

**ITC Follow-up Project: Seminar on “Improvement of Housing and Living Environment”**  
**Dhaka, Bangladesh**  
**15 April 2008**

The participants of the International Training Course in Regional Development (ITC) formulate their own action plans at the end of the course and respectively implement them upon course completion. UNCRD conducts on-site follow-up projects to support our former participants in carrying out their plans. On 15 April 2008, UNCRD organized the above seminar to follow up on the progress of action plan implementation by Mr. Rahman Matiar, a former participant of the ITC35, who manages projects at the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Co-operatives, Government of Bangladesh.

In Dhaka, which is the capital city of Bangladesh, a rapid rural-urban migration is underway and environment degradation is becoming widespread due to the lack of housing and infrastructure improvement, which is causing the expansion of slums. Therefore, a radical housing and living environment policy is needed; at the same time, a regional development policy which fundamentally copes with this outflow trend is necessary. Against such a background, Mr. Rahman formulated an action plan to deal with living environment issues, based on ITC training contents such as the regional development experience of Japan, through the cooperation of ministries and relevant organizations. Accordingly, in the follow-up seminar to support Mr. Rahman’s plan implementation, UNCRD disseminated necessary knowledge on the living environment.

One hundred and fifty persons, including officials of LGED and those engaged in issues related to the living environment and regional development at relevant organizations participated in the seminar. The seminar started with Mr. Wahidur Rahman’s welcome address. He stressed that the main focus of the seminar was to explore ways and means for the improvement of housing and the living environment in Bangladesh against the backdrop of somewhat unplanned urbanization and the accelerated growth of population, which is causing a dramatic decrease in available housing and environmental degradation. Development of Dhaka city is not the result of positive urbanization, but rather caused by the migration of people from rural areas. Poverty, periodic floods, river erosion, unemployment, and educational facilities compel hundreds of thousands of rural people to migrate to Dhaka city. Mr. Rahman then introduced the case of Japanese regional development and explained issues facing Bangladesh in comparison with Japan. Mr. Rahman’s presentation focused on Japan’s development technologies, infrastructure improvement, participatory development, administrative systems, among others.

Following his presentation, UNCRD staff gave a lecture on regional development in Japan, including living environment- and housing-related policies, and introduced Senri New Town as a case study of housing policy in Japan. In addition, a keynote lecture was also given on regional development of Bangladesh. Participants exchanged their opinion on these subjects.

UNCRD will assist Bangladesh in promoting the improvement of housing and the living environment through LEGD, its donor, and relevant organizations. UNCRD hopes that this assistance will contribute to the nation’s efforts in achieving sustainable regional infrastructure development towards which Mr. Rahman and his LGED colleagues are directing their efforts.