

Bangladesh and Germany signed two agreements for Sundarban Management & Environmental Conservation

Md. Abu bakar- In a significant step towards Sundarban Management and environmental conservation, two crucial agreements were signed Tuesday between Bangladesh and Germany at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Bangladesh Secretariat. Dr. Farhina Ahmed, Secretary of the Ministry, and Martina Burkard, Acting Country Director of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Bangladesh, inked the agreements aimed at the sustainable management of the Sundarbans and the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Swatch of No Ground (SONG).

Environment Secretary said Integrated Management of the Sundarbans Mangroves and the Marine Protected Area Swatch of No Ground in Bangladesh (SONG) project is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL).

She said the SONG project aims to strengthen marine conservation in Bangladesh by improving collaboration and capacity-building among responsible authorities and stakeholders, engaging fishermen, women, and youth in the coastal communities adjacent to the MPA. Key objectives include enhancing planning and surveillance capacities, scientific monitoring, strengthened knowledge-based decision-making through digital tools, and heightened awareness and support for marine protection among coastal populations and active participation in marine conservation.

Dr. Farhina said “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Financing for Sustainable Management of the Sundarbans and Restoration of Coastal Ecosystems in the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh and India (SUNDAR-BAY) project will be implemented from March 2024 to February 2027, focusing on the collaborative efforts between Bangladesh and India for the conservation of the Sundarbans.

Environment Secretary said the SUNDAR-BAY project aims to improve governmental and non-governmental coordination between the two countries, supporting the conservation of the Sundarbans and the provision of ecosystem services to local communities, especially women and marginalized groups. The project will enhance institutional capacities, promote joint training programs, and support local communities through sustainable income-generating activities and environmental education.

Both projects contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Life Below Water (SDG 14) and Life on Land (SDG 15), emphasizing biodiversity and the protection of natural resources. These initiatives reflect the commitment of Bangladesh and Germany to protect vital ecosystems and foster sustainable development in the region. The collaborative efforts are expected to yield significant environmental, social, and economic benefits, ensuring the preservation of the Sundarbans and the Swatch of No Ground for future generations.

Dr. Stefan Alfred Groenewold, Principal Advisor, SONG GIZ Bangladesh and Md. Amir Hosain Chowdhury, Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department also signed agreement on behalf of their organisations. Additional Secretary (Development) Md Mosharraf Hossain, Additional Secretary (EPC) Tapan Kumar Biswas and senior officials of the Ministry and GIZ also present in the occasion.