

**CONVENTION  
ON CHILDREN'S  
RIGHT TO FOOD**

Hyderabad, 7-9 April 2006

**REPORT AND  
CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

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## **Report of the Hyderabad Convention on Children's Right to Food (7-9 April 2006)**

A Convention on "Children's Right to Food" was held in Hyderabad on 7-9 April 2006. The main purpose of this Convention was to bring together individuals and organizations with a special commitment to children's right to food, to share experiences and plan future action. About 500 participants from 15 different states, who are working on this issue in various ways, took part in the Convention.<sup>1</sup>

The programme of the Convention is given in Annexure 1. The main focus was on ICDS, mid-day meals and other means of protecting children's right to food, including maternity entitlements. Special attention was given to "universalization with quality" as the core demand of a united campaign on ICDS. A "concept note" on children's right to food was prepared by the programme committee, to facilitate discussion at the Convention (see Annexure 2).

A fair amount of background material for the Convention was prepared by the programme committee, the workshop coordinators, and others. For instance, "primers" (reader-friendly booklets) on ICDS and mid-day meals, in English and Hindi, were prepared for this occasion, and also a series

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<sup>1</sup> The states represented at the Convention were: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. This event was a follow-up to the recent National Convention on the Right to Food and Work (held in Kolkata on 18-20 November 2005). A preparatory meeting took place in Delhi on 6 January 2006, when a "programme committee" was formed. The Convention was funded through individual donations as well as contributions from the participating organizations (details of accounts are available at [www.righttofoodindia.org](http://www.righttofoodindia.org))

of posters. Summaries of the concept notes prepared by workshop coordinators are presented in Annexure 3.

The Convention was held in the beautiful surroundings of St John's Regional Seminary, a perfect venue except for the ferocious mosquitoes. The premises featured a large hall for the plenary sessions, pleasant classrooms for parallel workshops, a series of stalls, and plenty of open spaces. A special crèche was set up for this event by Mobile Crèches.

The "archives" of this Convention (including the programme, concept notes, primers, posters, workshop recommendations, concluding statement, background material, etc.) are posted on the website of the Right to Food Campaign ([www.righttofoodindia.org](http://www.righttofoodindia.org)). This brief report summarises the proceedings.

### **Inaugural Plenary**

The Convention began on 7 April with keynote speeches by Jayati Ghosh, Shantha Sinha, Gangabhai Paikra and T. Sundararaman in the opening plenary.

Jayati Ghosh (Jawaharlal Nehru University) expressed her solidarity with the right to food campaign and her appreciation of earlier achievements such as the introduction of cooked mid-day meals in primary schools. She reminded the audience that India has some of the highest levels of child undernutrition in the world, along with Nepal and Bangladesh. She argued that the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) have a crucial role to play in addressing this problem. The programme is already doing quite well but it has failed to achieve its full potential because it is starved of funds, facilities and attention. Anganwadi Workers (India's "unsung heroines" as she calls them) are working in very difficult conditions and urgently need a better work

environment including adequate training, decent salaries, job security, and community support. Jayati Ghosh expressed her full support for “universalization with quality” as an agenda for ICDS and argued that finding money for this purpose is not a major problem. It can be done, for instance, by cutting defence expenditure or raising taxes.

Shantha Sinha (M.V. Foundation) commented on the relation between children’s rights and democracy. She said that “nothing can be more important for democracy than the rights of the most oppressed”. She pointed out that nutrition-related child mortality in India is equivalent to a tsunami happening every year, but does not evoke anything like the same response. Greater attention to children’s rights would be a sign of true democracy. Today, children have no voice. She welcomed the Convention as an opportunity to bring children’s rights centre-stage.

Gangabhai Paikra (Chhattisgarh Kisan Mazdoor Andolan) spoke about the nutrition situation and the right to food campaign in Surguja District, Chhattisgarh. He linked hunger with land alienation, social oppression, the degradation of natural resources, and the disempowerment of tribal communities. Child undernutrition is a major problem in Surguja but it tends to be treated casually, like other children’s issues. The campaign for mid-day meals in Surguja challenged this apathy. It also empowered marginalized communities like the Pahari Korwas, who are normally quite subdued. They stood up for their rights and the success of the campaign strengthened their confidence and unity.

T. Sundararaman (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan) elucidated various aspects of the nutrition situation India. He drew attention to the diverse manifestations of hunger and the need to take a broad view of the causes of undernutrition. Poverty is a well-recognised cause of undernutrition but this is only

one aspect of the problem. For instance, working mothers are often short of time to look after children, especially young children who require frequent feeding. Mothers’ time, and awareness of the feeding needs of a young child, may be as important as higher purchasing power for better child nutrition. This, in turn, may require overcoming patriarchal practices that deprive mothers of adequate time and knowledge. Sundararaman also pointed out that malnutrition rises sharply during the first few months of life. He stressed the importance of ensuring appropriate infant and child feeding practices (e.g. exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months). He also emphasized the vicious cycle of malnutrition and disease. Thus, a range of interventions are required to protect children’s right to food. Improving and expanding ICDS services, including nutrition counseling, has a crucial role to play in this respect.

### **Parallel workshops on ICDS**

In the afternoon of 7 April, there were eight parallel workshops on different aspects of ICDS. Before that, Vandana Prasad (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan) introduced the themes of the workshops in a short plenary, based on the concept notes prepared by the workshop coordinator(s).<sup>2</sup> This plenary was chaired by Syeda Hameed (Member, Planning Commission).

In her closing remarks, Syeda Hameed mentioned that the preparation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan was an opportunity to raise issues that had been previously neglected. The well-being and rights of children have been neglected for a long time and the country has paid a heavy price for it. She said that her main role in the Planning Commission was to ensure that children’s issues receive more attention. She volunteered to

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<sup>2</sup> The concept notes are available at [www.righttofoodindia.org](http://www.righttofoodindia.org) (for summaries, see Annexure 3).

take up any recommendations arising from this Convention with the Planning Commission, and to do her best to ensure that they are incorporated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.

Detailed notes from the parallel workshops on ICDS are being processed, and will be posted on the website of the right to food campaign ([www.righttofoodindia.org](http://www.righttofoodindia.org)). Meanwhile, the main recommendations of the workshops are summarized in Annexure 4. The overarching theme of these recommendations is “universalization with quality”: ensuring that the full range of ICDS services reach every child under six, every pregnant or nursing mother, and every adolescent girl, and also that the quality of services is radically improved.

### **Maternity Entitlements**

Along with the parallel workshops on ICDS, a workshop on “maternity entitlements” was also held. A recurrent theme of the convention was that protecting children’s right to food also requires protecting breastfeeding and maternity entitlements. Of course, these entitlements are also important in their own right for the health and nutrition of women. The summary recommendations of the workshop on maternity entitlements are also given in Annexure 4.

### **Cultural Programme**

There were plenty of cultural activities at the Convention, including a lively cultural programme on the evening of 7 April with short plays, songs and dances. The film “Kaam ka Adhikar”, a brief account of the campaign for an Employment Guarantee Act, was screened. Other cultural activities were sprinkled throughout the Convention programme. There was also a good deal of impromptu singing and dancing late into the night, much to the dismay of some of the good Fathers, who were concerned that the Seminary might

be mistaken for a Naxalite hide-out.

### **Parallel Workshops on “Action for ICDS”**

The second day (8 April) began with a brief plenary where the recommendations of the parallel workshops on ICDS were presented. Parallel workshops were then held on different tools of action for a joint campaign on ICDS: (1) Bal Adhikar Yatra; (2) Anganwadi Divas; (3) action-oriented research; (4) legal action; (5) media work; (6) use of the right to information. The recommendations of these parallel workshops are summarised in Annexure 5.

### **Parallel Workshops on Mid-Day Meals**

In the afternoon of 8 April, parallel workshops were held on mid-day meals. Each workshop began with a presentation of a recent field survey of mid-day meals in a particular state.<sup>3</sup> This was followed by an open discussion, organized around the following themes: Supreme Court orders on mid-day meals; improving the nutritional content of mid-day meals; financial allocations for mid-day meals; issues related to the appointment and work conditions of cooks and helpers; physical infrastructure required for effective mid-day meals; social discrimination in mid-day meals; resisting the “privatization” of mid-day meals; community involvement in the provision and monitoring of mid-day meals; preventing corruption in mid-day meals; and linking mid-day meals with school health services.

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<sup>3</sup> The presentations were as follows: Kumar Rana (Pratichi Trust) on mid-day meals in West Bengal; Tanushree Sood (Centre for Equity Studies) on Bihar; Meera Samson and Claire Noronha (Collaborative Research and Dissemination) on Delhi; Sudatta (Action Aid) on Rajasthan; Joel Lee (Fullbright Scholar) on social discrimination in mid-day meals.

### State-Wise Plans of Action

On 9 April, the Convention began with a short plenary, where resolutions from the parallel workshops on mid-day meals were reported (by Gurjeet, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti) and discussed. After that, the participants met in groups, state-wise, to discuss and plan future campaign activities in their respective states. Summaries of the state-wise action plans are in the process of being typed and will be posted on the website of the right to food campaign ([www.righttofoodindia.org](http://www.righttofoodindia.org)) as soon as possible. The action points that emerged from the state plans are summarised in Annexure 6.

### Concluding Plenary

The concluding plenary began with a summary presentation of the action plans prepared in the state-wise meetings. The draft "Concluding Statement" prepared by the programme committee was then presented to the audience by Jean Drèze (G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad), and comments were invited. The final Statement, revised by the programme committee in the light of these comments, is given below.<sup>4</sup>

Before retiring, Jean Drèze shared a few thoughts on the campaign. He reminded the audience that 9 April was a special day, as the first major activity of the Right to Food Campaign, a country-wide "action day on mid-day meals", took place on 9 April 2002. He commented on various lessons of the campaign for mid-day meals, and also of the more recent campaign for an Employment Guarantee Act. These

<sup>4</sup> The Statement is confined to essential points on which broad agreement emerged at the Convention. It should be read together with the concluding recommendations of the parallel workshops (see Annexure 4).

campaigns, he said, have shown that radical change is possible if we make organised use of all democratic means of action: legal proceedings, media campaigns, action-oriented research, policy advocacy, grassroots mobilisation, and street action, among others. These campaigns have also shown the importance of building consensus positions for united action. This is one important role of the Concluding Statement.

This was followed by a brief address from Annie Raja (National Federation of Indian Women). She reminded the audience that this campaign, along with other people's movements, had already achieved significant victories. She drew attention in particular to mid-day meals, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the Right to Information Act. The Employment Guarantee Act, she said, had been resisted tooth and nail by the Finance Ministry, the corporate media, and other vested interests. But people's initiatives such as the Rozgar Adhikar Yatra succeeded in overcoming this resistance. She argued that a similar campaign was required for children's rights and the universalization of ICDS. She pledged the National Federation of Indian Women's full support for this campaign.

In the concluding address, Kalpana Kannabiran (National Academy of Legal Aid Studies and Research) drew attention to various means of strengthening the campaign. For instance, she explained that legal action for children's right to food can be taken not only in the Supreme Court but also at "lower" levels of the judicial system such as the High Courts and even the District Courts. In Andhra Pradesh, District judges have been found to be quite effective in getting Supreme Court orders implemented. She suggested building links with judicial officers at the District and Sub-Divisional levels. She also said that aside from extending facilities such as ICDS services to all, it was important to

ensure that disadvantaged persons are able to access them. For instance, a differently-abled child (or children of differently-abled parents) may require special assistance to attend the local Anganwadi Centre. Throughout her speech, she emphasized the link between children's right to food and the fundamental right to life.

### Follow Up Plans

Many ideas for follow up activities were proposed in the parallel workshops on 'Action for ICDS' (see Annexure 5), and further discussed in state-wise meetings. Some joint activities were agreed upon in the concluding plenary, as follows:

1. **Anganwadi Divas:** There was a broad agreement on the usefulness of the Anganwadi Divas as a means of creating public interest and promoting community participation in ICDS. The 'Divas' can take place at any convenient time in any particular village or area. However it was agreed that a joint "Anganwadi Divas" would be organized throughout the country on 20 November 2006 (Child Rights Day). Preparatory activities could be taken up from 14 November (Children's Day) onwards.
2. **Bal Adhikar Yatra:** General enthusiasm was expressed for the idea of a Bal Adhikar Yatra. It was agreed that each State would be free to plan its own Yatra and the process would culminate in a joint event. A committee was formed to facilitate this process (see Annexure 5 for details of committee). A preparatory meeting is to be convened by the committee along with the Secretariat of the Right to Food Campaign.

3. **State Level Meetings:** It was decided that convention participants would convene at the State level to report back on the convention and discuss and plan follow up activities.

The Convention ended with lively *naras* (slogans). So does this report.

Godam Mein Sade Anaaj  
Phir Bhee Bacche Bhukhe Aaj!

xknke ea l M\$ vukt  
fQj Hkh cPps Hka[ks vkt!

Bachpan ko Kare Abad  
Anganwadi Zindabad!

cpi u dks djs vkckn  
vkaxuokMh ftHnkckn!

## **Convention on Children's Right to Food (Hyderabad 7-9 April 2006)**

### **Concluding Statement\***

A Convention on Children's Right to Food was held in Hyderabad on 7-9 April 2006. The main purpose of this convention was to bring together individuals and organizations with a special commitment to children's right to food, to share experiences and plan future action. About 500 participants from 15 different states, who are working on this issue in various ways, took part in the Convention.

### **Resolutions on ICDS**

One of the main themes of the Convention was the role of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in protecting the rights of children under the age of six, including their right to food, nutrition, health and pre-school education. A common understanding was achieved on a number of important points. The following resolutions on ICDS were adopted, as a starting point for action.

1. **Universalization with quality:** The universalization of ICDS is urgently required to protect the rights of children under six. Universalization means that the full range of ICDS services should reach every child under six, every pregnant or nursing mother, and every adolescent girl. It also requires a radical

\* This Statement is confined to essential points on which broad agreement emerged at the Convention. It should be read together with the concluding recommendations of the parallel workshops.

improvement in the quality of these services. Thus, our demand is not just universalization but "universalization with quality".

2. **Equity:** In the process of universalizing ICDS, priority should be given to marginalized communities. In particular, SC/ST hamlets should get priority in the creation of new Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).
3. **Basics:** "Universalization with quality" requires the following at the very least:
  - 1 The population norms for placement of AWCs should be revised. The revised norms should ensure that every child under six is within convenient reach of an AWC.
  - 1 The physical infrastructure of AWCs should be radically upgraded. In particular, all AWCs should have their own pucca building, attractively designed and with adequate space. All of them should have basic facilities including storage arrangements, drinking water, cooking utensils, toys, child-friendly toilets, etc. AWCs should also receive untied grants for improving the services in response to local requirements.<sup>1</sup>
  - 1 Training programmes for AWWs also need radical improvement. They should include special training on child care for children under three, nutrition counseling, and pre-school education.
  - 1 Each AWC should have two Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and one Anganwadi Helper (AWH) at the

1. No consensus was reached on whether AWCs need to be attached to primary schools. This was considered as an area requiring decentralized, flexible decisions based on local circumstances, rather than a central policy.

very least. One Anganwadi Worker should be in charge of looking after children below the age of three – the most vulnerable and neglected age group.

<sup>1</sup> The concerns and difficulties of Anganwadi Workers, particularly regarding excessive work burden, inadequate and delayed remuneration, and poor working conditions, need to be addressed. Their status as regular skilled salaried workers needs to be established as part of the process of institutionalizing ICDS itself. Anganwadi Helpers must receive the statutory minimum wage at the very least.

**4. Supplementary nutrition:** For children in the age group of 3-6 years, supplementary nutrition should be provided in the form of a cooked, nutritious meal at the AWCs, using locally procured food. For children below the age of three, nutritious take-home rations (THR) based on locally procured food may be provided. Supplementary nutrition should always be combined with extensive nutrition counseling and home-based interventions for both growth and development, particularly for children under 3.

**5. Day care:** Wherever required, day care services should be provided. The requisite resources, infrastructure, staff, space, training etc., should be available for this purpose. The timings of Anganwadi Centres should be sensitive to the needs of working mothers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Though the need for day care was reiterated several times, there was no consensus on the precise relationship and convergence between day care services (e.g. as part of the national crèche scheme) and ICDS. The differences in infrastructure, personnel and training requirements between these two different services (anganwadi and crèche) were also not discussed in depth. This remains an important issue for the campaign to discuss in the Future.

- 6. Community participation:** The process of “community participation” in ICDS needs to be defined and planned, and should involve all sections of the population. Untied grants should be provided to each Anganwadi Centre to encourage community innovation and quality improvements. Budget provisions for community awareness are also required.
- 7. Differently-abled children:** Special provisions should be made for differently-abled children. Also, surveys of children under six conducted by AWWs should include a survey of children with special needs.
- 8. Excluded children:** Special provisions should also be made for other marginalized groups of children, such as street children and children of migrant families.
- 9. Emergencies:** ICDS also needs to respond to disaster situations (floods, earthquakes, conflict, etc.) by opening emergency centres in the area as soon as possible.
- 10. No privatization or external funding:** There should be no privatization of any ICDS services. Moves towards privatization, such as the introduction of user fees in ICDS, or privatization in the name of community participation, should be resisted. The ICDS should be funded from government funds raised without recourse to loans or grants from agencies such as the World Bank.
- 11. Right to information:** All ICDS-related information

should be in the public domain. The provisions of the Right to Information Act, including pro-active disclosure of essential information, should be implemented in letter and spirit in the context of ICDS. All AWCs should be sign-posted and the details of ICDS entitlements and services should be painted on the walls.

**12. Eleventh Plan:** The universalization of ICDS (with quality) should be built into the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, with a specific time frame and the requisite Budget allocations.

**13. Supreme Court orders:** Supreme Court orders on ICDS in the "right to food case" (*PUCL vs Union of India and Others, Civil Writ Petition 196 of 2001*) should be immediately implemented in letter and spirit, especially orders relating to universalization with priority to SC/ST hamlets and urban slums.<sup>3</sup>

#### Resolutions on Mid-Day Meals

**1. Right to food:** Mid-day meals are not just an incentive for the universalization of education but an entitlement for children's right to food.

**2. Funds:** Budget allocations for mid-day meals should be raised.

3. A strong plea was made during the closing plenary that the campaign make a demand for Early Childhood Care and Education/ Development (ECCE/ECCD) to be recognized as a fundamental right and made legally enforceable. Though this was not discussed, it is an important action to consider in future deliberations.

**3. Infrastructure:** Proper infrastructure for mid-day meals should be mandatory, including cooking sheds, storage space, drinking water, ventilation, utensils, etc.

**4. Management:** Responsibility for the management of mid-day meals should not be assigned to teachers, to avoid disruption of classroom activities.

**5. No privatization:** There should be no privatization of mid-day meals in any form.

**6. Social discrimination:** Serious action should be taken in the event of any form of social discrimination in mid-day meals, such as discrimination against Dalit children or Dalit cooks.

**7. Equity:** Priority should be given to disadvantaged communities (especially Dalits and Adivasis) in the appointment of cooks and helpers. All cooks and helpers should be paid no less than the statutory minimum wage.

**8. Expansion of coverage:** Mid-day meals should be extended to school vacations and out-of-school children (including street children, migrant children and drop-outs).

**9. Community participation:** Community participation in the monitoring of mid-day meals should be strengthened, particularly to prevent corruption and ensure quality.

**10. School health services:** Mid-day meals should be integrated with school health services, including immunization, deworming, growth monitoring, health

checkups and micronutrient supplementation.

### **Resolutions on Support to Breastfeeding**

1. Children's right to food cannot be realized without full support to breastfeeding. This includes guaranteeing maternity entitlements for all women.
2. Specific mechanisms like creation of tripartite welfare boards and funds need to be developed for women working in the unorganized / informal sector.
3. Arrangements for nursing breaks and crèches should be mandatory on all worksites.
4. The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) should not be discontinued or diluted. Instead, it should be expanded and enhanced.

## **ANNEXURE 1: Programme of the Convention**

### **DAY 1 (APRIL 7<sup>th</sup>)**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 10.30 – 1.00 | OPENING PLENARY: Introduction to the Convention and Keynote Presentations on Children's Right to Food<br>[Speakers: Jayati Ghosh, Shantha Sinha, T. Sundararaman and Gangabhai Paikra] |
| 1.00 – 2.00  | LUNCH  |
| 2.00 – 3.00  | PLENARY: Introduction to key issues related to ICDS  |
| 3.00 – 6.00  | PARALLEL WORKSHOPS ON ICDS:  |
|              | 1. ICDS and Child Nutrition<br>(With special focus on outreach to under three's)   |
|              | 2. Pre-school Education at the Anganwadi   |
|              | 3. Covering every child: How and when?<br>(Universalization, Social Exclusion, Outreach)   |
|              | 4. Rethinking ICDS<br>(Design, Flexibility, Integration)   |
|              | 5. Community Participation in ICDS<br>(Role of PRIs, Accountability, Corruption, Transparency)   |

6. The Work Environment in ICDS  
(Workers' rights, Building capacities,  
Administration)
7. Financial and Political Resources for ICDS
8. Maternity entitlements: Theory and  
Practice

8.00 onwards: Cultural Programme

### **DAY 2 (APRIL 8<sup>th</sup>)**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 9.00 – 10.30 | PLENARY: Reports from 'Day 1' Workshops and Introduction to ICDS Action workshops  |
| 10.30 – 1.00 | PARALLEL WORKSHOPS: ACTION FOR ICDS.   |
|              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Media and Advocacy</li> <li>2. Anganwadi Divas</li> <li>3. Research Tools</li> <li>4. Right to Information and ICDS</li> <li>5. Bal Adhikar Yatra</li> <li>6. Legal and Policy Action</li> </ol> |
| 1.00 – 2.00  | LUNCH  |
| 2.00 – 3.00  | PLENARY: Reports from Workshops and Introduction of Issues Related to Mid-Day Meals  |
| 3.00 – 5.00  | PARALLEL WORKSHOPS ON MID-DAY MEALS (FIVE GROUPS)  |

All the groups will have a presentation of a recent study on MDMs and will discuss the following points in relation to the implementation of MDMs:

- Nutrition improvement
- Expansion
- Interpretation and enforcement of supreme court orders
- Exclusion
- School Health Programmes
- Community based Monitoring Mechanisms

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 5.00 – 6.00 | PLENARY: Reports from Workshops on Mid-Day Meals |
|-------------|--|

### **DAY 3 (APRIL 9<sup>th</sup>)**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 9.00 – 12.00 | PARALLEL WORKSHOPS: State-Wise Discussions on Future Action.   |
| 12.30 – 2.30 | CONCLUDING PLENARY: Summing Up and Future Action.<br>[Speakers: Jean Drèze, Annie Raja and Kalpana Kannabiran] |

## **ANNEXURE 2: Concept Note for the Convention\***

During the last five years, the “right to food campaign” has endeavoured to defend various aspects of the right to food. For instance, the campaign has played an active role in the struggle for a national Employment Guarantee Act, universal mid-day meals in primary schools, a universal public distribution system, and equitable land rights. The purpose of this convention is to bring together individuals and organisations with a special commitment to children’s right to food, to share experiences and plan future actions.

This Convention is a follow-up to the recent National Convention on the Right to Food and Work (held in Kolkata on 18-20 November 2005). A preparatory meeting took place in Delhi on 6 January 2006, when it was decided that a Convention on Children’s Right to Food would be held on 7-9 April 2006 in Hyderabad. The main focus of the Convention will be on ICDS, mid-day meals and other means of protecting children’s right to food, including maternity entitlements. Special attention will be given to “universalization with quality” as the core demand of a united campaign on ICDS.

About half of Indian children are malnourished, and there are no signs of any rapid improvements in this figure. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is supposed to address the health, nutrition and pre-school needs of children below the age of six. It is, in fact, the only government programme that addresses the rights and needs of this age group. However, the coverage of ICDS is quite limited, and

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\* Prepared by the Programme Committee, based on a series of open preparatory meetings.

the quality of the programme is also quite poor. “Universalization with quality” is urgently required to protect the fundamental rights of children under the age of six.

The universalization of ICDS, with quality improvements, is one of the core commitments of the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). It is also necessary for compliance with Supreme Court orders. These political and legal obligations present a real opportunity to achieve “universalization with quality” in the near future. However, public pressure is required to hold the state accountable to these obligations.

In this respect, there is much to learn from the campaign for universal, nutritious mid-day meals in primary schools. Mid-day meals help to protect children from hunger, to ensure regular attendance in school, and to impart egalitarian values at a young age. On 28 November 2001, the Supreme Court passed an order calling for the universalisation of both mid-day meals and ICDS. Following public action and mass protests, the mid-day meal scheme is now universal, and is functional to varying extents throughout the country. Important challenges remain, relating for instance to corruption, social discrimination, the quality of mid-day meals, their nutritional content, and so on. Nevertheless, some progress has been made, and the fact that a national consensus has been built about every school-going child being entitled to a nutritious mid-day meal is a real achievement.

On the other hand, not enough has been done towards universalizing ICDS or improving the quality of this vital programme. The Supreme Court orders direct the Central and State governments to ensure that there is a functional Anganwadi “in every settlement”. Supplementary nutrition is to be provided to each child under the age of 6 years as well as to all pregnant or nursing mothers. However, only one fourth of India’s 16 crore children in the 0-6 age group

are covered under the supplementary nutrition component of ICDS. The coverage of settlements is also highly inadequate: there are about 7 lakh Anganwadis in the country, compared with an estimated 17 lakh required for universal coverage based on existing norms. The quality of services and implementation varies a lot across the country, with some states doing much better than others. Even the design of ICDS needs radical improvement if the programme is to achieve its full potential, including the vital component of pre school education as well as effective services for children under three.

For children under six months of age, the right to food essentially means the right to exclusive breast-feeding. The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) partially addresses maternity entitlements and the nutritional requirements of pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers. However, this scheme is currently languishing in most parts of the country. Maternity entitlements need much more public attention as an important element of social security for the well being of women and children, and specifically for the food security of very young children.

Thus, there is an urgent need to build pressure on governments to universalize and improve these programmes, as well as to debate and propose required reforms.

During preparatory meetings for the Convention, it was felt that many issues related to the ICDS required greater clarity. It was decided that such issues would be discussed in depth at the Convention, with the participation of both activists and experts, and that an attempt would be made to move towards a consensus on key issues. The following are some of the specific issues that were identified. Parallel workshops are planned on each of these themes.

1. ICDS and Child Health and Nutrition (With special focus on outreach to under three's)
2. Pre-school Education at the Anganwadi
3. Covering every child: How and when? (Universalisation, Social Exclusion, Outreach)
4. Rethinking ICDS (Design, Flexibility, Integration)
5. Community Participation in ICDS (Role of PRIs, Accountability, Transparency)
6. The Work Environment in ICDS (Workers' rights, Building capacities, Administration)
7. Financial and Political Resources for ICDS
8. Maternity entitlements: Theory and Practice

Similar issues arise in the context of mid-day meals. These will be addressed in a session of parallel workshops on mid-day meals. In addition, parallel workshops are planned on different means of action: (1) Media and Advocacy; (2) Anganwadi Divas; (3) Research Tools; (4) Use of the Right to Information; (5) Bal Adhikar Yatra; (6) Legal and Policy Action. It was also suggested that one session of the Convention should consist of parallel state-wise discussions, to arrive at strategies for future action in each state. For further details, please refer to the Convention programme.

This will be an action-oriented convention, built around plenary sessions, parallel workshops, cultural activities, and more. The basic aim of the convention is to share experiences and deepen our understanding of issues related to children's right to food, as well as to think of possible demands and action for the future. Your participation is very welcome.

### **ANNEXURE 3: Introduction to Workshops**

**April 7<sup>th</sup>, 3.00 to 6.00 p.m.**

#### **1. ICDS and Child Nutrition (With special focus on outreach to under three's)**

**Co-ordinated by Sulakshana**

This workshop will focus on child nutrition and the role ICDS can play in enhancing it. The extent and magnitude of child nutrition and the significance of focusing on children under three will be discussed. In this context, the role of ICDS in reducing child malnutrition will be looked at, while addressing specific issues such as measurement of malnutrition, local vs. processed food, take home rations vs. centre-based feeding and linkages with health services.

#### **2. Pre-school Education at the Anganwadi**

**Co-ordinated by Mridula Bajaj**

In the absence of any other government planning for this age group (3 to 6 years) state responsibility for pre-school lies only with the ICDS. This special workshop plans to build a firm understanding of the characteristics of this age group, how they learn and thus the implications for programme content and structure. Focus will also be on building sensitivity about the learning needs of this age group amongst the stakeholders, especially the parents and the larger community. Other related issues such as human resources required, their capacities, training facilities available as also the structural elements of the programme will also be taken up in the workshop to build a holistic understanding of the preschool component of ICDS.

#### **3. Covering every child: How and when?**

**(Universalisation, Social Exclusion, Outreach)**

**Co-ordinated by Dipa Sinha and Tanushree Sood**

The workshop will look at the requirements to universalise ICDS in order to reach every child under 6, pregnant women, nursing mothers and adolescent girls. This would include a discussion on the population norms for anganwadi centres, distance norms and norms on anganwadi worker-beneficiary ratio. Recognising special efforts need to be made to reach certain socially-excluded groups, the workshop aims to identify such groups, understand the various causes leading to such kind of exclusion and find measures for tackling the problem of exclusion and building an inclusive approach in the ICDS.

#### **4. Rethinking ICDS**

**(Design, Flexibility, Integration)**

**Co-ordinated by Devika Singh**

This workshop on rethinking ICDS will examine the strengths and weaknesses of ICDS, analyse the reasons for its poor performance, and suggest what is required to transform it. It will also try to understand the role of design in realizing objectives and to distinguish between what problems arise out of inadequate design and which ones arise from the need to strengthen implementation. Questions related to the appropriateness of the design of ICDS in meeting its objectives, adequacy of the implementation structures, role of the community and what its needs are etc. will be raised.

#### **5. Community Participation in ICDS**

**(Role of PRIs, Accountability, Corruption, Transparency)**

**Co-ordinated by Samir Garg**

This workshop will focus on experiences and possibilities of community involvement in ICDS. Some field experiences will

be shared followed by a discussion. The discussion will be mainly on how PRIs can solve some of the governance issues in ICDS to ensure greater access and improved services for children and secondly on issues of ensuring accountability, transparency and limiting corruption in ICDS.

### **6. Maternity entitlements: Theory and Practice**

**Co-ordinated by Deeksha Sharma**

This workshop will have presentations on what maternity entitlements means and legal aspect of these maternity entitlements. Laws, policies and schemes related to maternity entitlements such as the Maternity Benefit Act, NMBS scheme, Janani Suraksha Yojana etc will be discussed. It will further discuss maternity entitlements in the private/corporate sector, the policy framework for maternity benefits at the national and the international level, issues related to maternity leave, nursing breaks and facilities to express breast milk and communication strategies.

### **7. The Work Environment in ICDS**

**(Workers' rights, Building capacities, Administration)**

**Co-ordinated by B.V.Vijayalakshmi and Punyavati**

This workshop will focus primarily on the work environment of Anganwadi Workers, and related issues such as training, supervision and work conditions of ICDS staff. Issues such as low wages paid to the workers and helper, poor supervisory support, minimal resources and facilities provided for undertaking ICDS activities, overloading the tasks assigned to Anganwadi Workers, inadequate training on all the services that the anganwadi worker is supposed to provide will be discussed in the context of what the present condition is and what are the changes required to improve the condition of the Anganwadi Workers and creating an environment where they are able to work effectively to protect the rights of children under six.

### **8. Financial and Political Resources for ICDS**

**Co-ordinated by Madhumita**

The workshop has been planned to discuss the commitments and subsequent manifestations in the budget made so far towards improving nutritional status of children below six years of age through ICDS. The discussion would focus essentially on the recent commitments made in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the UPA government, recommendations of the National Advisory Council (NAC), and the Supreme Court orders, vis-à-vis the present status of the programme. It would also highlight how our parliamentarians have expressed their concerns regarding the non-fulfilment of the commitments in parliament. Presentations would be made on the genesis of ICDS and its present status, political commitments and financial allocations, and Supreme Court directions with respect to universalisation of ICDS

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 10.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.**

### **9. Media and Advocacy**

**Co-ordinated by Sumita Mehta and Sachin Jain**

This workshop will begin with an introduction to advocacy and advocacy strategies. It will then look at media specifically and try to understand what the Press expects, what is media (demystifying the media), why it is important (tools of communication, credibility factor, campaign instrument) and how to use it effectively. Activities will be conducted to help understand how to create key messages, make a pitch, write a press release and manage questions. The use of alternate media will also be discussed.

### **10. Anganwadi Divas**

**Co-ordinated by Prakash, Seema and Hemlata**

This workshop will share the experiences of organizing an anganwadi divas and the significance and impact of such an

event. The details of how it can be planned for, the preparatory activities required and involving the local community will be discussed. The workshop will also discuss the possibility of planning such an event at the state, regional or national level.

### 11. Research Tools

**Co-ordinated by Jean Drèze Meera Samson and Claire Noronha**

This workshop focuses on possible uses of research in the context of children's right to food, with special reference to ICDS. Special attention will be paid to field surveys. The workshop will be divided into three parts: (1) Aspects of research methodology. (2) Recent experiences of field surveys on ICDS and mid-day meals. (3) Open discussion of possible uses of research in the ICDS campaign.

### 12. Right to Information and ICDS

**Co-ordinated by Anjali Bhardwaj and Shankar**

This workshop will give an introduction to the Right to Information Act and on the use of RTI for facilitating social audits. There will be an introduction to the principles of social audit, using social audit in relation to ICDS and a presentation of case studies by those who have used social audit as a tool in the context of ICDS.

### 13. Bal Adhikar Yatra

**Co-ordinated by Samar, Gurjeet and Vandana Bhatia**

Based on the experience of the Rozgar Adhikar Yatra, the possibility of organizing a Bal Adhikar Yatra will be discussed. The issues that the Yatra should raise, the route that it should take (whether state yatras or a national yatra), how to involve participants, raise resources, involve the media, activities to be taken in the *Yatra* such as public meetings, rallies, cultural programmes, street meetings,

rallies, dharnas and so on will be discussed.

### 14. Legal and Policy Action

**Co-ordinated by Uma Pradhan, Nandini Nayak and Anup Srivastava**

Using legal and policy action for ICDS will be discussed in this workshop. There will be an introduction to the legal action that has been taken until now, including the Supreme Court case on Right to Food. The existing Supreme Court orders related to ICDS and their policy implications will be understood. The procedures in the Court and using legal action through individual cases of negligence and discrimination and Public Interest Litigations for taking state specific instance of non-compliance to the High Court will be discussed.

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 3.00 - 5.00 p.m.**

### 15. Mid-Day Meals (Five Groups)

**Co-ordinated by (1) Navjyoti and Reetika, (2) Samir and Sudatta, (3) Meera and Claire and (4) Neeta and Shubhalakshmi (5) Vandana and Sachin**

On 28 November 2001, the Supreme Court directed the State Governments to introduce cooked mid-day meals in all primary schools. Initially, many State Governments resisted the order, but organized public pressure forced them to cooperate. Today, more than 100 million children get a cooked meal at school every day as a direct result of this campaign. This is an important step forward for children's right to food.

There are many useful lessons to learn from this campaign. It shows, for instance, that legal safeguards are essential to protect children's right to food. Without the Supreme Court's intervention, mid-day meals would not be in place today.

The campaign has also shown how various democratic means can be used to defend children's right to food: not only legal action but also media work, action-oriented research, policy dialogue, grassroots mobilization, among others. This rich experience has an important bearing on related campaigns for children's right to food, such as the campaign for "universalization with quality" of ICDS.

Having said this, there is still a long way to go in ensuring that mid-day meals reach their full potential. Well-organised mid-day meals (as in Tamil Nadu) can serve many useful purposes: enhancing school attendance, protecting children from hunger, imparting egalitarian values to children, providing local employment to poor women, among others. Mid-day meals can also be linked with other nutrition-related interventions at school, such as micronutrient supplementation, school health services, and nutrition education. However, achieving these goals requires a radical improvement in the quality of mid-day meals all over India. Ramshackle mid-day meals can do more harm than good.

The main purpose of the parallel workshops on mid-day meals is to learn from the mid-day meal campaign, assess the situation today, and identify possible directions of future action. Each workshop will begin with the presentation of a recent field survey of mid-day meals in a particular state. This will be followed by an open discussion. Among the issues that have been proposed for discussion are the following:

- 1 Further orders on mid-day meals that could be sought from the Supreme Court.
- 1 Improving the nutritional content of mid-day meals.
- 1 Financial allocations for mid-day meals.
- 1 Issues related to the appointment and work conditions of cooks and helpers.

- 1 Physical infrastructure required for effective mid-day meals.
- 1 Social discrimination in mid-day meals.
- 1 Resisting the "privatization" of mid-day meals.
- 1 Community involvement in the provision and monitoring of mid-day meals.
- 1 Preventing corruption in mid-day meals.
- 1 Linking mid-day meals with school health services.

## **ANNEXURE 4: Recommendations of Parallel Workshops on ICDS**

In this annexure, an attempt has been made to summarise the recommendations of the parallel workshops on ICDS, based on notes provided by the workshop coordinators (when available) as well as workshop reports presented in the follow-up plenary.

*Workshop 1: ICDS and Child Nutrition* [Coordinator: Sulakshana (Adivasi Adhikar Samiti)]

1. Cross-checking and verification of ICDS records should be undertaken, to check the common practice of "under-reporting" malnourishment.
2. The lack of impact of ICDS on child undernutrition cannot be taken as an excuse to prune the programme. The impact of ICDS on child undernutrition needs to be strengthened. One important way of doing this is better nutrition counselling and home-based interventions, particularly for children under the age of three.
3. Aside from nutrition counselling, ICDS should also promote frequent feeding, love and care, stimulation of the child, etc. This requires frequent home visits for which an extra Anganwadi Worker is needed. Much greater importance needs to be given to children under the age of three.
4. A third Anganwadi Worker is needed to focus on maternal health, especially the prevention of low birthweights.
5. Food provided at the Anganwadi should be a complete diet. It should be fresh, cooked and locally procured.

Adequate diversity and compatibility with local food habits are also important.

6. Problems with processed food, contractors, privatization, etc., need to be addressed.
7. Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats need to play more active role in ICDS, particularly for the purpose of monitoring.

*Workshop 2: Pre-school Education* [Coordinator: Mridula Bajaj (Mobile Crèches)]

1. Pre-school education (PSE) should be positioned within the ICDS set-up and not absorbed under primary schools. The latter would tend to formalise PSE and make it a downward extension of schooling, instead of promoting learning methods (such as play-way) appropriate for children under six. Also, primary schools are often too far for small children.
2. Good premises are of paramount importance for effective PSE. Anganwadis should have adequate space for indoor and outdoor activities, with clean and hygienic surroundings. They should be accessible, attractive, and safe. If the building is rented, there should be enough rent money to ensure that these requirements are met.
3. Different norms are required for rural and urban areas.
4. Extensive use should be made of local materials for the preparation of PSE aids, with the involvement of the community.
5. Effective PSE requires not only adequate material but also training and motivating the Anganwadi Workers. A

separate Anganwadi worker is needed for PSE, as this is a full-time activity requiring attention and commitment. Human resources for PSE are very important.

6. Supervisors and CDPOs should also give greater attention to PSE, instead of just checking records etc.

7. Building the motivation of Anganwadi Workers is also very important, especially because they work in tough conditions. For instance, awards could be given to Anganwadi Workers, based on well-defined indicators of the quality of their work.

8. PSE should be in the local mother tongue.

9. Greater attention needs to be given to diversity within the 3-6 age group, as this is a wide age range and children of different ages within that range have different levels of maturity.

10. Community support for PSE should be encouraged, and also supervision by and involvement of local bodies.

**Workshop 3: Universalization and Social Exclusion** [Coordinator: Dipa Sinha and Tanushree Sood (Centre for Equity Studies)]

1. Our goal should be “universalization with quality and equity”. In particular, priority should be given to SC/ST hamlets (especially those of “primitive tribes”) in the placement of new Anganwadi Centres.

2. Universalization should be understood to mean that all ICDS services are extended to every child under the age of six, every pregnant or lactating mother, and every adolescent girl.

3. Surveys of children under six conducted by AWWs should include a disability survey.

4. In each Anganwadi Centre, an extra Anganwadi worker should be appointed to take care of children under the age of three.

5. The universalization of ICDS (with quality) should be built into the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, with a specific time frame and the requisite Budget allocations.

6. The campaign must fight for the rights of marginalised children, such as street children, differently-abled children, and children of migrant families.

7. ICDS norms should be revised, in line with the goal of universalization with quality. The norms should be universalization-oriented in the sense that placement of Anganwadi Centres based on these norms would automatically ensure that every child under six is within convenient reach of an Anganwadi Centre.

**Workshop 4: Rethinking ICDS** [Coordinator: Devika Singh (Mobile Crèches)]

1. In the context of rethinking ICDS, “reaching every child” should be one of the main goals. All ICDS services should reach all children.

2. This involves, in particular, focusing on excluded groups such as Dalit families, children under three, differently-abled children, scattered hamlets, working women, and migrant families.

3. Population norms for ICDS should be revised to ensure universal coverage. Revised norms are particularly impor-

tant for tribal areas and dispersed hamlets.

4. Each Anganwadi Centre should have at least two Anganwadi Workers (one for the 3-6 age group and one for the 0-3 age group) and one Anganwadi Helper. An additional Anganwadi Worker is also required for outreach, counseling, home-based interventions and linkage with other services. If necessary, an extra worker should also be appointed to reach scattered hamlets.

5. Wherever required, day care services should be provided. The requisite resources, infrastructure, staff, space, training etc., should be available for this purpose.

6. Infrastructure at the Anganwadi Centres should be disa... friendly.

7. ICDS services should be available on demand to children of migrant families.

8. The pre-school education (PSE) component of ICDS should remain within the Anganwadi programme. Adequate space, play material, etc. should be provided for effective PSE. Special training for PSE should be given to Anganwadi Workers.

9. The process of "community participation" needs to be defined and planned, and should involve all sections of the population.

10. Untied grants should be provided to each Anganwadi Centre to encourage community innovation and quality improvements. Budget provisions for community awareness are also required.

12. Gaps in the training of Anganwadi Workers should be

addressed. For instance, Anganwadi Workers need training on the care of new-born babies and children under three (including their learning needs). Refresher courses are needed every two years. "Team training" with supervisors, CDPOs, ANMs and others is also essential to facilitate smooth coordination, supportive supervision and the integration of ICDS with health services.

13. Supplementary nutrition for children in the 3-6 age group should consist of cooked food, locally procured. For children under three, there should be flexibility regarding whether they should come to the Anganwadi Centre or get take-home rations (THRs) based on local foods.

*Workshop 5: Community Participation in ICDS* [Samir Garg (Adivasi Adhikar Samiti)]

1. Steps should be taken to combat corruption in ICDS, which affects all vital steps of the programme, from the selection of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers to the procurement, transportation and distribution of food. Even the ICDS statistics, especially the nutrition records, are routinely fudged.

2. The Right to Information Act has made it easier to access ICDS-related documents and fight corruption through community action (e.g. public hearings, social audits). This should be done without victimising the Anganwadi Worker. The community, Anganwadi Workers and Panchayats should work together to monitor the AWC.

3. Food purchases and contracts are a big source of corruption. Decentralization of purchases can help to fight corruption, as it is hard for the community to check corruption at higher levels. However, it is important not to overlook the fact that Panchayats themselves are often corrupt, or dominated by privileged interests.

4. Privatization in the name of community participation (e.g. introduction of user fees) should be resisted.
5. Empowerment of Anganwadi Workers is important to fight corruption. Insecurity and disempowerment makes it harder for them to resist corruption.

**Workshop 6: Maternity entitlements** [Coordinator: Deeksha Sharma (Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India)]

1. Maternity entitlements should be enforced in the private sector. This involves organising through trade unions, self-help groups, Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc., and building capacity to demand and monitor maternity entitlements at the local level.
2. Tripartite associations (involving employers, employees and the government) also have an important role to play in this respect.
3. Policy advocacy should focus inter alia on ratification of the ILO Convention, continuation and expansion of the entitlements provided under the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS), and mobilisation of public funds or social insurance to cover all women with maternity entitlements.
4. Information on maternity entitlements, including the relevant Acts, should be widely disseminated through various media, using accessible language. Employers should also be informed and sensitised.
5. The ICDS staff should be expanded to make it possible to provide day care and crèche facilities under ICDS.

**Workshop 7: Work environment in ICDS** [Coordinator: B.V.Vijayalakshmi (AITUC) and Punyavati (CITU)]

1. Anganwadi Centres need adequate buildings including ample space, storage facilities, PSE equipment, a playground, child-friendly toilets etc. Anganwadi Centres should also be secure, so that parents have confidence to send children. Allocations for rent of buildings are very meagre and should be increased.
2. Attention should be given to the needs of working mothers, e.g. the opening hours of Anganwadi Centres should be suitable for working mothers.
3. Training programmes should be improved. Joint training of Anganwadi Workers should be organised with CDPOs and supervisors. Special training required for the care of children aged 0-3.
4. Community support is essential for Anganwadi Workers to do their work effectively. Even when there are "lapses" from Anganwadi Workers, the community should be sympathetic to their problems and there should be mutual support.
5. Anganwadi Workers should be protected from corruption and harassment.
6. The work burden of Anganwadi Workers should be reduced, based on independent evaluations of their work load.
7. Anganwadi Workers should be regularised. They should be recognised as government employees and get proper salaries (not just a meagre "honorarium") as well as other benefits such as pensions.
8. There should be no privatization of any ICDS services.

**Workshop 8: Financial and political resources for ICDS**  
[Coordinator: Madhumita (Haq, Centre for Child Rights)]

1. The political commitment of the National Common Minimum Programme to the universalization of ICDS (“the UPA will also universalize the ICDS scheme to provide a functional anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children”) should be matched with corresponding financial allocations.
2. The recommendations of the National Advisory Council and Parliamentary Standing Committee (160<sup>th</sup> Report to the Rajya Sabha) should be strictly followed.
3. The gap between allocation and offtake of foodgrains under ICDS needs to be filled – allocations should be fully utilised. Similarly, Central assistance to the State Governments should be fully utilised.
4. State Governments should provide District-wise and Block-wise information on ICDS allocations, and these should be debated in the State Assembly.
5. Elected representatives should take greater responsibility for raising children’s issues.
6. The planning, implementation and monitoring of ICDS should be decentralised, down to the Panchayat level.
7. There should be a “child rights cell” in the Parliament and related public bodies.
8. ICDS should be funded by the government and dependence on external funds (e.g. World Bank funds) should be avoided.

**ANNEXURE 5:**  
**Recommendations of Parallel Workshops on**  
**“Action for ICDS”**

**Workshop 1: Anganwadi Divas** [Coordinator: Seema, Prakash (Spandan Samaj Samiti) and Hemlata (Mobile Crèches)]

1. The focus of Anganwadi Divas should be on child rights, not just the Anganwadi Centre per se.
2. Children of all communities should be involved.
3. AWW and community should both be positively involved (AWW should not see this activity as being “against” her); the “gap” between AWW and community should be overcome. Local organizations (including PRIs, SHGs, NGOs, Mahila Mandals, trade unions, etc.) should also be involved, as well as ANMs, teachers etc.
4. Anganwadi Divas should be used to spread awareness of Supreme Court orders.
5. Other possible activities on Anganwadi Divas: creative painting of walls of the Anganwadi Centre; decoration of the Anganwadi; special games for children; special meal; collecting donations to improve the facilities; public meeting with parents; social audit; taking Panchayat members to the Anganwadi; media involvement; repair or improvement of infrastructure; awareness and communication campaigns; making simple toys with local materials; interaction with government officials; awards for outstanding Anganwadi Workers and Helpers; etc.
6. Anganwadi Divas may be organized at any time in a particular village, locality or State. However it was suggested

that a joint “Anganwadi Divas” should be organized throughout the country on 20 November 2006 (Child Rights Day). Preparatory activities could be taken up from 14 November (Children’s Day) onwards.

**Workshop 2: Research Tools** [Coordinator: Jean Drèze (G.B. Pant Social Science Institute) and Meera Samson and Claire Naronha (CORD)]

1. Efforts to develop research tools for children’s right to food, and to disseminate them widely (e.g. through the website of the right to food campaign), should be intensified.
2. Arrangements should be put in place to facilitate sharing of experiences and mutual learning among persons and organizations involved in action-oriented research on children’s right to food.
3. Tools for regular monitoring of Anganwadi Centres, with community participation, should be further developed and disseminated, building on earlier experiences in Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere.

**Workshop 3: Right to Information and ICDS** [Coordinator: Anjali Bhardwaj and Shankar (NCPRI)]

1. Detailed information on ICDS entitlements should be painted on the walls of Anganwadi Centres. This is also a way of making the Anganwadi more prominent and attractive.
2. The Right to Information Act should be extensively used to bring about transparency in ICDS and check corruption. In particular, the provisions on pro-active disclosure of essential information should be enforced.

3. Convene a “Right to Information Day”, when at least one (or more) ICDS-related applications are submitted under the Right to Information Act, with community involvement.

**Workshop 4: Bal Adhikar Yatra** [Coordinator: Gurjeet (BGVS), Vandana Bhatia (Centre for Equity Studies and Samar (JNU)]

1. Bal Adhikar Yatras should be launched to mobilise public action, bring everyone together, consolidate the struggle and put pressure on governments to accept our demands. It was suggested that the Yatras should be organized at the state level.
2. Key demands could relate to: the fundamental right to live with dignity; the end of hunger, undernutrition and starvation deaths; the enactment of a comprehensive law on the rights of children; and the universalization of ICDS.
3. *Bal sansad* (Children’s Parliament) could be convened in every state capital, to culminate in a similar event in Delhi - possibly on 20 November 2006.
4. A committee was formed for the purpose of planning activities leading to the Yatras. This committee consists of Gurjeet, Samar, Sohail, Roli, Sulakshana, Uma, and Lalitbhai. Others are also welcome to join the group.
5. A national preparatory workshop should be convened “in the near future”, jointly by this committee and the secretariat of the right to food campaign, to discuss the Yatras, preparatory activities, and appropriate campaign material (parchas, posters etc.).

**Workshop 5: Legal and Policy Action** [Coordinator: Anup Srivastav, Uma Pradhan Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) and Nandini Nayak (Centre for Equity Studies)]

1. We should continue to press for the implementation of Supreme Court orders at all levels.

2. Some policy recommendations were made: (a) location of Anganwadi Centres should be based not only on the number of children but also on distance; (b) budget allocations for ICDS should be raised; (c) norms are required for supervisors (e.g. one supervisor for 20 Anganwadis); (d) Anganwadis should include a day care centre for children aged 0-3; (e) there should be no cap on the number of beneficiaries per Anganwadi Centre; (f) there should be time-bound reimbursement of expenses; (g) alternative to contractors (now banned under Supreme Court orders), such as PRIs and SHGs, should be explored.

**Workshop 6: Media and Advocacy** [Coordinator: Sumita Mehta (CRY) and Sachin Jain (Vikas Samvad)]

1. The media strategy for children's right to food should revolve around a specific plan which includes:

- 1 Responding rather than reacting to the media.
- 1 Providing proper and detailed evidence.
- 1 Building rapport with media persons, respecting their professionalism.
- 1 Highlighting facts that generate curiosity and interest, rather than distorting facts.
- 1 Choosing a style that suits media's structure and needs.
- 1 Using every opportunity to interact with the media.
- 1 Convening orientations for journalists.
- 1 Forming a media team within the campaign.

## **ANNEXURE 6: Summary of State-Wise Discussions on Future Action**

On April 9, participants met in state-wise groups to discuss follow-up campaign activities in their respective states. The states represented were: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The following is a summary of the action points that emerged in the most of the state plans (based on the reports of the discussions prepared by the state groups):

1. Most of state groups felt that there was a need to involve many more groups and individuals who were working on issues related to children's right to food, but were not present at the Convention, in the campaign. State level Conventions have been planned to involve other organisations, share the proceedings of the Convention and to discuss in further detail the campaign for ICDS and MDMS.
2. States also planned to conduct meetings and jathas at the district and regional levels.
3. The groups felt that there was a need to conduct campaign and awareness activities on ICDS, MDMS and related Supreme Court orders. The groups planned to conduct activities such as wall writing, community meetings, distribution of pamphlets, street plays and cultural activities.
4. The details of conducting an 'anganwadi divas' were discussed. It was felt that having an 'anganwadi divas' would be useful in creating awareness about the issues and also ensuring community participation. It is important to involve the community and also

- the local representatives in the campaign.
5. Tentative dates and routes for a 'Bal Adhikar Yatra' at the state/regional level were discussed.
  6. Research studies/surveys on ICDS and MDMS were planned. These studies will look at how these schemes are being implemented in relation to existing norms and Supreme Court orders.
  7. Public hearings at the block/district and state level were planned for. It was felt that the Supreme Court Commissioners must be involved in these public hearings. There was also a discussion on making more frequent representations to the Commissioners' office and using it more effectively.
  8. Many groups suggested that social audits be conducted with a focus on the implementation of ICDS and MDMS.
  9. It was suggested that the Right to Information should be used to get information on ICDS that can be used for campaign.
  10. Many of the groups discussed the role of the media and felt that it should be used to a greater extent. An attempt should be made to ensure that issues related to children's right to food and also campaign activities get wider media coverage.
  11. It was also decided that the Anganwadi Workers and the workers' unions must be involved in the campaign.
  12. There was a demand that all the campaign related material that was available on the website and during the Convention should be translated into local languages. The state groups decided to work towards this.
  13. A PIL in the High Court on children's right to food, and to demand an Act on the rights of children under six, were also suggested.