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UN development chief talks climate change in Bangladesh



UNDP Administrator Helen Clark

16 November 2010 – Bangladesh’s positive steps towards achieving the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) must be protected from the negative effects of climate change, according to the United Nations development chief. “On the MDGs, Bangladesh has much to be proud of,” said Helen Clark, Administrator of the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), during her just-concluded visit to the country. “Now we must work to ensure that hard fought development gains are not eroded by the effects of climate change.” The country’s vulnerability to climate change was a key focus of talks between the Administrator and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other senior politicians. Issues discussed included rising sea levels, increased salinity and the country’s national climate change adaptation plan.

Miss Clark also visited the remote island of Char Kukri-Mukri, where UNDP is working with Bangladesh’s Ministry of Environment and Forests on an innovative project which uses mangrove forests to combat erosion and directly reduce CO₂ emissions.

Rural populations were also on the agenda, given that UNDP works with the Bangladeshi Government to promote access to information as part of the “Digital Bangladesh” programme which aims to deliver vital information to people in rural areas nationwide.

As part of the programme, Miss Clark and the Bangladeshi Prime Minister inaugurated the creation of over 4,500 ‘Union Information Service Centres’ to help bring digital technology to local government.

“UNDP worked extensively on compiling the electoral rolls for the general election in 2008, a process which involved advanced technologies. This can lead to future work on a population registry and on other areas such as digitized land records and local government administration,” said Miss Clark.

During her three-day visit, the Administrator also participated in the International Forum on Human Rights hosted by the newly created Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, as well as in a regional meeting of the UN Development Group and the annual meeting of UNDP Resident Representatives from Asia and the Pacific.

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