



Nobel laureate Prof Abdus Salam addressing the inaugural function of the International Institute of Environmental Studies and Disaster Management at the International Conference Centre in city yesterday. President Ershad is also seen in the picture.

Institute of Disaster Management inaugurated Ershad's call to help solve environmental problems

Staff Reporter

President HM Ershad yesterday made an appeal to all governments and international organizations to help the newly created International Institute of Environmental Studies and Disaster Management (IIESDM) solve the global and regional environmental problems. The world must attain a sustainable development and for this there must be international cooperation, he added.

The President was addressing the inaugural function organized in connection with the foundation laying of

the institute at the International Conference Centre at the President's Secretariat.

Referring to the deteriorating physical condition of the earth, he said the health of the earth's inhabitants could not be separated from that of the planet itself. We must remember that we are the first generation of this planet whose decisions will determine whether the earth remains habitable, and there must be groundswell of support globally for far reaching changes to

reverse the trends which threaten the future of our children, he added.

Presided over by Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the institute Kazi Zafar Ahmed, the inaugural session was addressed by Nobel laureate Professor Abdus Salam as a guest of honour and Dr Syed Shafiqullah, secretary general of the institute.

The President said that Bangladesh went through unprecedented miseries with the recurrence of devastating flood

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Ershad

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cyclones, tornadoes, tidal surges and droughts which ravaged the countryside, destroyed millions of tons of foodgrains, people's homes and their means of livelihood. He said time had come to ask whether these disasters were not the result of man's treatment of nature.

He said that his government was deeply concerned over the environmental degradation and had given stress on the ecological impact on the development planning. Pleading for safer technology, President Ershad said that though the role of science and technology in economic progress of the country was well recognized, we were constantly searching for an environmentally safe technology.

The earth is actually warming and nobody can say for certain what will be the consequences of this global phenomenon, he said. He observed that the rise in the sea level poses the problem of enhanced inundation globally and it can take up as much as 30 percent of the arable land of Bangladesh.

He said the location of the institute was appropriate because of the geographical position of Bangladesh, which offered unique opportunities for studying certain environmental situations like flow of rivers and geo-climatic processes taking place in the coastal region.

Responding to the call of Professor Abdus Salam, President Ershad said since his government was totally committed to a better life of the people, it was also committed to the development of the institute and referred to the contribution of land to the institute by the government. He also announced a donation of Tk 10 million for the institute. President Ershad also said that his government would increase the allocation to 1.1 percent of the GNP for science and technology.

PROF SALAM
Addressing the function Professor Abdus Salam deplored the continuous neglect shown by the Third World countries including those of this region towards basic sciences. He said these countries had completely neglected the five areas of the basic sciences physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology and medical sciences and observed that a very very small minded approach was made by these countries towards the basic sciences.

He maintained that we need basic scientists to tell us what should we do.

Professor Salam, who is the Director of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, also pleaded for adopting high technology. He said that the industrial west became rich after acquiring the high technology.

Professor Salam mentioned the name of China which puts emphasis on the development of basic sciences. He said that the number of scientists in China would be about 3 lakh which grew over the years.

He has critical about the growing defence expenditures

in the third world and observed that 5.6 percent of their GNP were being spent on the defence head. The defence expenditure of Bangladesh is relatively less, he said. The noble laureate said only 3.7 percent of the GNP go to the Third World countries while in developed countries it is 5.1 percent. On science and technology Bangladesh spends only 0.2 percent of the GNP, he added. He referred to his discussion with some of the heads of government including Premadasa of Sri Lanka, Rajiv Gandhi of India and Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan. Describing the outcome of the discussions, Professor Salam said that Mrs Benazir Bhutto had agreed to increase her governments spending by 1 percent on science and technology. He also asked the Bangladesh government to increase the spending on science and technology. He described the economist's as the most "unenlightened" section of the community as they do not see the significance of science and technology and do not make available the benefits of science and technology to the people.

Professor Salam proposed that at least 10 percent of the expected foreign assistance should be diverted to the development of science and technology.

Speaking on the occasion Deputy Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed said that the inauguration of this institute was indeed a big leap forward towards realizing lofty goals enunciated in the Dhaka declaration which was made by the international seminar on Bangladesh flood in the first week of March.

Addressing the session, the secretary general of IIESDM informed that it had already taken four research protocols pertaining to the environmental problems in South Asia region which were agreed upon by the founding members. Work on some of these programmes has already started, he said.

Earlier President Ershad unveiled the plaque of the IIESDM at Darul Salam. Mirpur, Vice President, Professor Abdus Salam, cabinet members and senior government officials were present on the occasion.

Iiesdm board

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with two representatives of the research bureau. Of the rest 28 members 18 will be representatives of different foreign countries and organizations while the remaining 10 will be from Bangladesh.

The board of advisors will function for a term of four years, the Deputy Prime Minister said and added that the status of the Institute will be non-government and non-political.

The meeting was attended by 15 out of 24 members of the board of advisors constituted earlier. The aims and objectives and budget issues would be discussed in the second session of the meeting to be held today, the Deputy Prime Minister said.

The members also decided to hold at least one meeting of the board of advisors annually, Kazi Zafar Ahmed added.

Those who attended the first session included Nobel laureate Professor Abdus Salam, Prof Stephen C McCarrey (USA), Prof A Renzoni (Italy), Dr Kate Kranek (Canada), Prof Ratna S.J.B. Rana (Nepal), Prof Sun Shuncai (China), Mrs Nisakarn

IIESDM board of advisors meet held

Staff Reporter

The first session of the Board of Advisors of International Institute of Environmental Studies and Disaster Management (IIESDM) was held yesterday. Dismissing this to newsmen at the International Conference Centre, Deputy Prime Minister and patron of IIESDM Kazi Zafar Ahmed said the draft constitution was placed before the board for discussion. The preamble was adopted unanimously by 15 participating board members.

The meeting decided to form a 35-member committee with chief patron President Ershad as the Institute's President. Patrons Kazi Zafar Ahmed and B M Abbas A T will be the vice presidents while Secretary General of the Institute Professor Syed Saffullah will act as the member secretary. President of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences will be the ex-officio members of the board along

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