

Announcement

Right to Food Campaign

Dharna at Jantar Mantar, outside Parliament on 25th and 26th November 2010, 10am onwards

As part of a week of action (22-26 November 2010) for Right to Food, Life and Livelihood and Against Forced Land Acquisition and Displacement

Be there to raise your voice in support of a just and comprehensive National Food Security Act

After an agonising four months of discussions, the final recommendations of the NAC for the National Food Security Bill are extremely disappointing. The enactment of the NFSA could have helped the country overcome the gravest problem facing us today – that of declining food availability and an agrarian crisis. The recommendations however essentially deal only with a cereal-based targeted PDS and are a far cry from the comprehensive approach required to truly ensure food security for all. While the proposed child and maternal entitlements are minimalistic, social security pensions for the destitute have been kept out of the Bill.

We are shocked that the expansion of food entitlements for all is not even being considered. Arguments of lack of resources cannot be accepted where on the other hand the same government provides tax exemptions and rebates of over Rs. 5 lakh crores (in 2009-2010) majorly to the corporate sector.

The working group on food security of the NAC will now be drafting the National Food Security Bill based on these final recommendations and the bill will then be tabled in the Parliament. Hence, it's immensely important that we all get our hands together and raise our voice asking for a just and comprehensive food security act.

A dharna has been planned outside Parliament at Jantar Mantar on 25th and 26th November. We request all of you to be there to extend your full support.

Summary of our demands:

- An overarching obligation to protect everyone from hunger;
- Promotion of sustainable and equitable food production ensuring adequate food availability in all locations at all times;
- Protection against forcible diversion of land, water and forests from food production;
- Protection of food sovereignty and elimination of the entry of corporate interests and private contractors in food production, distribution and governance;

- Promotion of decentralized food production, procurement and distribution systems;
- Protection of interests of small farmers especially ensuring that farmers are given remunerative prices for food items.
- A Universal Public Distribution System providing at least 14 kgs of grain per adult per month as well as 1.5 kgs of pulses and 800 gms of oil, with comparable quantities for children;
- Special food and cash entitlements for households (including an expanded Antyodaya programme for single women, old, dalits, Tribals, Disabled, Transgender, landless and marginal farmers, daily wagers, slum dwellers, migrants etc.);
- No use of technology for identification purpose which can violate the civil liberties and human rights of the people.
- Consolidation of all entitlements created by recent Supreme Court orders (e.g. cooked mid-day meals in primary schools and universalization of ICDS);
- Support for effective breastfeeding (including skilled counselling, maternity entitlements and crèches);
- Immediate moratorium on genetically modified (GM) seeds, GM food imports, and use of GM food in government food schemes.
- Universalisation with quality of the ICDS, crèches for young children, universal and unconditional maternity entitlements and cooked mid day meals for school children.
- Elimination of all social discrimination in food-related matters;
- Safeguards against cash transfers replacing food transfers under any nutrition-related scheme;
- Provisioning of Ration cards in the name of women.
- Strong accountability and grievance redressal provisions, including mandatory penalties for any violation of the Act and compensation for those whose entitlements have been denied.

The dharna on 25 and 26 November 2010 is part of a week of national action. There will be dharnas at Jantar Mantar on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of November as well regarding the Land Acquisition (Amendment) Act, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill, Special Economic Zone Act, Forest Rights Act, Coastal Regulation Zone etc.

We are,

The Steering group of the Right to Food Campaign,

Anjali Bhardwaj, Nikhil Dey, Ankita Anand (National Campaign for People's Right to Information), Annie Raja (National Federation for Indian Women), Anuradha Talwar, Gautam Modi and Madhuri Krishnaswamy (New Trade Union Initiative), Arun Gupta and Radha Holla (Breast Feeding Promotion Network of India), Arundhati Dhuru and Ulka Mahajan (National Alliance of People's Movements), Asha Mishra and Vinod Raina (Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti), Ashok Bharti and Anup Srivastava (National Conference of Dalit Organizations), Colin Gonsalves (Human Rights Law Network), G V Ramanjaneyulu (Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture), Kavita Srivastava and Binayak Sen (People's Union for Civil Liberties), Lali Dhakar and Meera Paliwal (Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan), Mira Shiva and Vandana Prasad (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan), Paul Divakar and Asha Kowtal (National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights), Prahlad Ray and Anand Malakar (Rashtriya Viklang Manch), Subhash Bhatnagar (National Campaign Committee for Unorganized Sector workers)

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