

# GOBESHONA 6

## International Conference on Climate Knowledge Research into Action

### Session on celebrating Women's achievement and leadership in combating climate change

Date: 22 January 2020



The panel discussion session was moderated by Ms Shaila Shahid, Senior Advisor-Climate Change, DRR and Gender, ICCCAD and she was joined by thirteen women of diverse professional backgrounds, each narrating their promising experiences to an eager audience.

MS. Dilruba Haider, the Programme Specialist of UN Women's DRR, Climate Change & Humanitarian Actions, she is one of the early ladies who started to work into Disaster Risk Reduction and encouraged many women to work on the specific area. In the beginning she started her career into the disaster management & humanitarian response. She has 27 years of professional experience to work in this cluster.

She emphasized that, "Disaster Management and climate Change has always been a man's domain; it hasn't been a woman's domain."

She shared an empowering story of a woman named Mahera from the remote area of Sundarbans. Her family was very poor and used to rely on Sundarbans for her livelihood. With the assistance of UN Women, she opened a small grocery shop. After one-year Mahera was running a large grocery shop in the local market, selling all sorts of items. Now, she runs the shop, financially supports her family. Her husband looks after her children and do all the household chores. She managed to change the stereotypes regarding gender roles of our society. According to her, "Mahera is fully illiterate but she has immense power. She is planning beautiful future for her family. Compared to the women like Mahera I feel I am nothing. There are so many ambitious women like her in our country. If we give them support of a tiny finger, they utilize it, make it a huge success and change their lives."



# Key Highlights of Story Sharing Session



Ms Hasin Jahan, Country Representative of WaterAid Bangladesh, she has contributed enormously to build gender resilient infrastructure. She talked about her experiences in the field of water & Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) despite being an engineer from BUET. She is always enthusiastic to blend her engineering knowledge into social aspects for the betterment of the community

*She pointed out that, "I knew how to design a bridge, culvert, fly over but I was unaware to design a pit latrine or install a tube well. Therefore, based on that necessity we developed a textbook, where we introduced low cost water supply sanitation which included gender aspects. That was the first-time engineering curriculum addressed gender issue in Bangladesh."*



Dr Mahbuba Nasreen, PhD, Director & Professor, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS) She is one of the earliest females who contributed to the Flood Action Plan (FAP) through her pioneering research "Coping with floods and experiences with the rural women of Bangladesh". Prior to the research Bangladesh did not have any government mechanism to build resilience to withstand the impacts of flood specially on women.

*She mentioned, "We say women are vulnerable, but they are the leaders of their households. The thesis also provided structural solutions to cope with flood and it also proved that when there is a paradigm shift disaster is not only natural, it's also human induced and climate change has effects on it."*



Ms Rabeya Sultana, the Country Director of Muslim Aid Bangladesh, shared her struggle which she faced as a working woman in our society. She talked about her work with the 'untouchable caste' and she linked the community with society.

She shared her experience to work with sex workers and pushed for inclusivity of sex workers in access to relief and encouraged women to support other women.

*She emphasized that, "we have to make an inclusive climate policy which will include physically challenged persons along with women and children."*



Ms. Rosta Mate, Researcher and teacher from the Eduardo Mondagne University, Mozambique. She is also a community development practitioner and deputy dean for graduation studies in the Eduardo Mondagne University. She belongs from a very low-income family. Her hard work eventually paid off, she received full free scholarship from her government till PhD. After finishing her studies, she came back to Mozambique and started to contribute for the development of her community. She contributed to areas such as the forestry and climate change sector which was causing harm to her homeland.

*She said, "we work for gender mainstreaming, mitigation with the community organizations, we train, form and create. We have gender balance and we increased the opportunity for women of the lower level. We make sure they have proper representation in the village/district level so that they get recognized by the local level authorities."*

## Note

The Gobeshona conference is an annual international conference on knowledge dissemination focusing on research practices, that attract academics, practitioners, policy makers and delegates who are involved in work related to climate change and development. This conference has created relationships with over 40 partners that includes Development Partners, Academic Institutions, NGOs, and INGOs.