

# **Bangladesh: Peasants for Food Sovereignty] Climate Justice, Gender, and Food Sovereignty Caravan hits the road!**

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## **Setting the Stage for the Climate Caravan**

The inaugural function of Bangladesh-India-Nepal caravan on Climate Justice, Gender and Food Sovereignty took place yesterday at 11 am on 10 November 2014 at Shahid Reshel Manch in the capital city of Dhaka,

Bangladesh. Bangladesh Krishok Federation President Badrul Alam inaugurated the caravan with the introductory presentation on the objectives of the caravan while other leaders such as, Bangladesh Kishani Sabha Organizing Secretary Asma Begum, Bangladesh Adivasi Samity President Sree Biswnath Singh, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labor Federation General Secretary Abdul Majid, Friends of Bangladesh(Australia) Member Emma, Ekattra-An Urban Youth OrganizationPresident Meghna Alam spoke in the meeting.

In the inaugural meeting Mr. Badrul Alam emphasized the question of agro-ecology as an alternative to the industrial agriculture. "The earth's future is alarming due to climate change. We need a deep cut in carbon emissions from developed countries, as they are responsible for climate change. They need to pay their historical and ecological dues to the Global South who are most affected by the climate crisis!" he told.

He also said that the main objectives of the caravan is to reach out the grassroots people and communities who are facing the serious impact of the climate change. Furthermore, it aims at building awareness among the people on the climate change and building solidarity in South Asia in order to realize the climate justice.

The declaration to be formulated with opinion of the grassroots people with regard to alternatives at the end of caravan will be put forward to Lima, Peru where the next UNFCCC takes place in December this year. He urged the policy makers to give away the false solutions to climate change like CDM, REDD+, agro-fuel, GMOs, green economy, etc. The alternative is the proposal coming out of the Mother Earth's Right conference held in Bolivia in 2010 and the proposal of La Via Campesina, an international network of peasants' organizations.

## **Bringing Bt Brinjal into Focus**

The caravan is now in Gajipur district which is 80 kilometers away from the capital Dhaka. Today in the morning session there was a plenary on issue of GMOs and its impact on environment, ecology and women at

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute(BRRI) where the test field of Bt brinjal (Egg plant). Presided over by Bangladesh Krishok Federation President Badrul Alam, the plenary meeting was addressed by Dr. Jiban Krishna Biswas who is Director General of BRRI and Dr. Ansar Ali who is Director (Research) of BRRI, Debika of Pesticide Action Network from USA and others. In the plenary the speakers criticized the authority for the introduction, approval and commercialization of Bt.brinjal in

the country. They expressed concern with environmental, ecological and health risk of Bt, brinjal. They rejected the optimism around Bt. brinjal as an answer to climate change. Already people witnessed the crops failure. They are of the opinion for local seeds of brinjal which is protected, conserved and restored by the peasant women in the country. They said that the promotion and commercialization of Bt. brinjal would make the peasant women unemployed in the rural areas.

It can be mentioned that Bt. brinjal is banned in India whereas it has been introduced in Bangladesh with the help of Mahico-Indian Pesticide Company and Monsanto. In the afternoon, four workshops took place simultaneously on GMOs issue. The outcomes of the workshops were coordinated, reported back to the plenary. In the workshops all participants were able to participate in and contribute to the discussion.

### **La Via Campesina South Asia**

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