

## **RMMRU Seminar on Climate Change and Environmental Refugees**

### *Press Release*

Speakers at a seminar highlighted the need for greater awareness about impact of global climate change on Bangladesh. They also emphasised the need for development of appropriate policy responses to minimise the adverse effects of climate change. These observations were made at a seminar on 'Climate Change, Migration and Bangladesh' organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) under the auspices of the DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty at the Dhaka University premises on Tuesday.

In his keynote address Dr. Ahsanuddin Ahmed of Centre for Global Change drew attention to the fact that increased human activity in the last fifty years has resulted in major increase global temperature contributing to the process of climate change. "If the human kind continues with the current level of consumption then doomsday will arrive within the next couple of hundred years" he warned. By citing scientific research he informed that the process of climate change will be accompanied by increased frequency and intensity of drought, floods, rainfall, cyclone and tornadoes, waterlogging and salinity. While all these will adversely affect livelihood and health of millions of people across the world, developing countries like Bangladesh will bear the major brunt, he noted. It is in this context he demanded the developed countries should compensate to support adaptation efforts of the countries that will suffer from the process.

Journalist Afsan Chowdhury stated that climate change is not to be viewed as a matter of environmental concern; it has major social, economic and political ramifications, he argued. Chowdhury observed that in the absence of adequate livelihood options a number of people will become environmental refugees, a phenomenon that will have grave implications for national security of states.

Prof. Mizan R Khan of North South University underscored the need for national capacity building for effective bargaining in international negotiating tables. He demanded that the developed world as major contributor to climate change should consider special quota for environmental refugees from the developing countries like Bangladesh in the similar model that New Zealand accepts migrants from Pacific island state of Tonga that is threatened with extinction due to sea level rise.

In his concluding speech Dr. C R Abrar of RMMRU lamented that policy makers are mainly engaged with short term problems and thus far have paid only lip service to this impending disaster. He called for incorporation of climate change issue in the national curricula, sustained engagement of the media and initiating a dialogue between scientists, social activists and policy makers to deal with the issue of climate change.

Among others Prof. Dalem Chandra Barman and Mr. Obaidul Haque participated in the discussion. The seminar was preceded with a screening of a documentary film "*Does anybody care if Bangladesh drowns?*" directed by Mr. Afsan Chowdhury. It was attended by members of faculty and students various departments of Dhaka University.

For further details, please contact:

R M Faizur Rahman, Programme Officer, RMMRU  
rmmrubj@aitlbd.net