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## **COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)** **Central Committee**

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### **Press Release**

In a well attended national convention at Mavalankar hall--over 1500 delegates from across the country, the CPI(M) General Secretary, Prakash Karat, gave a call for a nationwide struggle on the demands on three main issues --relief measures for the drought affected, against exorbitant price rise and for food security. While welcoming in principle the proposal of the UPA Government for a Food Security Act, he rejected the specific suggestions made by the Central Government as retrograde. He announced the joint Left parties decision to hold state-level rallies and meetings during September-October. He said other State level parties who support the demands could also participate in the struggles.

The **National Convention For The Right To Food And Against Price Rise** at the Mavalankar Hall, was inaugurated by the Tripura Chief Minister and Polit Bureau Member Manik Sarkar and the inaugural session was addressed by eminent economists Prof. Madhura Swaminathan, and Prof. Jayati Ghosh. Polit Bureau Member S. Ramachandran Pillai chaired the session. Member of Rajya Sabha and Polit Bureau Member Brinda Karat placed the resolution on the issues before the Convention. The resolution contained three sets of demands on drought, price rise and alternative proposals for the Food Security Act.

Inaugurating the Convention Manik Sarkar emphasised that the Food Security Act that is being proposed by the Congress-led UPA Government in its present form will only institutionalise food insecurity and it will further worsen the problem of malnutrition.

The second session chaired by Polit Bureau Member M.K.Pandhe came up with the experiences of the CPI(M)'s intervention in Left ruled states as well as the constructive intervention by elected

representatives of the CPI(M) in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Speaking in this session on Left interventions, the Finance Ministers of Bengal and Kerala Asim Dasgupta and Thomas Isaac respectively outlined the governmental initiatives to provide relief to the people in the wake of rising prices. Under the innovative interventions in the two states more commodities are being distributed through the PDS and a wider criteria is being used to identify beneficiaries. Notably Kerala Government has doubled the numbers of families under the BPL category as opposed to the Centrally sanctioned number. It has also been decided to include all the SC/ST/fishing community and all in the unorganised sector under the BPL. Kerala and Bengal also supply rice at Rs.2/kg.

The Convention held two other sessions on (1) anomalies in the BPL and APL categories and problems of access to the PDS; (2) Problems connected with production and procurement. These were chaired by Polit Bureau Member, K Varadarajan, Central Committee Members, Subhashini Ali, A Vijayaraghavan, Suneet Chopra, Sudha Sundaraman, Kisan leader N.K. Shukla and youth leaders Tapas Sinha and Sriramakrishan. Nineteen speakers from as many States gave their experiences. They included delegates from tribal and scheduled caste areas, minority dominated areas, women including a widow of a suicide farmer and speakers from drought hit States.

Concluding the Convention Member of Parliament and Polit Bureau Member Sitaram Yechury said with the main opposition party the BJP in doldrums, the Government thinks they can do what they like. The opposition is from the people against price rise and food insecurity and the CPI(M) will intensify its struggle for justice and against inequalities.

**(Hari Singh Kang)**  
**For Central Committee Office**