

FOURTH NATIONAL CONVENTION

ON

THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND WORK

6-8 AUGUST, 2010,

Place: Meera Bhavan, Rourkela, Orissa

Dear friends,

The Steering group of the Right to Food Campaign¹ invites you and your organization to the fourth National Convention on the Right to Food and Work, to be held in Orissa from 6-8 August 2010.

This convention, convened by the Right to Food Campaign, is extremely significant in the current context where the Government on the one hand is increasingly eroding people's control over their livelihoods and resources while on the other, promising to enact a National Food Security Act that guarantees food security for all. With spiraling food prices and widespread drought experienced across the country last year, pushing people further into hunger and poverty, the principle of universality in food entitlements must be established in an urgent manner. The draft National Food Security Act proposed by the government, in fact falls far short of any such guarantee and even erodes entitlements that already exist.

The right to food for all can only be realised if water, land and forests are not diverted from food production and people's control over these resources is safeguarded. The Government has to be forced to make a commitment that nobody goes to sleep hungry. Further, with such high levels of malnutrition as in India, food security must be understood to mean "nutritional" security and not just access to cheap food grains.

It is in this backdrop that we want to discuss issues related to the question of people's right to food that are of concern to our campaign.

Among the main issues to be discussed at the convention are: the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act; the Public Distribution System; children's right to food; the agrarian crisis; social discrimination in the context of the right to food; food security of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled, and widows; farmer's suicides; coercive change of land use; displacement of people and its impact on food security; legal action for the right to food; and organisational aspects of the Right to Food Campaign. This will be an action-oriented event, structured around a series of parallel workshops, plenary sessions, cultural activities, and more.

Please consider organising meetings, workshops and conventions at the district/state level on these issues in advance of the national convention. This would facilitate better involvement of local groups and grassroots organisations at the national convention. Participating organisations are also invited to bring their campaign material (e.g. reports, posters, exhibitions, etc.) for circulation or display at the Orissa convention.

¹ The "Right to Food Campaign" is an informal network of organisations and individuals committed to the realisation of the right to food in India. We consider that everyone has a fundamental right to be free from hunger. For a brief account of the campaign's activities so far, please log into our website <http://righttofoodindia.org/>.

The cost of this convention will be met through voluntary donations and registration fees (tentatively Rs 100 per participant for three days, including food and accommodation – to be confirmed). Thus any donations that you can send will be most helpful. All participants are expected to make their own travel arrangements. Kindly book your tickets well in advance. And kindly intimate us about your participation as it will help us plan for the convention.

We request you to share news of this convention within your organization and with other interested organizations/individuals as well. The same letter in Hindi and English is attached.

For further information, please send a line to righttofood@gmail.com, check the campaign website (www.righttofoodindia.org), or contact the Right to Food Campaign secretariat at 011-2649 9563.

In solidarity,

Steering group of the Right to Food Campaign

We are,

Annie Raja (National Federation for Indian Women), Anuradha Talwar (New Trade Union Initiative), Arun Gupta & Radha Holla (Breast Feeding Promotion Network of India), Arundhati Dhuru and Sandeep Pandey (National People's Movement of India), Ashok Bharti (National Conference of Dalit Organizations), Anjali Bhardwaj, Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey (National Campaign for People's Right to Information), Asha Mishra and Vinod Raina (Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti), Colin Gonsalves (Human Rights Law Network), Kavita Srivastava (People's Union for Civil Liberties), Mira Shiva and Vandana Prasad (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan), Paul Diwakar (National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights), Subhash Bhatnagar (National Campaign Committee for Unorganized Sector workers), Jean Dreze (Former support group and Allahabad University), V.B.Rawat (Former support group and Social Development Foundation)

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