

BANGLADESH 'Country's climate-fund demands too low'

December 14, 2009 | BA08380.1580 | 330 words Text size

DHAKA (UCAN) -- Prominent Church people say the claim by Bangladesh for 15 percent of any climate change adaptation fund, that may be pledged at the Copenhagen talks, may not be enough.

"Our people are not only suffering from sea-level rise and cyclones but also more people each day become refugees because of river erosion which is an effect of climate change too," Benedict Alo D'Rozario, executive director of Caritas Bangladesh, told UCA News.



A family in southwestern Bangladesh wades through water alongside their demolished house following Cyclone Aila

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected this week at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen to demand 15 percent of the fund which is to help at-risk nations adapt to climate change.

D'Rozario said that his country's claim was based on forecasts that Bangladeshis would represent 15 percent of the estimated 100 million climate refugees in the world in years to come.

That figure, however, does not give the full picture apparently. "Already we have five percent of the world's climate refugees mostly caused by river erosion and recent cyclones," he said. "If we estimate there will be another 15 percent in coming years, then we could demand at least 20 percent from the fund."

D'Rozario says that seawater also increasingly encroaches on the land damaging livelihoods.

"For the last seven months, since Cyclone Aila hit, people of Gabura and Paddapukur in the country's southwestern district Satkhira have not been able to return home," he said. Now they are either living in temporary shelters on higher ground or have left the area entirely.

Thomas Costa, a Catholic freelance consultant on development programs, agrees that Bangladesh's demand on the fund will need to be increased.

"Certainly Bangladesh deserves more than 15 percent of the climate adaptation fund but it would not be appropriate if it is calculated according to percentage only," said Costa, who is also a teacher of anthropology at Dhaka University, said.

"Actual needs have to be justified based on (climate change) effects on the coastal belt areas, river erosion and effects on marshy land."

<http://www.ucanews.com/2009/12/14/countrys-climate-fund-demands-too-low/>