

## **The South Asian Caravan 2011: Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty**

Welcome to the 2011 South Asian Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty Caravan! As communities around the world experience the damaging effects of climate change, grassroots mobilizations are attempting to respond to these challenges in positive and creative ways. This is particularly the case in the Global South in countries such as Bangladesh where the effects of climate change are at their most extreme. Such mobilizations – of which the caravan is an example - form part of an emerging global struggle for climate justice: for a socially just and environmentally sustainable future.

The caravan aims to address the key issues of climate change, gender and food sovereignty and their interrelationships. There is an ongoing and urgent need to inform and mobilize vulnerable peasant populations in order to respond to the threats of climate change, and to further develop international solidarity networks concerning climate change and food sovereignty. We hope that the caravan will contribute successfully to this goal!

**Bangladesh Krishok Federation**  
**Bangladesh Kishani Sabha**  
**La Via Campesina**  
**November, 2011**

# **Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty**

## **Climate Change**

The global economy depends upon the use of fossil fuels (e.g. coal, oil and gas) which provide the key energy sources for industry; industrialized agriculture and travel (cars, airplanes; shipping). However, the extensive burning of these fuels for energy over the past 150 years has created the build up of what are termed 'greenhouse gases' (GHG) such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere. These gases trap incoming heat from the sun (and radiated heat from the earth) causing a rise in the planet's temperature, or what is termed 'global warming'. As a result the planet's climate is changing in several important ways. First, temperature increases are causing heat stress for plants, increasing sterility and lowering overall productivity. They also increase evaporation from plants and soils, increasing water requirements while lowering water availability. Second, the pattern of the seasons is changing: seasons appear to have shrunk in number and variety: becoming hotter and drier. Also rainfall (e.g. Monsoon) is more unpredictable and unreliable both in its timing and its volume; winds and storms (e.g. cyclones) are increasing in strength; unseasonal events such as storms, dense fogs and heavier rains are more common; and ecological niches are shifting and biodiversity is disappearing. All of this is leading to greater uncertainty and heightened risks for farmers, and potentially eroding the value of traditional agricultural knowledge such as when to plant particular crops. Third, sea levels are rising which will contaminate coastal freshwater aquifers with salt water. Higher seas also make communities more vulnerable to storm surges which can be 5-6 metres high. For example, the storm surge from cyclone Nargis (Burma) travelled 35 kilometres inland, killing 140,000 people and flooding around 14,400 km. Fourth, there is increasing numbers of 'extreme weather events' leading to environmental and humanitarian disasters such as floods, droughts, hurricanes, and landslides, and the spread of diseases and

emergence of new diseases. As a result, the effects on agriculture are disastrous: climate change is leading to the reduction of arable land, widespread shortage of water, and diminishing food and fish stocks. Indeed, fresh water availability could fall by up to 30% in some regions, causing farming losses, surging food prices and shortages, and civil unrest.



**Floods in Thailand, 2011**

There is an inequality of responsibility for GHG emissions. For example, the U.S. with 5% of global population creates 25% of global GHG emissions. Meanwhile, 124 developing countries *together* contribute 24% of global emissions. In short, the richest 20% of the global population are creating 60% of global GHG emissions (and this rises to over 80% of emissions if we also consider historical emissions, since CO<sub>2</sub> remains in the atmosphere for over 50 years). There are also inequalities in countries' capacities to reduce such GHG emissions, as well as their ability and capacity to respond and adapt to climate change and the unequal impacts of climate change. For example, the United Nations Development Programme estimated that between 2000-2004, 98% of the 262 million people affected by climate change disasters were in the Global South (i.e. 1 in 19

people; compared to 1 in 1500 in the Global North). The planet is already witnessing climate refugees: population movements are already underway in Alaska, Bangladesh, Chad, China, Gulf of Mexico, Maldives, Nepal, and the Polynesian islands.

From the 1992 Rio Earth Summit onwards, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established to respond to global warming. The UNFCCC contained a nonbinding commitment by industrialised countries that they would reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the year 2000. It soon became clear that this was not enough to avoid dangerous climate change. Hence, at the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995, Parties (i.e. governments) began to negotiate a Protocol that would set tighter and legally binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for certain countries.

At the 3rd COP to the Convention in Kyoto, Japan in 1997, Parties agreed on the 'Kyoto Protocol' that set targets for industrialised countries to reduce their domestic emissions by an average of 5% below 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012. To help reduce the cost of meeting these reduction commitments three market-based "flexible mechanisms" were designed: Emissions Trading (ET), Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) (see below). While different in operation, these three mechanisms are based on the same principle: to allow industrialised countries to reduce emissions wherever in the world those reductions are cheapest, and then count those reductions towards their national target.

At subsequent 'COP' meetings including COP 16 in Cancun, 2010 the governments most responsible for GHG emissions have failed to agree in new binding limitations to their emissions. Indeed CO<sub>2</sub> emissions continue to rise globally. Further, a host of 'false solutions' to climate change have been proposed (e.g. the 'green economy') that are about 'greening' capitalism, or what has been called 'greenwash' i.e. creating new means of profit under the guise of environmental sustainability,

rather than actually addressing climate change. As such, these capitalist 'solutions' are termed

## **The False Solutions to Climate Change**

### ***Markets and Energy***

Drawn from an article by Stephanie Long (Friends of the Earth (FoE) Australia see [www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au))

A range of market mechanisms have been developed claiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the most significant being carbon/emissions trading and the Clean Development Mechanism in the Kyoto Protocol. These schemes allow corporations to 'offset' their emissions by either purchasing credits in a trading scheme or investing in 'clean development' projects in countries that don't have emissions reduction targets under the Protocol. Both schemes rely upon a series of flawed assumptions, including that markets will enable us to trade our way out of pollution, when the very nature of human-induced climate change is rooted in the quest to generate profits. Furthermore, they assume that governments are effective environmental regulators, when environmental regulation is reduced by laws inspired by the WTO and developed through bilateral free trade agreements, and when most contemporary conservative governments are ideologically opposed to regulation.

In essence, these schemes enable corporations to maintain (or even increase) their pollution by obtaining credits through projects in Majority World settings that rarely benefit the local people. A notorious example is the Bissard toxic waste dump in Durban, South Africa. The dump was to close due to high levels of cadmium and lead, but has remained open with World Bank funding in order to provide carbon credits through methane gas extraction. As a number of excellent reports by Carbon Trade Watch ([www.carbontradewatch.org](http://www.carbontradewatch.org)) demonstrate, carbon trading and the Clean Development Mechanism appear to be more about maintaining profits for corporations at the expense of the Majority World, rather than any concerted and ethically responsible attempt to address human-induced climate change.

A sustainable energy future for communities, nations and the world will be a combination of eco-sufficiency and eco-efficiency using decentralised renewable energy generation options. This absolutely means reducing consumption and moving away from centralised energy production. False solutions such as nuclear energy and 'clean coal' technology will only increase the political and economic power held by the uranium/nuclear and coal industries. Further expansion of these industries wastes revenues in centralised energy infrastructure and construction of power plants that lock us into dangerous energy generation for 30-50 years per plant – not to mention the enormous burden of decommissioning and rehabilitating sites, and dealing with nuclear waste for thousands of years to come: witness the catastrophe in Fukushima, Japan. Such false solutions are a dangerous and expensive distraction from the real task of addressing climate change through sustainable energy consumption and decentralised renewable energy generation.

### ***Agriculture***

Drawn from 'Agriculture and Climate Change: real problems, false solutions' by Helena Paul et al, [www.econexus.info](http://www.econexus.info)).

A range of false solutions to climate change also include agriculture, including the inclusion of soil carbon sequestration in carbon trading (especially biochar), no-till agriculture, and GM crops. In no-till agriculture soil carbon emissions are supposed to be reduced by not tilling the soil. Weeds are usually killed off through the application of herbicides instead, and genetically modified (GM) crops tolerant to herbicides lend themselves to this practice. But experience from existing large scale no-till agriculture (especially with GM soya in Argentina and other GM crops in the US) reveals negative impacts on the environment and climate, while, according to IPCC and others, the carbon sequestration capacity of no-till soils is not conclusively proven.

Biochar is proposed as a new form of soil carbon sequestration in which fine-grained charcoal is applied to the soil. The International Biochar Initiative (IBI) argues that applying

charcoal to soils would create a reliable and virtually permanent carbon sink, mitigate climate change, and make soils more fertile. However, even studies by scientists who are members of the IBI indicate high levels of uncertainty. The burning of biomass to produce charcoal is described as close to carbon neutral because greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions during combustion are supposedly offset by CO<sub>2</sub> absorption during new growth, but this ignores the impacts of conversion or degradation of the large areas of land needed to produce the quantities of biochar proposed by many advocates. Estimates range from half to one billion hectares, an amount that would cover between 1,5 and 3 times the land area of India. Furthermore, regardless of land-use impacts, burning or charring trees releases CO<sub>2</sub> which new trees can decades to sequester again. It is also unclear what percentage of black carbon will remain in the soil, for how long, and how much will be turned into CO<sub>2</sub> and emitted again.

GM crops are being advocated as likely solutions to a wide range of problems linked to climate change. In particular GM is presented as a means to increase yields on existing agricultural land, even though no crops have actually been engineered for yield increase and current GM crops have not led to increased yields but only to some temporary reduction of losses. Hundreds of patent applications have been made for so-called “climate ready” GM crops. Other promised solutions include extending the geographic and climatic range of crops and their capacity to tolerate salt, drought, heat and floods, as well as engineering plants so that applications of nitrogen fertilizer can be reduced. In fact, such crops have been heralded since the 1980s, promising drought and salt tolerant crops and nitrogen-fixation as a means to combat hunger but no such GM crops have yet been launched. At the same time GM crops have led to problems such as serious herbicide resistance among weeds, requiring additional herbicide applications, with negative impacts on environment and climate.

REDD, or reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, is based on the notion that governments, companies or

forest owners in the South should be rewarded for keeping their forests instead of cutting them down. However, the payments are not for keeping forests, but for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Hence it could allow logging an area of forest but compensating for the emissions by planting industrial tree plantations elsewhere. Also forest conservation or sustainable management measures (e.g. through the establishment of national parks) has involved large scale evictions and loss of rights for indigenous peoples and local communities. Further 'enhancement of forest carbon stocks' could result in conversion of land (including forests) to industrial tree plantations, with serious implications for biodiversity, forests and local communities. Ultimately, this will make protection of forests less likely to be achieved and will do nothing to ameliorate carbon emissions ([www.see-redd.com](http://www.see-redd.com))

Finally, biofuels – made from grains such as corn/maize - are being heralded as a clean alternative to fossil fuels. However, they are competing with food for arable land, and diverting grain away from food to fuel uses. Further, as farmers have been encouraged to set land aside for biofuel production, there has been financial speculation in grains, driving prices up higher. For example, the World Bank estimates that biofuels have forced global food prices up by 75%, and price rises in one commodity inevitably spill over to other crops.

### **Climate Change and Gender**

The effects of climate change are being particularly felt by the poor, peasants, indigenous people, children and women. Peasant women already have to negotiate the inequalities associated with patriarchal societies such as 'dual labour' (working in agriculture as well as looking after the household, though cooking, childcare etc); restrictions on mobility; lack of participation in decision-making etc. The effects of climate change then exacerbate these inequalities. Climate change is deepening the food crisis for women and their families. Women are the majority of the world's small-scale farmers and produce most of the world's

food. For example, because of their role in farming, women depend upon local natural resources: land; water, forests etc. These are the very resources that get impacted by climate change and extreme weather events. For example, water shortages caused by droughts or sea water inundations are felt acutely by women: since they are the ones who, not only use water to farm, but also fetch the water; wash clothes; and use it for cooking. According to an Oxfam Report ('Women and Climate Change', [www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca)) women are more likely to die during natural disasters than men. This higher death rate for women is directly linked to their lack of rights (when, for example, women can't leave their homes without a male escort); being unable to swim and their clothes (especially saris) getting trapped around obstacles such as trees, lampposts, doorways etc. Climate change also leads to increased illness and disease and women are the primary caregivers for the sick.

Climate change has increased floods and droughts, contributing to outbreaks of diarrhea and cholera. It has also increased the spread of malaria and dengue-carrying mosquitoes. Water-related diseases alone kill over two million people every year, most of them women and children. For indigenous women the destruction of the environment by climate change also undermines indigenous women's identity, well-being and way of life. Climate change also makes women's long workday even longer. When unpredictable rainfall makes food, fuel and water scarce, women have to walk longer and farther to collect them. This is time that could have been spent studying, earning an income or working to better their communities. What's more, long remote treks often put women at a greater risk of violence. Moreover, global warming increases the likelihood of armed conflicts over the increasing scarcity of resources and thus also leads to more violence against women. However, women have the knowledge and skills to adapt to climate change and to create sustainable livelihoods. What they need is the power, tools and resources to turn this knowledge into solutions.



**Jubilee South climate justice demonstration**

## **Climate Change and Food Sovereignty**

The global food economy is based upon the industrial grain-livestock complex of the temperate world. It is a large scale, industrialized, subsidized and fossil-fuel intensive monoculture, dependent on agro-chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers. It is controlled by transnational corporations such as Cargill and Monsanto who make vast profits. It promotes the excessive consumption of meat that requires massive land and water use. For example, 67% of all arable land globally is devoted to livestock production. One edible unit of protein from factory-farmed meat requires 100 times more fresh water and 8 times more fossil fuel energy than one edible unit of protein from grain. It depends on the massive use of fossil fuels, for synthetic fertilizers, agro-chemicals, transport; refrigeration, and plastic wrapping; which cause toxic effluence in groundwater, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal waters and the growth of algal blooms. It also causes deforestation to make way for farming; and is based upon the unequal distribution of land. As a result, approximately 30% of global carbon emissions come from industrialised agriculture.

In contrast to the global food economy, food sovereignty has been recognised by peasant movements as one of the most

important practices that enable peasant communities to both mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change. Food sovereignty implies control over territory and biodiversity (commons); self governance; ecological sustainability; the articulation of cultural difference, etc. and has acted as a point of encounter, common interest and solidarity between farmer's movements.



### **Food Sovereignty Caravan Logo, 2004**

The idea of food sovereignty was introduced by *La Via Campesina* (LVC) at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996, intended to question prevailing discourses of food security. As Raj Patel (2009) argues, dominant discourses of food security adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been primarily concerned with ensuring the adequate production and distribution of, and access to, food supplies to people. However, LVC have argued that any notions of food security must also account for the political economy of food, including issues of nutrition, social control, public health, and the political systems (e.g. power relations) existing in particular countries at specific times.



**La Via Campesina Demonstration**

Definitions of food sovereignty vary between organizations and activist networks, have changed over time, and contain inconsistencies, although common themes have emerged such as direct democratic participation and agrarian reform (e.g. the right of ‘local’ people to define their own agricultural and food policy, organise food production and consumption to meet ‘local’ needs; and secure access to water, seeds and land). Although social movement participants in LVC agree in principle to the stated core values of food sovereignty articulated by the network, they address such issues from ‘different starting points, traditions and politics’ (Patel, 2009: 671).

### **Bangladesh and Climate Change**

Bangladesh is considered to be one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and sea level rise (IPCC, 2008). Flooding due to tropical cyclones constitute a devastating hazard in Bangladesh. The coastal region is particularly vulnerable to cyclonic storm surge floods due to its location in the path of tropical cyclones, the wide and shallow continental shelf and the funnelling shape of the coast. Also, the coastal areas of Bangladesh comprise low-lying and poorly protected land which supports a large population. Only 10 per cent of the country is one metre above mean sea level. Approximately 80 per cent of Bangladesh’s

land mass is located on the floodplains of three large rivers: the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna (Karim and Mimura, 2008). Their width and estuaries allow sea surges to propagate faster and intrude far inland via lateral flooding along the rivers. Since 1970 four severe cyclones – with maximum wind speeds of 220km/h and associated surges greater than 4 meters high have hit Bangladesh (in November 1970, April 1991, May 1997, and November 2007). There is also a high vulnerability to surge flooding due to water logging and salinity (Karim and Mimura, 2008). For example, in southern Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr, in 2007, caused 3500 deaths (Karim and Mimura, 2008) while Cyclone Aila, in 2009, damaged homes and inundated the land in Satkhira district with salt water.



**Shrimp nets in salt flooded occupied land, Satkhira district.**

The country is likely to be affected by more severe cyclonic events due to climate change and sea level rise. Indeed, rising sea levels along its coast is already occurring at a greater than the global rate (of 1.0-2.0mm/year) due to global sea level rise and local factors such as tectonic setting, sediment load and subsidence of the Ganges delta (Karim and Mimura, 2008). Moreover, recent climate studies predict intensified tropical cyclones and associated storm surges with an increase in sea surface temperatures. The country's capacity to deal with cyclones has improved through the

establishment of cyclone warning and evacuation systems. These form part of the Comprehensive Disaster management Programme, established by the Bangladesh government in 2003. However, the capacity of existing cyclone shelters is inadequate to accommodate all of the people in flood risk areas, although the construction of such shelters has led in a decrease in fatalities caused by cyclones. NGOs are also working in the coastal districts on adaptation measures such as afforestation in order to slow down surge waves and stabilise coastal land (Karim and Mimura, 2008).

These climate change related effects have led some commentators to estimate that up to twenty million Bangladeshis in low lying areas could lose their homes by 2050 (Ayers and Huq, 2009). The government has initiated a National Adaptation Programme of Action (in 2005), in order to raise awareness in Parliament, civil society and the private sector. Moreover, the government established a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in 2008, the six key themes of which include food security; mitigation and low carbon development; comprehensive disaster management. However little has as yet been initiated in terms of policy (Ayers and Huq, 2009). The coping capacity in Bangladesh remains limited due to the relatively poor physical infrastructure and the political structure (Chowdhury, 2009). Hence land degradation and scarcity have been growing in Bangladesh since the 1950s. The majority of the population are poor and dependent on agriculture, and are thus more vulnerable to tropical cyclones, storm surges, floods, and droughts to which the country has been historically prone (Reuveny, 2007). For example, flooding in the country has increased in severity and frequency. For example, in 2004 severe floods destroyed over three quarters of food crops, and left 10 million people homeless. Moreover, in Bangladesh, food security for peasants has also been undermined by issues such as unequal land distribution (especially landlessness) and lack of credit. Hence climate change is emerging as an important challenge for social movements in the country that are already involved in conflicts over access to key resources.

## **Bangladesh Krishok Federation**

The Bangladesh Krishok Federation (BKF), the largest rural based peasant movement in the country, was established in 1976. Since its inception it has been actively involved in land occupation struggles in a very systematic way. From 1977 until 1991 BKF conducted various types of struggle and movements e.g. hunger strikes, sit-in strikes, public meeting, the encirclement of the local administrative offices, demonstrations, and road blocks. Through different agitational programmes, the BKF has been able to compel local government officials, at different times to make commitments about the distribution of land amongst landless men and women. Despite these commitments no concrete action was taken. However, in 1987 the then autocratic government introduced a land law called the "Land Administration Manual" on behalf of the landless people. Because of this new land law, the movement gained momentum. Since 1987, the BKF had scope to demand the distribution of *khas* (fallow) land among bona fide landless men and women as stated in the land law. In spite of great deal of pressure from the movement, the government never paid heed to landless people's demands. Finally, in late 1991, thousands of landless men and women gave an ultimatum to government demanding the immediate settlement of *khas* land for landless people. As the government refused to take any initiative, BKF persuaded landless people to occupy the *khas* land in early 1992. This time over 22,000 acres of land on 4 *chars* (small islands) in the southern coastal belt were occupied.



**BKF Land and Climate Change demonstration, Barisal.**

During the occupation movement, the BKF has encountered many impediments from the local big landowners and their *goondas* (thugs), and a few local bureaucrats working in the Land Revenue Department. Local big landowners have made several attacks on the landless people's settlements on the chars. Every time, the landowners were defeated, but the landless people had to shed blood for their victories. Many landless people have had to sacrifice their lives, but their heroic role and fearless contribution continues to be an inspiration to all those involved in the movement. In remaining in their settlements, the people have built their homes, cultivated their land, and grown different indigenous crops (e.g. rice, vegetables, and fruits). Since 1992, the land occupation movement has continued, and so far, under the leadership of the BKF, the landless people have been able to occupy 76,000 acres of *khas* land, across Bangladesh. Most of the occupations are concentrated in the south of the country and all of land has been distributed to more than 100,000 of the poorest men and women of living in the countryside. In the context of Bangladesh, this has been a large success in terms of the struggle for land rights. In the past, there were a few initiatives to occupy the land by different organizations, but they were not sustained.

In addition to the land occupation movement, BKF is also involved in other action-oriented activities, such as the fight for fair prices for farmer products, the promotion of agro-ecological and organic farming (which is our traditional farming method), subsidies for agriculture etc. A few years ago BKF started to develop the idea of food sovereignty for the farmers, and it has been advocating the protection of indigenous seeds. BKF is also against the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and multinational corporations that are the key players attempting to destroy the agricultural sector in Bangladesh. BKF has actively opposed the introduction of Genetically Modified crops in Bangladesh having had bitter experience with the introduction of hybrid crops during the Green Revolution. BKF believes in genuine agrarian reform to solve the existing problems in the rural areas. It is totally against market-led land reforms that benefit the multinational corporations and international institutions such as the World Bank.

The BKF defended women's emancipation and officially committed its' organisation to cooperate with the struggle of women. BKF has 7 associate organisations, which together form the 8 organisations ('Aath Sangathan'). These include the Bangladesh Kishani Sabha, the Bangladesh Adivasi Samiti (Indigenous People's Association), the Bangladesh Floating Labour Union, the Bangladesh Women's Floating Labour Union, the Bangladesh Rural Intellectual Front, the Revolutionary Youth Association, and the Ganachhaya Sanskritic Kendra (cultural organisation).

### **Bangladesh Kishani Sabha**

Bangladesh Kishani Sabha (BKS) officially came into existence in 1990, through a conference held in Dhaka. It is the female dimension of the farmer's community in Bangladesh and is one of the biggest of the 8 organizations. In the landless movement, Kishani Sabha has played a heroic leading role and the members of this organization have been the main force in protecting the occupied land.

Kishani Sabha has 14 major demands that have inspired women to struggle. These are:

01. To establish social, political, economic emancipation and democratic rights of peasant women, and all toiling women
02. To free women from domestic slavery and establish equal rights in all spheres of life for men and women.
03. To establish monogamy on the basis of equal rights of men and women in marriage.
04. To get rid of economic slavery (on the basis of equality) of married life of women through the participation of both men and women in social production.
05. To abolish the existence of the present master-slave relationship between men and women.



**Kishani Sabha activists, northern Bangladesh.**

06. To abolish the discriminatory inheritance system of property between sons and daughters.
07. To establish equal rights of men and women on the property achieved with the joint efforts of husband and wife in married life, and to equally distribute all the moveable and immovable

properties achieved in married life among husband and wife after divorce.

08. To free all women from illiteracy, fanaticism, superstition, blind beliefs and ugly custom.

09. To free all women for ever from the curse of the dowry system.

10. To ensure food, clothing, shelter, work, education and medical care for all women.

11. To establish just rights for men and women against bureaucratic and social bribes, corruption, oppression and injustice.

12. To ensure the participation of women in all spheres of social and state life, to struggle for subsistence wages and to abolish the discriminatory wage system for men and women.

13. To cancel the existing communal inheritance property system and to cancel the existing deprivatory act for women in Hindu community and to legal provision in order to give assurance for equal rights and dignity to them.

14. To introduce the custom of doing everything equally in terms of family and married life activities.

### **Struggles for Food Sovereignty and Climate Justice**

In addition to struggles over land rights within Bangladesh, the BKF has been active in a range of international networks, concerned with collective action around a range of issues associated with neoliberal globalisation, land rights, food sovereignty and, more recently, climate change. For example, the Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Bangladesh Kishani Sabha organized 31 workshops in different parts of Bangladesh (e.g. in Kurigram; Dinajpur; Sathkhira; Khulna; Barguna; Barisal Districts amongst others) from 17th December 2009 to 27th January 2010. Those workshops – facilitated by Cathryn Kriewaldt from RMIT University, Australia - were organized to assess the impact of climate change, and its future consequences as well as the social responsibility in this regard. Peasants commented on a range of problems that they were now encountering such as longer hotter, drier summers; decreasing water table; colder periods are becoming more intense in winter; dense fogs destroying seasonal

crops; increased frequency, speed, and strength of cyclones; increased flooding; increased tidal surges; and increased salinity. Hence, the BKF is increasingly encountering new problems associated with a changing climate and sees food sovereignty as an important response to it.

The BKF is involved in a variety of international solidarity networks, including LVC, the international peasant network established in 1993, the Asia Peasants Coalition, the South Asia Peasants Coalition, and the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty, and the Asian Social Forum and World Social Forum processes.



**Asian Peasant Coalition Banner**

Through its participation in LVC it is also part of the Climate Justice Now! network and participated in recent 'climate justice' summit protests in Copenhagen (2009). As a participant in LVC, the connections between climate change and the movement's goal of food sovereignty is recognised by BKF activists. At an LVC South Asian regional Conference held in Dhaka in 2008, the President of the BKF noted:

In order to overcome the present challenges of the climate crisis, the small peasant can play pivotal role...through their conventional farming methods [...] Food sovereignty means the people's right to produce and consume culturally appropriate and accepted healthy and adequate food and their right to define their own food and agriculture policy. The concept of food sovereignty keeps the aspirations and demands of the peasants who produce the basic food at the

centre of all thinking around the food policy. It is not based on the need of TNCs. It prioritizes the local and national economy, peasants and family farm based agriculture, artisan style fishing, pastoralist-led grazing and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. (Badrul Alam, *The Struggle*, October, 2008: 4)

As part of their commitment to this vision, the BKF has embarked on popular education on food sovereignty to peasant communities, participated in an Asian Food Sovereignty Caravan (in 2004) and participated in conferences on food sovereignty and peasant rights in Nepal and Bangladesh in 2007; a LVC-organised conference in Dhaka, 2008 on climate change and food sovereignty; and now, with funding from La Via Campesina; The Rosa Luxembourg Foundation; Misereor; Grassroots International; and More and Better Network the BKF, BKS and LVC are organizing the South Asian Caravan 2011: Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty.

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## **The South Asian Caravan 2011: Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty**

The Caravan will be hosted by the Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Bangladesh Kisan Sabha and La Via Campesina. The broad aim of the caravan is to address the key issues of climate change, gender and food sovereignty, because there is an ongoing and urgent need to (i) inform and mobilize vulnerable peasant populations throughout Bangladesh in order to respond to the threats of climate change: and (ii) build upon international solidarity networks concerning climate change and food sovereignty, such as those nurtured within *La Via Campesina* of which the BKF is a participant

In particular, the purpose of the caravan will be to deepen and extend networks of grassroots movements in South Asia and build international solidarity around specific campaigns concerning issues of climate change and food sovereignty. The caravan will also include a gender perspective on these issues throughout its duration, exploring the nexus between climate change, gender and food sovereignty. There will be participation from grassroots movements from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, as well as activists from Europe, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

The focus of the caravan will be on (i) movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies, for example concerning sustainable farming practices, and traditional and indigenous knowledges; (ii) education of communities about the effects of climate change; (iii) holding trainings and workshops; and (iv) conducting rallies.

## Caravan Participants

### Bangladesh

**Bangladesh Krishok Federation:** see above. **CONTACT:** [www.krishok.org](http://www.krishok.org)

**Bangladesh Kisani Sabha:** see above: **CONTACT:** [www.krishok.org](http://www.krishok.org)

### Nepal

#### **All Nepal Peasants Federation (ANPF)**

ANPF established in 1951 is an umbrella association landless, lower and middle class peasantry, all farm and bonded laborers, pastorals as well as indigenous and Dalit farmers, women and youths including peasants working on various farm sectors such as cereal crops, cash crops, fisherfolks, indigenous people, cattle ranching and sheep-flocking, vegetable farming, poultry farming, fruits and herbal farming, etc. The association provides leaderships to millions of peasants and their independent organizations dedicated for the welfare and dignity of the peasantry in their respective professional organizations. Currently, there are 22 national level subject specific professional organisations under ANPFa. The central office of ANPFa is located in Kathmandu, the Capital city of the country. **CONTACT:** [www.anpfa.org.np](http://www.anpfa.org.np)

#### **All Nepal Peasants' Federation (Revolutionary) (ANPFa (Revolutionary))**

ANPFa (Revolutionary), established in 1951, is the largest peasants' organization in the entire nation with more than 1.5 million registered members and a large mass of supporters throughout the country. Its membership comprises of landless, lower and middle class peasantry, all farm and bonded laborers, pastorals as well as indigenous and Dalit farmers, women and youths. As an umbrella organization it constitutes 21 different peasants' organizations. **CONTACT:** [nahendra@gmail.com](mailto:nahendra@gmail.com)

**All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA)**, the women's wing of ANPF will be participating. **CONTACT: [anwa@anwa.org.np](mailto:anwa@anwa.org.np)**

**CEFONT (General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions)**

GEFONT was established in 1989, has 27 affiliates and is largest trade union Confederation in Nepal, representing over 300,000 workers. **CONTACT: [www.gefont.org/](http://www.gefont.org/)**

**Jagaran Nepal**

Jagaran Nepal is a non-profitable and non-governmental organization that aims to nurture marginalized groups and especially for the realization of women's rights, gender equality through advocacy, pressure and partnership and assistance. It has embarked on programs on Women's Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Promotion, Women's Civil and Political Rights Promotion, Solidarity Building among Human/Women Rights Organizations and Activists, Pro-Women Policy, Peace & Reconciliation and Institutional Development. **CONTACT: [info@jagarnepal.org](mailto:info@jagarnepal.org)**

**India**

**Andhra Pradesh Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union (APVVU)**

The APVVU has campaigned for the release of bonded labour, minimum and equal wages, and the struggle for land redistribution. Mostly a federation of Dalits, it fights against the practice of untouchability and other forms of discrimination, and monitors atrocities against dalits, women and adivasis. The APPVU's main focus is to protect the rights of communities from the onslaught of globalization and climate change. **CONTACT: [chenyya@sancharnet.in](mailto:chenyya@sancharnet.in)**

**Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS/BKU: Indian Farmers' Union)** an Indian farmers' representative organization will be participating. **CONTACT: [bku.tikait@gmail.com](mailto:bku.tikait@gmail.com)**

## **Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS Karnataka State Farmer's Association)**

The Karnataka Farmers' Association came into being in 1980 as a symbol of solidarity between many small district level unions in the face of anti-farmers state government policies. At the time, farmers and peasants in Karnataka had raised their voices against low agricultural prices, the imposition of illegal taxes and the lack of essential services in rural areas. The state government killed 139 of those who protested. The KRRS continues to inspire a large number of women and men to continue the struggle for the right to life and livelihood. **CONTACT: [chukki.krrs@gmail.com](mailto:chukki.krrs@gmail.com)**

## **IMSE (Institute for Motivating Self Employment)**

Founded in 1973, IMSE organises the poor, deprived and exploited sections of the society to create awareness among them so that they can raise a united voice for a better society free from exploitation. In the past decades, IMSE has worked with more than one million people. **CONTACT: [www.imse-india.org](http://www.imse-india.org)**

## **Pakistan**

### **Anjuman Muzareen Punjab (Tenants Association Punjab)**

AMP is a revolutionary movement of peasants, workers and tenants working on government land in the Pakistani side of the Punjab, organised against government repression. AMP represents almost a 100,000 peasants in the Punjab province of Pakistan, who work and live on Pakistani government- and military-owned land, managed by the Punjab Seed Corporation.

## **Sri Lanka**

**Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform (Sri Lanka)** will be participating. **CONTACT: [monlar@slt.net.lk](mailto:monlar@slt.net.lk)**

**National Socialist Party (Sri Lanka)** will be participating in the caravan.

## **Philippines**

**Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas** (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines)

KMP is a democratic and militant movement of landless peasants, small farmers, farm workers, rural youth and peasant women. It has effective leadership over a total of 1.3 million rural people with 65 provincial chapters and 15 regional chapters nationwide. KMP coordinates the farmers' local struggles and campaigns at the national level. It is also linking up with movements and organizations of workers and other sectors of society as well as with struggles and movements internationally. KMP also struggles for immediate economic relief for the peasants and builds economic organizations, launches programs and projects such as livelihood and production, health, sanitation, disaster relief, and technology-development projects.

**CONTACT:** *kmp@kilusangmagbubukid.org*

**La Via Campesina:** formed in 1993, is the international movement which brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world. It defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. It strongly opposes corporate driven agriculture and transnational companies that are destroying people and nature. La Via Campesina comprises about 150 local and national organizations in 70 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Altogether, it represents about 200 million farmers. It is an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent from any political, economic or other type of affiliation **CONTACT:** *www.viacampesina.org*.

## **Caravan Program Schedule**

### **15-11-2011 (Tuesday)**

01. Departure of buses from the Central Office of Bangladesh Krishok Federation based in Motijheel, Dhaka 8:00 p.m.

### **16-11-2011 (Wednesday)**

01. Arrival in Bangosonarhat College field 7:00 a.m.
02. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 am.
03. Inaugural of caravan 10:00 a.m.
04. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.
05. Visit public water-body and shonarhat bridge 3:00-6:00 p.m.
06. Dinner 6:00-7:00 p.m.
07. Night halt

### **17-11-2011 (Thursday)**

01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.
02. Set for visit to Singihar Slum in the occupied railway land 8:00 a.m.
03. Tea Break and meet the people on the way 8:00 a.m.
04. Set for next stoppage (Nageshwary) 10:30 a.m.
05. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.
06. Workshops: Climate Change/Gender/Food Sovereignty 3:00-5:00 p.m.
07. Lathikhela - a traditional game show 5:30-7:00 p.m.
08. Dinner 7:00-8:00 p.m.
09. Night halt

### **18-11-2011 (Friday)**

01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.
02. Set for the next stoppage (Ghogadah-Kurigram Sadar) 8:00 a.m.
03. Rallies 10:00-1:30 p.m.

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|---|----------------|
| 04. Lunch   | 1:30-2:30 p.m. |
| 05. Workshop: Creating Solidarity Networks 1:<br>Learning/sharing experiences | 3:00-5:00 p.m. |
| 06. Night halt  |                |

**19-11-2011 (Saturday)**

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 01. Breakfast   | 7:00-8:00 a.m.  |
| 02. Set for next stoppage (Rangpur)                               | 8:00 a.m.       |
| 03. Tea Break and meet the people on the way<br>(Chaora-Rajarhat) | 9:00-10:00 a.m. |
| 04. Lunch in Rangpur  | 1:30-2:30 p.m.  |
| 05. Workshop: Food sovereignty<br>indigenous practices            | 3:00-5:00 p.m.  |
| 06. Visit Royal palace  | 5:00-7:00 p.m.  |
| 07. Dinner  | 7:00-8:00 p.m.  |
| 08. Night Halt  |                 |

**20-11-2011 (Sunday)**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 01. Breakfast  | 7:00-8:00 a.m. |
| 02. Set for next stoppage  | 8:00 a.m.      |
| 03. Visit Tista Barrage where desertification<br>process continues and tea break | 10:00-12:00    |
| 04. Again set for the next sub-stoppage  | 12:00 Noon     |
| 05. Lunch (Kishorgonj under Nilfaamri district)                                  | 2:00-3:00 p.m. |
| 06. Again set for next stoppage  | 4:00 p.m.      |
| 07. Dinner (Dinajpur City)   | 6:30-7:30 p.m. |
| 08: Night Halt   |                |

**21-11-2011 (Monday)**

- |                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Breakfast                      | 7:00-8:00 a.m.  |
| 02. Informal networking            | 8:00-10:00 a.m. |
| 03. Set for next stoppage (Bogura) | 11:00 a.m.      |
| 04. Lunch                          | 1:30-2:30 p.m.  |
| 05. Workshops on renewable energy  | 3:00-5:00 p.m.  |
| 06. Dinner                         | 7:30-8:30 p.m.  |

07. Departure for the next stoppage  
(Dhaka University in the capital) 9:00 p.m.

**22-11-2011 (Tuesday)**

01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.  
02. Workshops/Seminars (as per event registered  
with South Asian Social Forum)  
03. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.  
04. Free time (Shopping if any) 2:30 -6:00 p.m.  
05. Dinner 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
06. Night Halt

**23-11-2011 (Wednesday)**

01. Departure of for next stoppage (Narayangonj) 7:00 a.m.  
02. Breakfast 8:00-9:00 a.m.  
03. Visit hand loom industries 10:00-1:00 a.m.  
04. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.  
05. Workshop: Creating Solidarity Networks 2:  
ideas from the caravan 3:00-6:00 p.m.  
06. Dinner 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
07. Night halt

**24-11-2011 (Thursday)**

01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.  
02. Departure for the next stoppage 8:00 a.m.  
03. Tea break on the way in Munshigonj 10:00-11:00a.m.  
04. Lunch (Shariatpur) 2:30-3:30 p.m.  
05. Workshop on agro-ecology 3:00-6:00 p.m.  
06. Dinner: 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
07. Night halt

**25-11-2011 (Friday)**

01. Breakfast 7-8 a.m.  
02. Departure for the next stoppage (Khulna) 8:00 a.m.  
03. Lunch (Kalikapur, Dumuria, Khulna) 1:30-2:30

- 04. Dinner (Kaligonj, Satkhira) 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 05. Night halt

**26-11-2011 (Saturday)**

- 01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.
- 02. Workshop on climate refugees/  
visit landless territory 8:00.-11 a.m..
- 03. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- 04. Public Meeting (Zaida Nagar, Kaligonj) 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- 06. Dinner 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 07. Night halt

**27-11-2011 (Sunday)**

- 01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.
- 02. Departure for next stoppage 8:00 a.m.
- 03. Visit Mangrove Sunderban  
(Munshigonj Point) 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- 04. Lunch 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- 05. Departure for next stoppage Khulna 3:00 p.m.
- 06. Dinner (Khulna) 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 07. Night Halt

**28-07-2011 (Monday)**

- 01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.
- 02. Workshop on grassroots solutions to climate  
change (Uttar Shoilmari, Batiaghata) 8:00-10:00 a.m.
- 03. Departure for next stoppage by boat 11:00 a.m.
- 04. Lunch 1:30-230 p.m.
- 05. Visit traditional organic farming + workshop  
on Climate change/gender/food sovereignty 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- 06. Dinner 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- 07. Night halt

**29-11-2011 (Tuesday)**

- 01. Breakfast 7:00-8:00 a.m.

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|---|----------------|
| 02. Departure for next stoppage (Patharghata)                                     | 8:00 a.m.      |
| 03. Lunch (On the way, in Pirojpur)   | 1:30-2:30 p.m. |
| 04. Workshop: Creating Solidarity Networks 3:<br>future initiatives (Patharghata) | 4:00-6:00 p.m. |
| 05. Dinner  | 6:30-7:30 p.m. |
| 06. Night halt  |                |

### **30-11-2011 (Wednesday)**

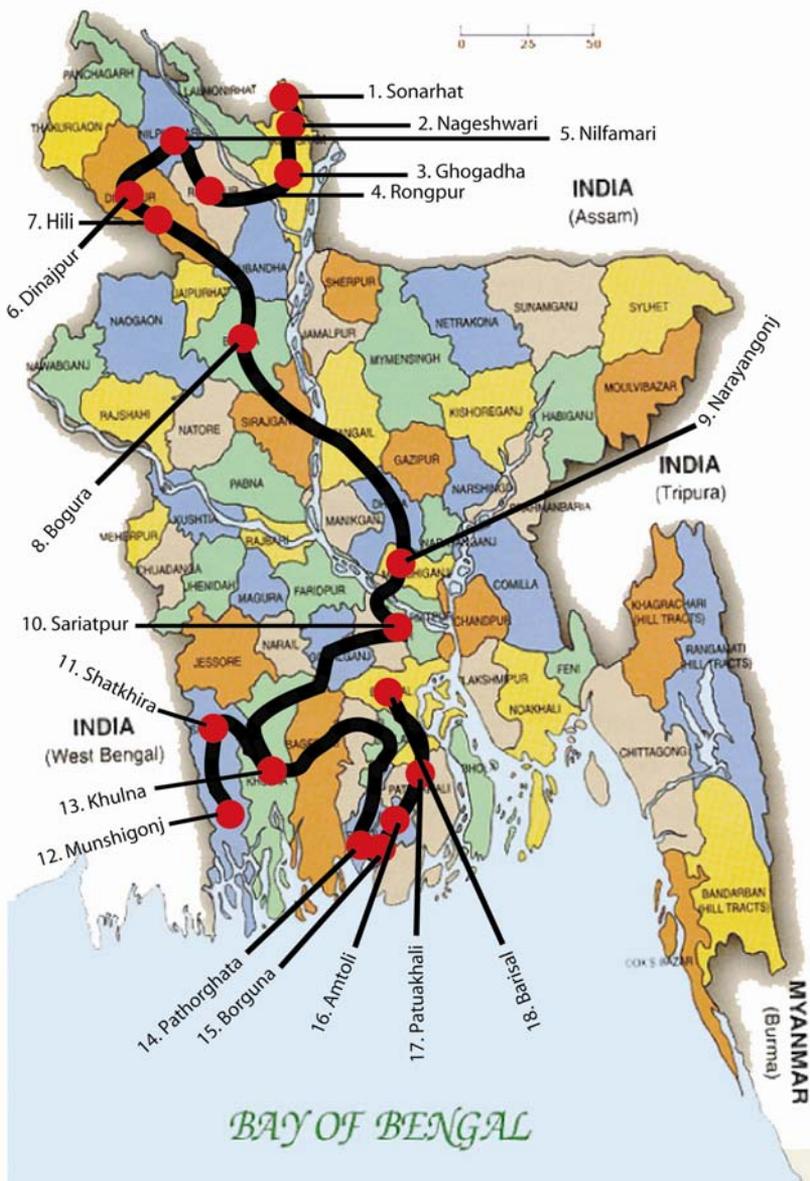
- |                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 01. Breakfast                  | 7:00-8:00 a.m. |
| 02. Rallies                    | 10:00 a.m.     |
| 03. Lunch                      | 1:30-2:30 p.m. |
| 04. Visit Kalipur, Patharghata | 3:30-6:30 p.m. |
| 06. Dinner                     | 6:30-7:30 p.m. |
| 07. Night halt                 |                |

### **01-12-2011 (Thursday)**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 01. Breakfast  | 7:00-8:00 a.m. |
| 02. Departure for next stoppage (Barisal)              | 8:00 a.m.      |
| 03. Tea break on the way (Lamua Bazar,<br>Patharghata) | 9:00 a.m.      |
| 04. Lunch (Barisal)                                    | 1:30-2:30 p.m. |
| 05. Culminating rallies                                | 3:00-5:00 p.m. |
| 06. Dinner   | 6:30-7:30 p.m. |
| 07. Leaving for Dhaka                                  | 8:00 p.m.      |

### **02-12-2011 (Friday)**

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| Arrival in Dhaka                               | Morning |
| Departure of the guest to respective countries |         |



## **Climate Justice Struggles: System Change not Climate Change**

Pablo Kala

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009, 100,000 people marched through the streets of Copenhagen, Denmark to protest against the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties negotiations on climate change ('COP 15'). They protested the failure of governments to take meaningful, urgent and coordinated policy approaches to address climate change. They also contested the neo-liberal, free market solutions being promoted in the negotiations as tools for solving the climate crisis. The demonstration formed part of a coordinated attempt by social movements, grassroots activists and campaigns from the across the world to take action on and challenge the various processes and policies contributing to climate change. For example, on 24th October 2009, a global day of action organised by the 350 campaign saw 5200 actions in 181 countries unite in a call for an equitable and meaningful solution to the climate crisis - a demand for climate justice that has emerged around the world in the past ten years. This is increasingly urgent as the floods in Pakistan and Thailand; the droughts in Kenya and India; and the devastating cyclones in Bangladesh and the Philippines attest.

### ***The emergence of climate justice***

The term 'climate justice' first appeared in a 1999 report appearing on a website followed by a November 2000 Amsterdam conference of National Committee for Sustainable Development (NCDO) of the Netherlands, during the COP6 Climate Change negotiations. The concept gained further elaboration in the Bali Principles of Climate Justice, 2002; the Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading, 2004, articulated by the Durban Group for Climate Justice; the formation of the Climate Justice Now! (CJN) network in Bali, Indonesia, during the COP14 negotiations in 2007(A); and the 'Climate Justice Action' (CJA) network as an organising platform prior to the Copenhagen mobilizations ([www.climate-justice-action.org](http://www.climate-justice-action.org)). Subsequently these ideas have been taken forward

through the Declaration of the Klimaforum (the alternative climate forum held in Copenhagen); the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Cochabamba, Bolivia, during April 2010 and the mobilisations during the COP 16 in Cancun, Brazil, and the COP 17 in Durban, South Africa (B).

Climate justice refers to principles of democratic accountability and participation, ecological sustainability and social justice and their combined ability to provide solutions to climate change. Such a notion focuses on the interrelationships between, and addresses the roots causes of, the social injustice, ecological destruction and economic domination perpetrated by the underlying logics of pro-growth capitalism.

In particular, climate justice rejects capitalist approaches to the challenges of climate change (e.g. the 'false solutions' such as carbon markets). Building on the Climate Justice Now! declarations in 2007 and 2008, and the Copenhagen Klimaforum Declaration (see <http://declaration.klimaforum.org/>), climate justice demands: leaving fossil fuels in the ground; reasserting peoples' and community control over production; re-localising food production; massively reducing over-consumption, particularly in the Global North; respecting indigenous and forest people's rights; and recognising the ecological and climate debt owed to the people's in the Global South by the societies of the Global North necessitating the making of reparations. In a further elaboration, the Cochabamba Declaration of 2010 has argued for a series of 'Inherent Rights of Mother Earth (C), and demanded that developed countries severely reduce and absorb their emissions; assume the costs and technology transfer needs of developing countries; assume responsibility for climate refugees; eliminate their restrictive immigration policies, offering migrants a decent life with full human rights guarantees in their countries; and construct an adaptation fund to assess the impacts and costs of climate change in developing countries and provide a mechanism for compensation. This understanding of climate justice is now

accepted by a broad range of climate justice campaigning networks as a motivating frame and basis for common ground for future organizing and campaigning.

### ***Climate Justice Struggles***

Climate justice actions taking place around the world are politicizing climate change and challenging capitalist business-as-usual in the places where it makes profit and destroys the environment: e.g. (i) ongoing protests against the exploitation of Tar Sands in Canada have recently targeted the White House in the United States (since the US government will be one of the principal purchasers of Canadian tar sand oil via the Keystone XL pipeline) ([www.tarsandsaction.org](http://www.tarsandsaction.org)); (ii) occupations of the Dominion Virginia Power's new coal-fired power plant in Wise County, Virginia, U.S.; (iii) a range of protests in the U.K. such as climate camps (located at sites of fossil fuel emissions such as the Drax and Kingsnorth power stations and Heathrow airport; see [climatecamp.org.uk](http://climatecamp.org.uk)) and protests against new coal exploitation (e.g. see [coalactionscotland.org.uk](http://coalactionscotland.org.uk)); (iv) ongoing struggles against biofuel projects (eg such as the Isabela Bioethanol and Cogeneration project in San Mariano state, Philippines) that are part of solidarity networks such the Asian Peasant Coalition and the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty.

Climate Justice is also about struggles to create, defend and expand commonly owned and shared resources such as land, water, seeds, and forests. These are crucial because of the ongoing attempts by multinational companies and governments to steal these resources from poor, peasant and indigenous peoples. Across the world peasant movement struggles over resources and territory are being waged, e.g. the land occupation struggles of the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* [Movement of Landless Rural Workers or MST] in Brazil and the Bangladesh Krishok (peasant) Federation [BKF] in Bangladesh. Both movements are involved in attempts to establish food sovereignty practices in their sites of struggle. Food sovereignty has been recognised by peasant movements as one of the most important

practices that enable peasant communities to both mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change. Food sovereignty implies control over territory and biodiversity; self governance; ecological sustainability; the articulation of cultural difference, etc. It also forms the basis of solidarity between different movements through networks such as the international peasant farmers' network *La Via Campesina* (LVC), the Asia Peasants Coalition, and the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty.

Also solidarities are being forged in the range of networks that have emerged that share the broad demands of climate justice. These include CJA; CJN!; the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance ([www.pacja.org](http://www.pacja.org)); the Philippines Movement for Climate Justice (a network of 100 organisations); the Thai Climate Justice Network; the Indonesian Civil Society Forum on Climate Justice; and the People's Dialogue (a coalition of South African and Latin American movements; [www.dialogosdospovos.org](http://www.dialogosdospovos.org)) that has been formed prior to the COP17 mobilisations in Durban South Africa, 2011.

### ***System Change not Climate Change***

Despite all of these encouraging developments, there are still many different understandings of climate justice and activists from different campaigns and political positions use climate justice in a range of ways from those who argue for reformist agendas, to those who argue from more socialist and anti-capitalist positions. While the concept of climate justice contributes to an ecological critique of capitalism, through an understanding of how the process of endless capital accumulation is destroying the planet's environment, more work remains to be done for climate justice to become effective in linking up and expanding struggles. Having said this, climate justice remains the most radical and coherent alternative to capitalism's endless search for profits; its exploitation of peoples; and its fuelling of climate change. However, climate justice campaigns will need to negotiate a range of issues to enable more successful solidarities to be built. First, there are considerable differences of experience between activists

and movements from the Global South and Global North that have the potential for undermining the possibilities of international solidarities. For example, different class, caste and gender positions exist within and between different movements, and also between Global Northern and Global Southern movements and organisations, such as the excessive powers of certain Global Northern NGOs and trade unions compared to Global Southern peasant farmers' organisations. Second, there have begun to be promising developments of 'red-green' alliances between some trade unions and environmental organisations. For example, in South Africa, the National Union of Metalworkers (a member of COSATU, the confederation of South African Trade Unions) is now entering into discussions with climate justice groups such as groundwork and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance about a 'green transition' from jobs that damage the environment to jobs that produce renewable energy technologies. However, the future success of red-green alliances will require trade unions to move away from narrow 'workerist' positions, that sideline or worse ignore militant NGOs (e.g. Focus on the Global South), peasant movements, and informal, precarious labour. Third, movements will need to consider collaboration with political parties *under certain circumstances* such as the 'People's Assembly' actions during the 'Reclaim Power' day of action in Copenhagen when activists from CJN; CJA; and LVC attempted to meet UN delegates from Bolivia and Tuvalu. There are - in certain cases - potential movement allies amongst political elites, but these are only workable if those elites accept the main demands of climate justice. Finally, movements should always consider a diversity of tactics, targets and terrains of struggle in order to achieve climate justice. We need system change, not climate change, and climate justice represents the most hopeful and radical way to achieve it.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>A</sup> network of over 160 organisations and networks (see [www.climate-justice-now.org](http://www.climate-justice-now.org))

<sup>B</sup>See <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bali.pdf>; [www.climate-justice-now.org](http://www.climate-justice-now.org); [www.durbanclimatejustice.org](http://www.durbanclimatejustice.org) [www.climate-justice-action.org](http://www.climate-justice-action.org)

<sup>C</sup>These include: the right to life and to exist; the right to water as a source of life; the right to clean air; the right to health; the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste; and the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted.

## **Climate Change and Peasants' Struggle in Nepal**

Nahendra Khadka

### **Introduction:**

Climate change has been a hot issue of the present day global debate. Previously; due to its forum, nature and process of discussion, it used to be felt that it's a matter of upper class elites, scientists and policy makers. And more often, it was considered as a cream-making agendum for NGOs and INGOs for accumulating sweet amount of foreign donation and the working class including peasants, labours, dalits, youths, women, indigenous peoples were tactically not represented in such forums.

Now the scene has changed. The peasants and workers around the world with other exploited communities are struggling hard against the climate change and its humane cause today. We are the largest voice makers because we are in the largest number and the most affected as well.

### **Green House Gases and Global warming:**

When the quantity of different gases including carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, ethane, nitrous oxide, ammonia etc which are produced from factories and industries, mines, fuel processing units, industrial farms, intensive farms with haphazard inputs of hazardous synthetic agrochemicals, air pollution, soil pollution, water and marine pollution; a thicker layer is created in the atmosphere that reduces the thermal emission from

the earth surface to minimal. This causes a gradual raise in the earth temperature which is known as global warming. Those gases which create such a layer and act as green house are called green house gases (GHGs) and the effect so forth is called greenhouse effect.

### **Climate Change :**

The greenhouse effect and global warming causes the raise of temperature at the 2 earth poles, melting of ice-reserve from the poles and snow from the Himalayan region, the changes in the rain-cycle, anomaly in weather cycle and its regular changes and raise in the sea level etc and affects earth environment in many dimensions. Such a change in earth and its environment is called climate change. In other words, the exponential growth of CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHGs in the atmosphere is causing climate change. It is a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It may be a change in average weather condition or the distribution of events around average.

### **Climate change and its effect:**

Some of the climate studies have shown that rate of the increment in the earth temperature was 0.74°C per century during 1800 AD but it has been accelerated so frequently that it would reach as high as 1.4° -5.8°C in the same time span till 2100 AD. The temperature of the Himalayan region has also increased in a frequent way during this period. The general temperature on Nepal in found to be increased by 0.70°C per decade during 1977 to 2000 AD. From the seasonal and regional aspect, this change is an alarming signal.

Such a regular raise in temperature affects the earth and its environment in many ways. The ice-reserve in the north and the south pole of our planet is reserving and controlling a huge amount of water as ice and regulating the temperature due to its cooling effect, on the other hand. When the earth temperature gets raised, the ice in these 2 poles starts melting and releases a huge quantity of water into the ocean that results into the raise of water level in

the seas. It, further, accelerates the rate of increment in earth temperature as well. When the sea level rises, it causes the hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones and tsunamis more often. Many places which are closer to the sea surface may submerge under water. According to some studies many places including some islands from the Maldives, Indonesia, Japan, Korea are in this process. An alarming bell has been ringing in many places of even India and Bangladesh.

The raise of water level with the melting of ice from the poles affects the water cycle that alters the weather pattern, season cycles, regular process and timing of raining; which ultimately causes the crop cycle and the daily life of the people. This alters not only the quality, quantity and the productivity of the crops, however, the whole agro-ecological system itself and ultimately affects the real life and livelihood of the peasants.

In the Himalayas, there would be other associated problems due to less snowfall, vigorous melting of snow, peculiar expansion and explosion of the snow based lakes. In the Himalayan glaciers and snow-rivers, there would be flooding in one season but dryness in the other. Due to this, the snow based rivers become the cause of flood and landslides sometimes but would remain dry on the other season. This creates a crisis in the irrigation system, aquatic flora and fauna, and biodiversity based on such rivers. This phenomenon effects the animals and plants, the system of production, timing of production and crop cycle, the method of production and the livelihood of the people in the Himalayan region. Such symptoms are coming to the surface even now. When the snow based rivers would decrease or dry during the winter and summer season, there would a water crisis for drinking, household, agricultural and industrial purposes in the whole Himalayan, Hilly and Terai region. Such crisis not only affects Nepal and Nepalese people but all the regions having Himalayas and rivers there from. This will disturb the large irrigation and Hydro-electricity projects as well.

It affects agriculture, forestry, human health, biodiversity, snow cover and aquatic to mountain ecosystems. Changes in

climatic factors like temperature, solar radiation and precipitation have potentials to influence crop production. Despite many efforts possible on combating impacts of climate change, there are still difficulties in Nepalese agriculture. With an average of 0.06oC/yea, a rise in temperature from 1975 to 2006 by 1.8oC has been recorded in the country.

Problem of frequent drought, severe floods, landslides and mixed type of effects in agricultural crops have been experienced in Nepal because of climate change. Study done on CO<sub>2</sub> enrichment technology at Khumaltar revealed that the yield of rice and wheat increased by 26.6% and 18.4% due to double CO<sub>2</sub>, 17.1% and 8.6% due to increase in temperature respectively. A crop simulation model (DSSAT) to study the effects of CO<sub>2</sub>, temperature and rain in NARC showed positive effect in yield of rice and wheat in all regions, but negative effect in maize especially in Terai. In Nepalese agriculture, the time has come for the authorities to find out adaptive measures to mitigate the effects to reduce untold natural calamities and miseries due to recent erratic weather pattern.

In such a way, climate change has many and multi-dimensional effects on earth and her dwellers.

### **Our Resistance :**

Many intellectuals try to define climate change as a technical problem caused by the non-living GHGs and recommend some falsified data and suggestions. Yes, the Green house effect and ultimately the effect of climate change is caused by the GHGs but we must not forget some issues. Who are the owners of the source of GHGs emissions? Who do own mines, factories and industries? Who have industrial farms? Who do manufacture, sell and use such a huge amount of hazardous agrochemicals? Who use vehicles? Who destruct forests? Who pollute earth? Why are they doing it? Are not there any alternative procedures which are ecofriendly? If yes, why don't they use those techniques? These are the major questions we need to ask with everybody and

understand ourselves. This directs our path of resistance towards a real and targeted direction.

Those who produce GHGs are the real causes of climate change and they must pay for it. This should be the main agenda of our struggle against climate change. We, all the peasants around the world, who are the real saviors of earth need to organize ourselves accordingly and resist the climate change and its human cause at local and global level. Nepalese peasants are organized and mobilized in this spirit and express their solidarity for all the movements of national, regional and international levels against the climate change.

### **Renewable Energy – The way to a low carbon world**

Anthony Gleeson,  
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Right now I'm sitting in the Bangladesh Krishok Foundation's office in Dhaka. It's tiny, but currently houses 10 people beavering away in preparation for next week's climate caravan. I'm an Aussie climate activist adjusting to the sights, sounds & smells of a large Asian city. I'm here for the caravan which is going to start next Tuesday.

I am not proud of the fact that my country has the highest per capita rate of carbon emissions on the planet. In fact this is one of the reasons why I decided to come on the caravan. I want to take back images and stories from real people who have to live with the consequences of our addiction to 'cheap' fossil fuels every day of their lives.

The latest peer reviewed science is screaming out to us that we need to reduce our co2 emissions to zero by 2020 or future generations are going to have to contend to living with unpredictable and catastrophic climate change.

No one approach is going to enable us to achieve such a reduction. It is going to take a variety of methods. One of the main ones in my view is the way we produce our energy. At the moment, most

countries burn fossil fuels, either coal, oil or gas to produce steam which drives a turbine which in turn produces the electricity necessary for modern life.

It is sobering to note however that more than 1 billion people in the developing world still don't have regular access to electricity. Surely they have a right to this, just like the rest of the world. How to do this safely is the conundrum.

Ok, so what is renewable energy? It is energy which is produced by nature. The main examples of this are the sun, wind, tidal, wave and geothermal.

Each of these produce energy which can then be used to drive the turbines to generate electricity. If you ask a young child would you prefer to have your electricity generated from sources which will pollute the planet, or from sources which are clean, which would you prefer? The answer is obvious.

So why are we having so much trouble in achieving the necessary changes?

At the moment fossil fuel companies have a lot of power and influence over governments all over the world. Over time, they have managed to convince governments of all persuasions that they can't do without their products. In fact, they have managed to extract billions of dollars in public money in the form of subsidies and incentives to extract their carbon intensive products.

In my country, Australia, such is their influence that they have actually written government policy on energy production. In so many ways we are addicted to fossil fuels as they have allowed more and more people to experience the affluent lifestyles of the modern world. The big question is, but what is the cost?

The fossil fuel companies have invested billions of dollars in their infrastructure. They have known for years that there are serious concerns about the resultant carbon emissions and the impact they have on our climate. However they have chosen to ignore it. Just like the cigarette companies during the 70's & 80's, when there were concerns of the health impacts of tobacco products, they have chosen to actively engage on a public

campaign of misinformation, which raised doubt about the underlying science.

Rather than respond positively to the concerns and adapt, they took a business as usual(BAU) approach. They engaged highly paid lobbyists to plant the same doubt in politicians' minds. They were ably assisted in this by a compliant media which perpetuated the same doubts in people's minds. They also repeated the mantra of jobs and the myth that base load (24/7) power was not possible. Any politician who challenged the BAU approach and suggested a change was subjected to public ridicule. In Australia, this resulted in the removal of a prime minister and a leader of the opposition, both who were suggesting public policy of transitioning to a clean energy future.

Fortunately a group of young, intelligent Aussies called Beyond Zero Emissions – BZE ([www.bze.org.au](http://www.bze.org.au)) knew what was possible and set out to show this. In 2010, they came out with their award winning “2020 Zero Carbon Australia Plan’. They showed that baseload power could be generated using technology called concentrated solar thermal. This consisted of 1000's of mirrors that focussed the sun's rays on a tower which created energy which in turn turned conventional turbines to create electricity. This was then stored in a molten salt solution to be used during the night when the sun wasn't shining.

Other groups like the grass roots based 100% Renewable Energy campaign ([www.100percent.org.au](http://www.100percent.org.au)), and the Say Yes Australia campaign ([www.sayyesaus.org.au](http://www.sayyesaus.org.au)) joined with BZE. This resulted in an unprecedented and very organized push back against this abuse of power by the Fossil Fools. Hundreds of volunteers actively engaged with their communities and held thousands of individual conversations ensuring that the true facts were known and understood. The results of this were clearly communicated to politicians of all persuasions.

The business as usual people, who as I said earlier, are very used to getting their way, poured in excess of \$10 million dollars into public misinformation, but this time it was in vain. Last week

our upper house, the Senate passed the Clean Energy package and so it became law. There is a very long way to go, but putting a price on carbon will allow us to put the true cost of polluting practices & give incentives for clean energy sources and products to find a position in our market economy. We became the 32<sup>nd</sup> country that has enshrined some sort of pricing mechanism on carbon into their national laws.

This is the start of a post carbon world and a clean renewable energy future.