

Newsletter (Jan-Mar'21)

NATIONAL EVENTS

18.5.2021

*More than 6 thousand
informal and illegal
ULAB recycling
operations across the
country*

Environmentally Sound Management ULAB An Urgent Need in Bangladesh

The government should initiate environmentally sound management (ESM) and regulate unauthorized ULAB recycling to prevent health risks and environmental pollution. Experts express their concern on informal recycling of used lead-acid batteries throughout the country in a Capacity Building Workshop organized by the Environment and Social Development Organization – ESDO in collaboration with the UN Environment Program and International Lead Association on 24th February 2021 in Dhaka both physically and virtually.



Media Briefing on Plastic Waste Expert Urge Government to Rectify Basel Ban Amendment

ESDO in association with Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives – GAIA has organized a Media Briefing on 'Significance of implementing Basel Amendment to Stop Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Plastic Waste' on 18th March 2021 in a city restaurant of Dhanmondi. In the briefing, all the speakers showed their concern about the problems associated with the illegal waste trade (especially plastic) in Bangladesh. And to solve this problem, they all consented to implement the Basel Ban Amendment. They urged the Government to take adequate initiatives to ratify the Basel Ban Amendment





Media Orientation in Dhaka and Rangpur City Environmental Journalism: Reporting on Waste Issue

A day-long media orientation was organized by Environment and Social Development Organization - ESDO in two big cities of Bangladesh; Dhaka on 18th March 2021 and Rangpur on 16th February 2021. The aim of the orientation was to guide journalists on how they can play a leading role in protecting the environment through their regular awareness and anti-corruption reporting. There were several sessions which were conducted by Dr. Shahriar Hossain and Ms. Siddika Sultana and Mr. Shahiduzaman, Senior Journalist & Editor, News network. The sessions were focused on the discussion on the need for environmental journalism to protect human life and the environment, to identify the waste stream, cause, and consequences, to discuss how a report can lead to problem-solving and aware the society and to know the tools of environmental journalism.

Mercury Free Dentistry Bangladesh Dental Society and ESDO signed MOU for the third time!

ESDO and Bangladesh Dental Society - BDS signed Memorandum of understanding - MOU for the third time. This agreement was signed on a consultation jointly organized by ESDO and BDS on 27th January at ESDO head office. The whole year's action plan and implementation of different action-oriented activities were discussed in the consultation. Action Plan includes Awareness campaign, Study, Policy advocacy, Petition to Government, etc.



Global Day of Action Home Composting for Zero waste Community to Go #BeyondRecovery!

To commemorate the Global Day of Action with GAIA, ESDO organized a webinar on 'Home Composting for Zero Waste Community to Go beyond Recovery!' through the virtual platform Zoom where seven entrepreneurs participated enthusiastically. The webinar was arranged to encourage people for adopting a zero-waste lifestyle.

This event is for raising awareness among the public regarding the benefits of using composter to improve or maintain high-quality soil, to grow healthy plants, reduce the use of fertilizer and pesticides and protect the environment. Many participants who are small-scale gardeners took part in the webinar and shared their views and pictures on home composting

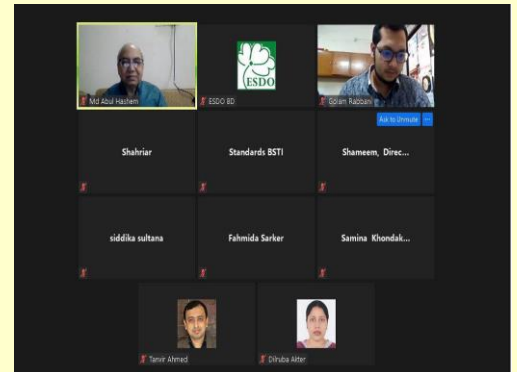
Toxic Plastic Waste Trade Around 1.2 million tons of plastic wastes were shipped to Bangladesh in 3 years!

Waste import is prohibited in Bangladesh as per the import policy. However, huge transboundary movements and illegal trading is happening. It was found that around 1.2 million tons of plastic wastes were shipped to Bangladesh in 3 years from the United States and the UK. Malaysian authorities sent back a total of 150 containers imported from 13 countries including Bangladesh as the consignment had non-recyclable plastic. To release this study finding, ESDO, in collaboration with IPEN organized a media briefing on 11th February 2021 at ESDO head office and also on the online platform Zoom.



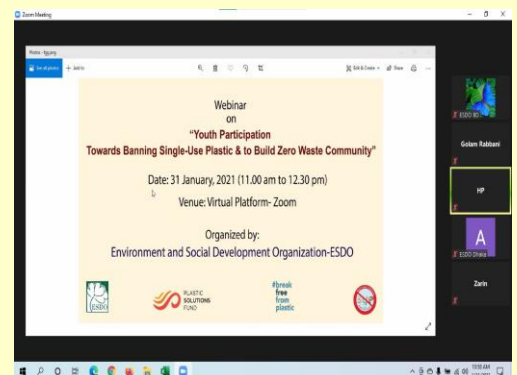
Project Support Group meeting A step forward Minamata Convention Ratification

On 4th March, ESDO organized a Project Support Group - (PSG) meeting to discuss the 'Draft roadmap/strategy for phasing out mercury-added products under the Minamata Convention on mercury in Bangladesh'. ESDO believes that this draft roadmap/strategy will be of great help in the case of ratification of the Minamata Convention. The main objective of this meeting was to share this roadmap with the PSG and collect their recommendation to make this draft roadmap/strategy more concrete. The PSG includes participants from relevant ministries and departments (Minamata focal person), academicians from universities such as BUET and the University of Dhaka along ESDO board members.



Environmental Youth Awareness Enthusiastic Youth demands an eco-friendly pathway!

ESDO in association with Plastic Solution Fund-PSF has organized a Webinar on "Developing Environmental Awareness and Eco-Friendly Behavior" on 31st January 2021. The session aimed to encourage youth for initiating responsiveness for abandoning the use of Single Plastic to support the zero waste community. With this initiative, ESDO targeted to find out some promising environmental defenders (Institution-based or organization based) to contribute to the environment and establish a Green Club in their respective area in association with ESDO in the near future.



Many Participants from different institutions such as; Daffodil University, Jagannath University, College of Home Economics, Dhaka University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology etc. has shared their experiences and suggested a remarkable pathway for building eco-friendly behavior among peoples



Zero waste Community Consultation A Walk towards Sustainable Waste Management

To share the concept of a waste-free lifestyle to the community people of Lalmatia, Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO organized community consultations on 'Sustainable Waste Management' 26 January 2021 virtually at ESDO Head office on and on 6 February 2021 physically at Lalmatia Housing Society School and College. In both programs, Sayed Hasan Nur Islam Ruston, honorable councilor of 32 no. Ward, DNCC, Dhaka has enlightened as to the chief guest. He appreciated the initiative taken by ESDO and said that City Corporation will work forward in collaboration with ESDO in this project.



Community Consultation in Rangpur City The practice of waste management for a sustainable living

ESDO organized community consultations along with CBO formation respectively on 13th and 14th February to educate and encourage community people to practice waste management for sustainable living. One consultation held at Shalbon, Rangpur, and another consultation held at Betgari Union, Rangpur. To support this initiative of ESDO; Upazila, chairman of Betgari Union, Senior Journalists, academicians, and members of civil society were present at those events. Besides, in the month of January, many small-scaled consultations were held in Rangpur with the targeted community.

Mobile Campaign

Safeguard the Environment from the Hazardous Effects of Single-Use Plastic

To create awareness among people of the hazardous effects of toxic plastic and on safeguarding the environment from the harmful consequences of Single-Use Plastic, Environment and Social Development Organization - ESDO arranged day-long mobile campaigns on "Building Toxic Plastic Free Environment in Bangladesh" on 16th January and 14th February in some distinct places of Dhaka city. Team members of ESDO gathered public opinions about the effects of plastic and collected their signatures through these campaigns. People expressed their concern over the harmful consequences of plastic waste on the environment.



Bangladesh Dental Society letter to Minamata Secretariat

BDS moving forward to ban dental amalgam use by 2022.

Bangladesh Dental Society - BDS recently submitted the information regarding Bangladesh Dental Society initiatives and achievements to end dental amalgam in Bangladesh that demonstrate the availability and feasibility of mercury-free dentistry. BDS moving forward to ban dental amalgam use by 2022 and Push for a ban on dental amalgam the Minamata Convention obligations in Annex A-II to phase down the use of amalgam. In Bangladesh, the government and civil society are both following paths to reduce substantially, and then phase out entirely, the use of dental amalgam.



PFAS Desk Assessment Study

Hidden Killer in Our Drinking Water

ESDO is a pioneer environmental organization and initiator of environmental justice in Bangladesh. Bringing attention to PFAS is a part of that journey. PFAS, short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a group of widespread man-made carcinogenic (cancer-causing) chemicals that do not break down in the environment or in the human body and have been flagged as a major contaminant in sources of our drinking water. ESDO under the IPEN initiative is doing an extensive study on the country situation of PFAS from 2019 and prepared a desk assessment report on which the Executive Director of ESDO Siddika Sultana gave an interview to Somoy TV.



Skin Lightening Cream

A danger for us all

The Zero Mercury Working Group (ZMWG) is an international coalition. This group was born out of the Zero Mercury Campaign project having as its ultimate objective 'Zero' emissions, demand, and supply of mercury, from all sources we can control, in view of reducing to a minimum, mercury in the environment. The project started in November 2004, by the European Environmental Bureau - EEB in collaboration with the Mercury Policy Project. Under Zero Mercury Working Group's Skin Cream Campaign, ESDO is working to phase out mercury especially from skin lightening cream. Under this campaign, we are purchasing creams for sampling and monitoring the availability of these creams in shops and online shopping platforms. ESDO is now currently monitoring if the skin lightening creams are available on the online shopping site. This year due to the pandemic situations, the monitoring has been limited to online platforms.





Mercury Free Dentistry A pledge by dentists to practice Mercury-free Dentistry

In Bangladesh, about 90% of dentists have stopped using mercury in their dentistry. They are now practicing mercury-free dentistry. ESDO in association with BDS has been working on mercury-free Dentistry project for a long time and started to create a database consisting of the name of the dentists who are not using mercury in their practice. The dentists will be recognized nationwide for their support and will be given a certificate for practicing mercury-free dentistry.

Gender and Chemical An increasing problem that needs attention!

Engagement with the role of gender in chemical management is not a new phenomenon, either nationally or globally but it remains complex. The significance of gender (social/behavioral) factors in chemical risk assessment and management are typically addressed in three ways: First in relation to gender and exposure; second in relation to gender and exposure and third in relation to the issue of gender balance and equal participation of women and men in chemicals management decision-making. ESDO has started to work on this issue for quite some time. Recently, ESDO has sent concept notes on 'Gender and Mercury' or 'Gender and Chemical' to Minamata Convention and other organizations who work on this related issue. Besides ESDO always attended webinars regarding the issue and shared their thoughts on this.



INTERNATIONAL CORNER

Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum prior to the sessions of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly

The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) prior to Open Ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECP) and the first session of UNEA 5 held yesterday on 9th February, 2021 in an online event that allowed Major Groups to discuss their input into this UNEA session and to exchange on other issues of importance. This virtual Forum is self-organized by the Major Groups and second and third session held on 10th and 11th of February, 2021. Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Secretary General of ESDO attended the event.



The dais during the opening ceremony (clockwise from left): Moderator Ingrid Rostad, Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM); Mohamed Abdelraouf, Chair of Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC); and Jorge Laguna Celis, UNEP

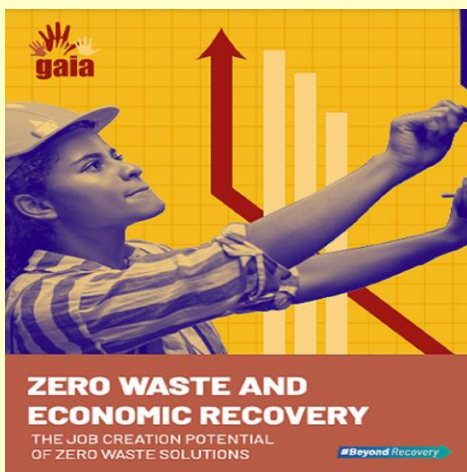
Zero Waste Month An oath for a sustainable future!

In order to celebrate Zero waste Month, ESDO in collaboration with Break free From Plastic organized a webinar about establishing zero waste communities for a sustainable and just future on 9th February at online platform Zoom. The aim of the webinar was to share how zero waste is beneficial for sustainable lifestyle.



The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly - UNEA5 Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) provides leadership, catalyzes, intergovernmental actions on the environment, and contributes to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In light of the exceptional circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNEA-5 was split into two sessions: UNEA-5.1, which was held virtually on 22 and 23 February 2021, with a focus on urgent decisions to ensure the continuity of UNEP's activities, and UNEA5.2, which will be an in-person session in February 2022, with the aim to consider substantive matters and for which there are high expectations. The overarching theme for the two sessions is "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."

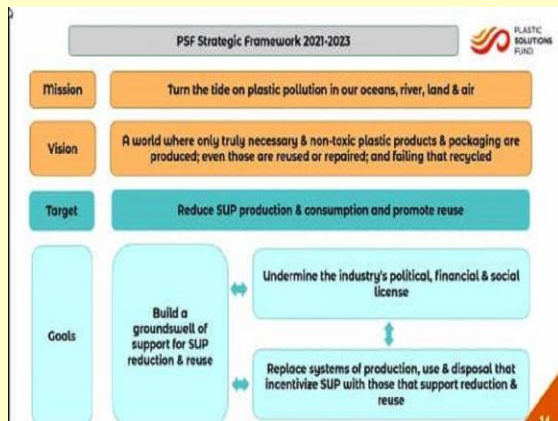


Zero Waste and Economy Recovery Zero Waste Systems Could Create Thousands of Jobs for Dhaka Residents!

A new study from GAIA finds that cities that invest in zero waste programs and policies create numerous, good, green jobs, in addition to known benefits of reducing pollution and improving community health. This report comes as municipal governments across the world are making critical investment decisions to increase climate resilience and rebuild local economies damaged by the COVID-19 crisis. The study projects that if Dhaka were to recover 80% of recyclable and organic material in its waste stream, the city could create over 6,000 new jobs.

PSF Strategic Framework Development

A strategic framework was developed through a development process including the consultation workshop, a joint meeting of the PSF Board and BFFP Global Steering Committee, and finally PSF Board only discussion. The aim of meetings was to ground the PSF strategic conversations in the lived experience and expertise of those working on these issues around the world. A general appreciation was praised by participants regarding the draft PSF strategic framework, as well as on strategic focus towards reduction and reuse.

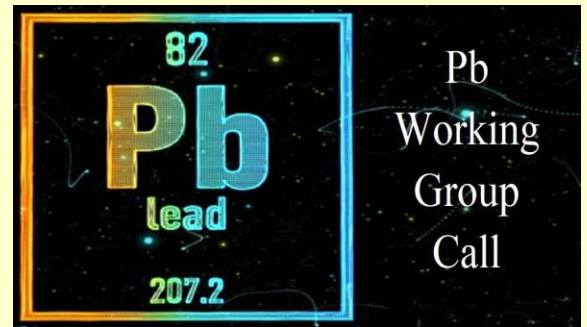


Asia Pacific Regional Meeting Discussion on Implementation Planning Outcome

On 5th March, an Asian Pacific regional meeting was conducted by Break Free from Plastic for Asia Pacific regional members to discuss the implementation planning outcomes of 2020. There were participants from MSC, CAG, GAIA AP, ESDO, YPBB, GreenPeach PH, Plastic Bag Diet, etc. Executive Director of ESDO Siddika Sultana and Project Associate- Legal and Communication of ESDO Sharmin Jahan attended the meeting.

Pb Working Group call Organizations gathered to discuss the update on Lead activities

A working group call was arranged where different organizations who are currently working on lead joined to discuss the issues. Organizations such as Stanford University, ILA, ICDDR, B, ESDO, Pure Earth, UNICEF, and UNEP were present at this meeting and provided updates on the activities they are currently working on. Executive Director of ESDO Siddika Sultana was present at the meeting and shared a national strategy plan prepared by ESDO.



World Alliance Global Strategic Meeting

On 8th February, World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry held a Global Strategic meeting with the regional leaders. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the project the regional leaders are working on. The first project was the submission to the Minamata Secretariat, the second one would be Amendment and the third one was a Survey of the dentists around Asia, Africa, and Latin America. There was also a project added recently with WHO. There was a thorough discussion on how to improve projects which some of which are already in a continuous process and generate ideas through brainstorming.

Siddika Sultana, Executive Director of ESDO First South Asian Woman Appointed as the Vice President for Asia of the World Alliance for Mercury-free Dentistry

ESDO's Executive Director was chosen as the Vice President for Asia of the World Alliance for Mercury-free Dentistry. She is the first woman from South Asia to achieve the World Alliance Global Leadership role since its operation in 2010. World Alliance is a Washington D.C. USA-based global network for phaseout the use of dental amalgam worldwide. An official message from World Alliance President Attorney Charles G. Brown expressed his gratitude and said that the World Alliance deeply appreciates the outstanding work she has done since 2012 for mercury-free dentistry for Bangladesh, Asia, and for the world.



The Global Treaty Dialogues A Virtual Activist-to-Industry series

The Global Treaty Dialogues is an activist-to-industry year-long series of global online summits in advance of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) decision in February 2022 on whether to pursue a Paris Agreement for Plastics. Secretary General of ESDO, Dr. Shahriar Hossain represented ESDO in this global event.

ESDO attended Webinars

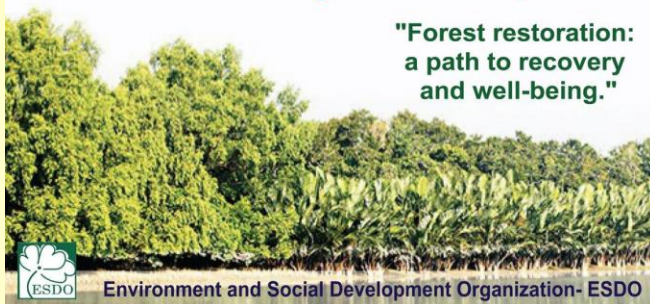
As the pandemic continues, organizations from different countries are still relying on webinars to create awareness among mass people and networks. During this quarter, ESDO attended several webinars such as Zero Waste Solutions Towards a Regenerative Asia-Pacific Region, Zero Waste and Economic Recovery: The Job Creation Potential of Zero Waste Solutions, Addressing Illegal trade and traffic Industrial Chemicals, Pesticides and Waste for Beyond 2020, Knowledge Sharing Seminar 1 - Circular Economy by STEPP, Anchoring sustainable chemistry in chemicals management: Development of milestones and indicators for international chemicals management beyond 2020, Webinar Series: Waste Trade and its Prevention: Part I: Why Waste Moves and the Advent of the Basel Convention, BFFP Asia Sachet Strategy Development Consultation, etc.



Days We Celebrated

ESDO designates specific days, weeks, years, and decades as occasions to mark particular events or topics in order to promote, through awareness and action-oriented events. This year Coronavirus is still hovering around the world causing us to limit physical activities. So like every other country, ESDO has also limited their physical activities and chose social media to celebrate significant days and also to create awareness among mass people. The days so far ESDO celebrated are International Mother Language Day, International Day of Forest, Women's Day, World Water Day, World Oral Health Day, Independence Day, World wetlands day, Sundarban Day, World Wildlife Day, etc.

International Day of Forests, 2021



World Oral Health Day, 2021

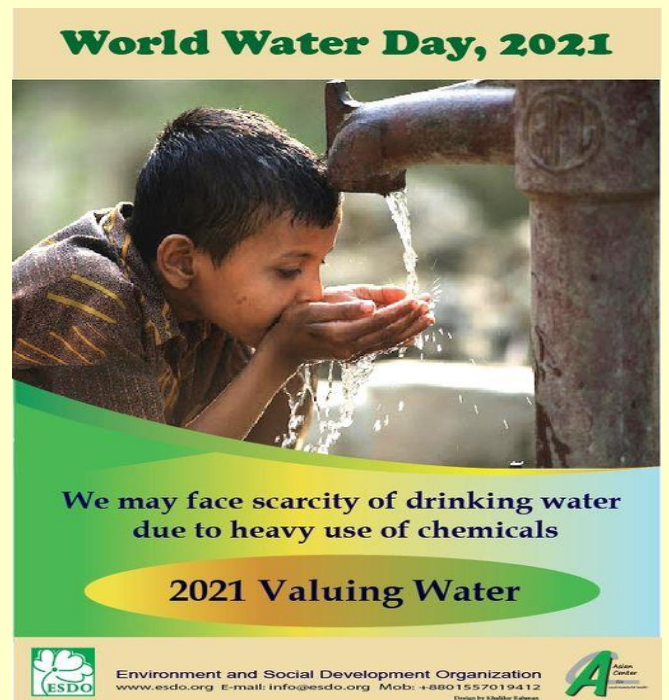
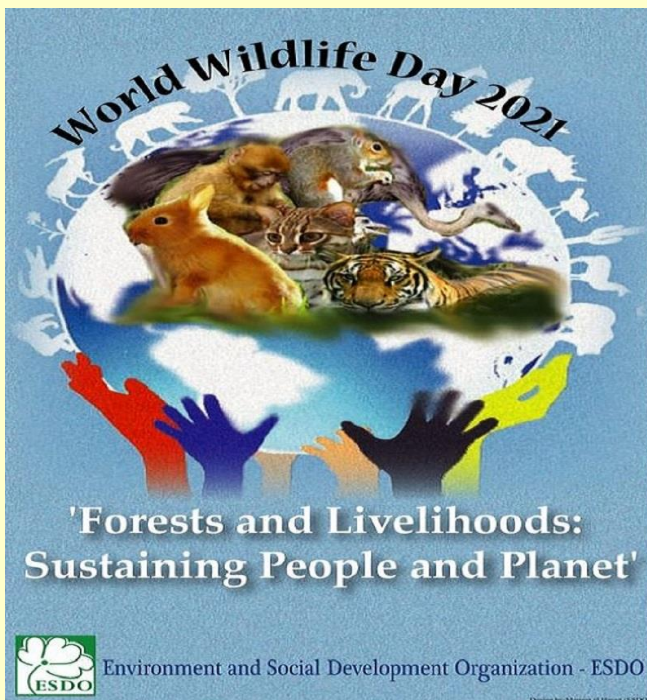
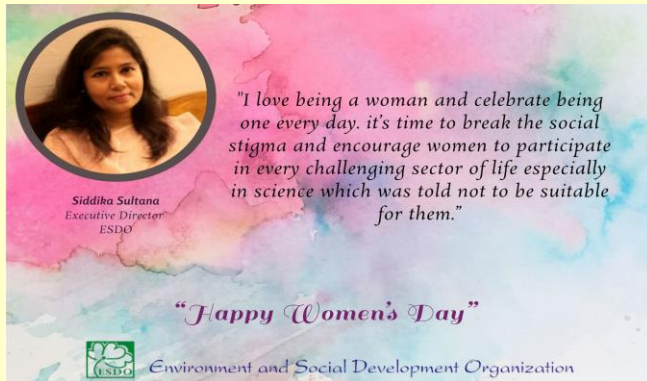


BDS has banned mercury use in the treatment of pregnant women, nursing mother and children from June, 2018. But we all must spread awareness about oral health and hygiene as well as the people need to be cautious from whom they are taking services. Happy World Oral Health Day!...
Dr. Humayun Kabir Bulbul

Say NO to Mercury Amalgam



**BE PROUD
OF YOUR MOUTH**



ESDO is working to promote the coherent implementation of environmental dimensions of sustainable development since 1990. It should be mentioned that ESDO is the first organization to ban polythene bag in 2002. ESDO's activities continue with different issues like mercury-free dentistry, single-use plastic pollution, and micro beads including lead containing products. In this quarter, ESDO primary objective was phasing out mercury free products and plastic pollution through consultations and campaigns to raise awareness among the general people, government officials, stakeholders and policymaking



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