sea level
 - Much of Ganges diverted for irrigation – removes some of silt and prevents floodplain further downstream from building up
 - Cyclones frequently hit Bangladesh
- Coastal Hazards in Bangladesh
 - Emission of greenhouse gases that cause global warming causes sea level rise
 - Climate change-driven events also generate cyclones with storm surges that create coastal hazards
 - Strong relationship among climate change sea level rise, coastal flooding, disease outbreaks, loss of agricultural production, and unemployment

- Bangladesh coastal zone lowest lying zone in world where 36M people living within 1 metre elevation from high tide level
- Coastal ecosystem supports more than 15% of total population of country, but under varying degrees of environmental threats due to anthropogenic and climate change impacts
- Sector-wise impacts
 - Coastal areas: flood surges, riverbank erosion, salinity, tropical cyclone – 30 million people could become refugees
 - Agriculture and fisheries: declining of crop yields, arable land decreased greater extent due to extreme temp, drought, salinity intrusion
 - Water resources and hydrology: effects on surface and ground water resources severe and alarming – will have a significant impact on economy due to dependence on surface water for irrigation, fishery, industry
 - Urban areas: direct impacts through increased floods, drainage congestion, water logging, infrastructure damage during extreme events
 - 40% of urban population live in slums that are highly prone to disaster risk
 - Vulnerable groups: Women particularly due to constraints in public spaces -- urban poor due to absence of infrastructure and employment
- Adaptation in Bangladesh: Policies
 - Government has outlined priority areas for climate change adaptation and mitigation in national plans, with range of estimated financing requirements, from 0.8 percent to over 5 percent of annual GDP
 - In 2018, the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (BDP2100) was adopted with goal of achieving safe, climate resilient, and prosperous Delta
 - US\$38 billion by 2030 (in 2015 prices) for physical investments and institutional strengthening for implementation and monitoring
 - Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP): Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund – to work with ministries, govt. departments, and other organizations
 - UNFCCC: National Adaptation Plan 2023-2050
 - Nationally determined contributions
 - Climate Vulnerable Forum: Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (2022-2041)
- Global context:
 - Many climate change solutions can deliver economic benefits while improving lives and protecting the environment
 - We also have global frameworks and agreements to guide progress, such as Sustainable Development Goals, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement
 - Three broad categories of action are: cutting emissions, adapting to climate impacts and financing required adjustments.
 - Switching energy systems from fossil fuels to renewables like solar or wind will reduce emissions driving climate change

- While growing number of countries is committing to net zero emissions by 2050, emissions must be cut in half by 2030 to keep warming below 1.5°C
- Achieving this means huge declines in use of coal, oil and gas: production and consumption of all fossil fuels need to be cut by at least 30 per cent by 2030 in order to prevent catastrophic levels of climate change
- Climate resilient priorities in Bangladesh, according to World Bank
 - People-centric, climate-smart development
 - Development approach that considers regional variations in climate impacts and builds on Bangladesh's experience of locally-led adaptation and small-scale solutions
 - Investing in public services, nature-based solutions, and infrastructure in urban areas—including affordable housing, resilient transport connectivity, and water and waste management—will help cities prepare for influx of climate migrants
 - Delivering development benefits with decarbonization
 - Emissions from energy, transport, industry, and agriculture can be reduced at relatively low cost and yield significant co-benefits related to air pollution, health costs, and jobs
 - By implementing policies that abate both air pollution and emissions, Bangladesh can reduce deaths from air pollution by half or save nearly 1 million lives within 2030.
 - Enabling environment and institutional realignment
 - With stronger legislative and institutional capacity, Bangladesh can accelerate implementation of existing policies and programs
 - Empowering local governments to plan and implement adaptation programs will be important
 - Increased domestic and foreign private sector involvement, such as in climate-smart agriculture and renewable energy, necessary
- Despite significant gains in reducing human toll from climate disasters, Bangladesh continues to face severe and increasing climate risks
- Without urgent action, including further adaptation and resilience measures, the country's strong growth potential could be at risk
- Some parts of Bangladesh are more prone to climate change impacts
- So investments should be prioritized for climate hotspots such as in Barind Tract, coastal zone, Haor area, and Hill Tracts
- Also regions facing higher poverty rates and natural hazards: western upazilas of Mymensingh, eastern upazilas of Rangpur, and southern parts of Khulna Division