

KISAN KI AWAAZ

(National Magazine of Farmers' Voice)



www.kisankiawaaz.org

Vol.1 No.10.October,2010



Dr. Krishan Bir Chaudhary

Bharatiya Krishak Samaj letter to Government

On behalf of millions small and marginal farmers of India and in continuation of our letter dated 16th July 2010 and the reply of that letter given by the agriculture ministry , writing the facts related to the Pesticide Management Bill-2008 .

Regarding protection given in other part of world, why Agriculture Department comparing our developing country with the developed countries. When the Patent Law already exists in the Country then what is the need for double benefit (extra time) is being given to MNC's for monopoly of their so called new pesticides, most of the molecules are obsolete in many Countries. More then five hundred pesticide molecules are waiting for entry into Indian markets. MNC's will sold such products at an exorbitant prices to the Indian farmers. They are trying to capture the input sector of agriculture.

We should not give the monopoly rights to MNC''s unnecessarily by giving the tool of data protection. We have raised all issues before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture also, because its our moral duty to protect our poor farmers and we should not surrender the input sector of agriculture to the multinational corporations. Why the government is adopting double standard with the most important input sector of agriculture, which is directly related with the food security of the country. This act of the government will increase the cost of production. When there is no data protection in the pharmaceutical industry in India, which is also equally important sector ,then why in agriculture sector ?

Once the data is generated in any part of the world and the molecule is found to be efficient on crop and safe for the environment , animal and human being then the further registration of the same molecule from other source is unnecessarily sheer wastage of money and energy and stopping the Indian industry to give the same molecule to the farmers at cheaper price. Any new molecule invented in the world for the first time with commercialization in any country all over the world is already patented then why separate data protection is required whereas already 17 years protection is there.

As India already signatory to WTO on Patent/IPR and this cover 17 year protection of data and it is WTO the sole authority who can increase and decrease the period of patent than why we unnecessary exercising ourselves in granting further 5 year data protection and over an above this is prerogative of international agency i.e. WTO or the patent authority to increase or decrease the period of data protection.

The data protection will be misused by misleading the government and making the interpretation by MNC's in their own interest through our corrupt government officials. Every time they will twist their data in the name of new data and will ask for further protection for 5 years so they will be using this protection for evergreen. It shows, how powerful MNC's driving our policy makers and twisting the government. Why the govt. is giving the extra protection to MNC's.

Krishan Bir Chaudhary



Editor :

Dr. Krishan Bir Chaudhary,
President,
Bharatiya Krishak Samaj,
F-1/A, Pandav Nagar,
Delhi-110091

Advisory Board :

S. P. Gulati, Sect. G.O.I., Retd.
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Designed by : Rahul Sharma
Aastha Chaudhary

Printed & Published by :

Dr. Krishan Bir Chaudhary on behalf of
Bharatiya Krishak Samaj.

Printed at Everest Press, E-49/8, Okhla
Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-20.

Published at :

F-1/A, Pandav Nagar, Delhi-110091
Mob.:9810331366, Telefax:011-22751281,
Kisankiwaaz@gmail.com
E-mail:bharatiyakrishaksamaj@gmail.com
Website:- www.kisankiwaaz.org

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Single copy Rs. 25/-, Annual Rs. 300/-

Vol. 1 No. 10

October, 2010

KISAN KI AWAAZ

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CONTENTS

Bt Brinjal Event EE1: 'The scope and adequacy' * Aruna Rodrigues	2
Beware of new US protection * Martin Khor	5
Is Genetic Engineering Liberating Women? * Dr. Vandana Shiva	7
Gutter Science: Inter-Academy Report * Dr. G. V. Ramanjaneyulu	10
UN calls special meeting to address	12
Japan targets India for increased trade * Shalini Bhutani	14
रोजगार गारंटी का सच * रमेश भट्ट	16
FTAs and Doha provisions can make MDGs * Sanya Smith	19
Holy cow Acclaimed abroad, despised at home * Devinder Sharma	22
Chemical pesticides linked to ADHD in children * David Gutierrez	23
Russia Resolves U.S. Objections to Its W.T.O. Entry * ANDREW E. KRAMER	24
Class and conflict: tensions at the heart of	25
Experts admit GM brinjal report fault * G.S. MUDUR	27
GM foods are more dangerous for children than adults * Jeffrey M. Smith's	28
NAMS distances itself from pro-Bt brinjal report	29
Academies copied to push for Bt brinjal * Dinesh C. Sharma	30
A Call to Social Movements & Organizations	31

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Suggestions for improvement are invited*

Bt Brinjal Event EE1: 'The scope and adequacy of the GEAC environmental risk assessment'

* Aruna Rodrigues

“The GEAC set too narrow a scope for environmental risk assessment (ERA) of hybrid Bt brinjal, and it is because of this overly narrow scope that the EC-II is not an adequate ERA”. -“most of the possible environmental risks of Bt brinjal have not been adequately evaluated; this includes risks to local varieties of brinjal and wild relatives, risks to biological diversity, and risk of resistance evolution in BFSB”. Prof David Andow

David Andow an acknowledged international expert on the environmental risks of GE crop plants. “Briefly, EC-II relied on dubious scientific assumptions, did not focus on realistic environmental concerns, inadequately evaluated some important environmental concerns, and ignored other real environmental concerns”. I pick out the following critical points from his definitive environmental appraisal of Bt brinjal:

- **India is the centre of the world's biological diversity in brinjal** with over **2500** varieties grown in the country and as many as **29 wild species**. Some local varieties have significant religious and cultural value.
- **The EE-1 transgene may be a second-rate Bt brinjal product**. Efficacy of EE-1 is low. It provides only 73% control of BFSB in the MST (multi-site trials) field trials (Dossier vol. 6). Given these considerations, it seems clear that the applicant has invested little in the development of a useful Bt brinjal product for India. Indeed, an inflammatory characterisation of the process so far would be a case of “transgene dumping.”
- **Nearly all brinjal farmers in India are small-scale resource-poor farmers**, who farm <1ha for all of their crops (DES 2008). They grow brinjal in small (~65 m²) plots, and sell to local village and town markets. For these farmers, brinjal production is essential for their overall economic security and well-being (APEDA 2009).
- **Brinjal fruit and shoot borer (BFSB) causes significant economic damage to brinjal throughout India for all farmers** --averaging about

30% yield loss (a comparison of yield with pest management versus no pest management). Farmers are prone to overestimate the loss to BFSB, precipitating an over-use of insecticides significantly beyond that justified by the actual economic significance of BFSB. Real losses from BFSB are higher for large-scale commercial producers than for small-scale resource-poor producers because of the way damaged fruit can be used by the small-scale resource-poor farmers. EC-II vastly over-estimated losses to BFSB.

- **Insecticide use can be reduced substantially** using integrated pest management (IPM). Useful alternative production systems for control of BFSB are being tested, actively used, and promoted in India: IPM, traditional pest management, organic production and other locally-derived methods that reduce costs associated with external inputs.
- **Many of the experiments submitted by Mahyco in the Dossier provide little relevant information about the potential impact of Bt brinjal on species in India** and do not assess any real concern in India. The **soil studies** were not designed to evaluating effects on soil health, brinjal productivity, or the productivity of other crops grown by brinjal farmers, which are the real concerns for Indian farmers. Instead, they measure microbial populations, which have little relevance for assessing these real concerns.
- **Resistance:** Any major pest control practice will select for resistant individuals in the target pest population. If enough individuals become resistant, the control fails, the pest becomes abundant and crop yields decline. The evolution of resistance to Bt crops

is a real risk and is treated as such throughout the world and the evolution of resistance in BFSB to overcome Bt brinjal is a real risk that must be managed. EC-II does not acknowledge this risk and the Dossier does not propose effective means to manage it.

□ Event EE-1 Bt brinjal poses several unique challenges because the likelihood of resistance evolving quickly is high. Without any management of resistance evolution, Bt brinjal is projected to fail in 4-12 years.

□ **EE-1 Bt brinjal is proposed as a hybrid, and is unlikely to fit well in the small-scale production systems** relying on open-pollinated varieties (OPVs) of brinjal. For small-scale resource-poor farmers brinjal is critical for creating economic security. Farmers are expected to retain only 10% of the increase in profitability from Bt brinjal, but are expected to retain 63% of the increase from brinjal IPM.

□ **The assessment does not comply with CODEX:** the Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants (Codex, 2003, CAC/GL 45-2003). The lack of compliance of EC-II to Codex highlights a serious deficiency in the EC-II assessment.

Comments by AR:

1. This risk assessment raises the key Q: on what basis did the EC II recommend Bt brinjal and the GEAC uphold that recommendation and approve it on 14 Oct. 2009? Either our regulatory bodies (GEAC/RCGM) did not bother to look at the raw data of the dossier, or are incapable of analysing such data. Either way, the Regulators and the 'Rules' governing GMOs pose an unacceptable risk to India's bio-safety on the many dimensions of the irreversible risks of GM crops and in this specific case, the risks from Bt brinjal

2. Beyond this, it is clear that the conflict of interest favouring GE crops, at the level of the STATE, not merely the proven case within the regulatory bodies, has allowed a situation where the only bio-safety dossier produced for any crop, viz. Monsanto's

Bt brinjal, is quite simply fraudulent. Much more serious is the Government Regulators' role in upholding that dossier. And what of the thousands of untested GMOs in open field trials that continue unabated and which unambiguously contravene India's Environment Protect Act (EPA)

3. Can it get worse? Yes, because the claim was that the dossier complied with the ICMR guidelines for the risk assessment of GM crops, which were supposedly in compliance with the spirit and letter of our international obligations under Cartagena and the Codex. Both are false and manifestly so.

4. What we need are 'Rules' for GMOs which DO THE CORRECT THING BY INDIA, not merely regulate this technology to the substandard ICMR guidelines, but approach it with the required sceptical analyses, an absolute requirement for risk assessment protocols for this lab-based technology which presents unique risks.

5. Can it get even worse? Yes it can. According to Andow's research, Brinjal farmers in India have a quite low suicide rate, because brinjal helps cash flow and buffers income variation in other crops. Yet, what will happen to these farmers with the advent of Bt brinjal, when we have crop failures projected to occur in 4-12 years because there is no recognition of 'resistance' of the BFSB? (In the Supreme Court, the risks for farmers, arising from 'resistance' has been the focus of the Petitioners for over 3 years. The Apex Regulator has actively denied the fact of resistance -- a thoroughly unscientific and untenable claim). We already have high rates of suicide among Bt cotton farmers attributed squarely to Bt cotton for an assortment of reasons. It would appear that the government regulator is prepared to risk our small-scale resource-poor farmers to promote GM crops and back Monsanto.

6. There is the further problem of insect shifts which we have already seen since the commercialisation of Bt cotton and which has apparently devastated the Bt cotton crop in several States. The potential for secondary pests in Bt brinjal has been examined only "cursorily" by EC II despite the "common occurrence of secondary pests on Bt crops around the world". Given the economic plight of our small-scale brinjal farmers, a thorough evaluation

of this problem was mandatory. It should have been done first for Bt cotton before examining the similar potential of a secondary pest on Bt brinjal.

□ “Imagine if the government claims there are no risks of secondary pests, and then a secondary pest arises. The government might be perceived as favouring GM seed companies at the expense of small-scale farmers”.

7. Finally, Andow's thinking and analyses rightly go beyond science, as do the Cartagena Protocols and Jairam Ramesh, when he judged the evidence that underscored his decision to impose a moratorium on Bt brinjal; he was both “responsive” to society and “responsible” to science. Andow elegantly recognises that “Brinjal plays a unique role in Indian society, and it will be important to evaluate if and how Bt brinjal may affect these values-- The narrow utilitarian analysis used by the GEAC in EC-II and the Dossier assumes that the only relevant human

value is related to money, -- Human flourishing is reduced to whatever money can buy, and issues of equity and fairness are irrelevant to this way of thinking”.

For civil society, Andow's environmental appraisal must signal a high alert. Critically, a regulator should be supported either by its own internal capacity to perform safety testing or by a specialist community of fundamental safety researchers with clear career pathways that allow them to work without the need for industry or political associations. This is presently not the case.

My own reaction is one of profound unease for our country: The Regulators' approval of Bt brinjal is a breathtaking impertinence. They thought they could use their statutory powers to pull one over the entire nation, to hand down a decision that amounted to an unacceptable betrayal of India.

Need to Develop Export Oriented Supply Chain to Ensure Broad Based Trickle Down Effects of International Trade

September 10, 2010, New Delhi: -- “There is a need for capacity building of state government officials to enable them to engage in meaningful consultation with the central government to make the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) of India address issues at the grassroots” said R.S.Ratna, Professor, Centre for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi.

He was responding to one of the concerns raised by Dr. Siddhartha Mitra, Director (Research), CUTS International, regarding the centralised formulation of the FTP of India at a multi stakeholder consultation workshop organised by CUTS International in New Delhi.

Dr. Mitra also pointed out that given the complicated supply chain of specific commodities and with a majority of the population at the grassroots belonging to the informal sector, proper benefit sharing mechanism needs to be chalked out

between the producers at the grassroots and the exporters to ensure that benefits of export percolate down at the grassroots.

The workshop registered active participation from Ms. Eva Bratholm, Counsellor, Political Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy; Mr. Manab Majumdar, Assistant Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI); and Ms. Jayati Srivastava, Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

This workshop has been organised under a flagship project of CUTS International entitled Grassroots Reachout and Networking in India on Trade and Economics (GRANITE) which aims to understand whether (or not) the FTP of India has promoted inclusive growth through generation of benefits and participation from grassroots level stakeholders.

Beware of new US protection

* Martin Khor

Geneva, 13 Sep -- With its economy in bad shape, and a Congressional election approaching, various actors in the United States seem to be preparing the ground for a bout of protectionism, with developing countries as the target. There were two examples of this last week.

First, an American trade union filed a legal case with the government accusing China of illegally subsidising exports of clean energy equipment. It wants the US government to take action against China at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Meanwhile, the New York Times published a front page article giving details of how Chinese authorities subsidise producers of solar and wind technology in allegedly unfair ways.

This is truly ironic for many reasons. On one hand, developing countries, especially China, are under tremendous pressure to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The most important measure advocated is to switch from carbon-intensive coal and oil to renewable clean energy like solar and wind.

This pressure is being applied at the global climate negotiations. In addition, the US House of Representatives has passed a bill that authorises the President to impose a "border adjustment measure" (with the effect similar to a tariff) on carbon-intensive imports of countries that are deemed not to have taken sufficient action on climate change.

Yet, on the other hand, when China takes measures to promote the production of solar panels and wind turbines, it is asked to stop these measures on the ground that they violate World Trade Organisation rules.

The United Steelworkers union has filed a 5,000-page legal case with the US administration accusing China of subsidizing exports of wind turbines, solar panels, nuclear power plants and other clean energy equipment.

The union claims that the central and provincial governments have used land grants, low-interest loans and many other measures that allow Chinese companies to gain market share at the expense of jobs in the United States.

The US administration has to decide within 45 days whether to pursue a case against China in the WTO to remove the subsidies.

The international trade expert Bhagirath Lal Das has pointed out that the WTO's subsidies agreement is biased in favour of developed countries because it allows types of subsidies that they use (especially research and development grants) while forbidding or restricting types of subsidies that developing countries tend to use.

Developing countries, because of lack of resources, cannot match the research and development subsidies that the rich countries provide.

They can however provide assistance to firms for infrastructure (such as land and utilities) and credit (bank loans at preferential rates) so as to encourage their production.

In many developing countries, such subsidised facilities are given, including land and utilities in free trade zones, and credit through development banks and to small and medium enterprises.

It would be most unfortunate if developed countries, facing high unemployment and other economic woes, were to make scapegoats of developing countries and take them to the dispute system in the WTO for using these measures.

The New York Times article, while criticising China's clean-energy subsidies, also reported that the US itself has approved US\$10 billion in grants and financing to new companies and another US\$10 billion for economic stimulus programmes in the clean energy sector, besides investing in infrastructure that benefits

industry.

Moreover, the US (and European countries) have spent trillions of dollars to rescue their financial institutions and automobile companies.

If free-enterprise and free-trade principles were to apply, these measures should not be allowed. Yet no developing country has taken WTO action against these countries.

Another imbalance in the trade rules is that the US and Europe have been allowed to continue their massive agricultural subsidies.

These enable their farm products to be sold abroad at artificially low prices, often below the production cost, thus displacing the products of local farmers in developing countries.

It is thus most unfortunate that some US groups are attacking China's measures promoting clean-energy technology. This could have a "chilling effect" on developing countries overall. The developed countries should be encouraging developing countries to develop green technologies instead of placing obstacles.

If the WTO rules restrict the measures needed towards climate-friendly technologies, then these rules should be reviewed and reformed to allow developing countries to use them to promote environmental technology.

A second case of potential US protection was in last week's economic policy speech by US President Barack Obama, that he planned to cut tax incentives given to companies that out-source their work to other countries.

"For years, our tax code has actually given billions of dollars in tax breaks that encourage companies to create jobs and profits in other countries," said Obama.

"I want to change that. Instead of tax loopholes that incentivise investment in overseas jobs, I'm proposing a more generous, permanent extension of the tax credit that goes to companies for all the research and innovation they do right here in America.

"If we're going to give tax breaks to companies, they should go to companies that create jobs in America - not those that create jobs overseas."

The Indian newspaper The Hindu has voiced concern that this may yet be another protectionist move that will affect the Indian information technology (IT) industry.

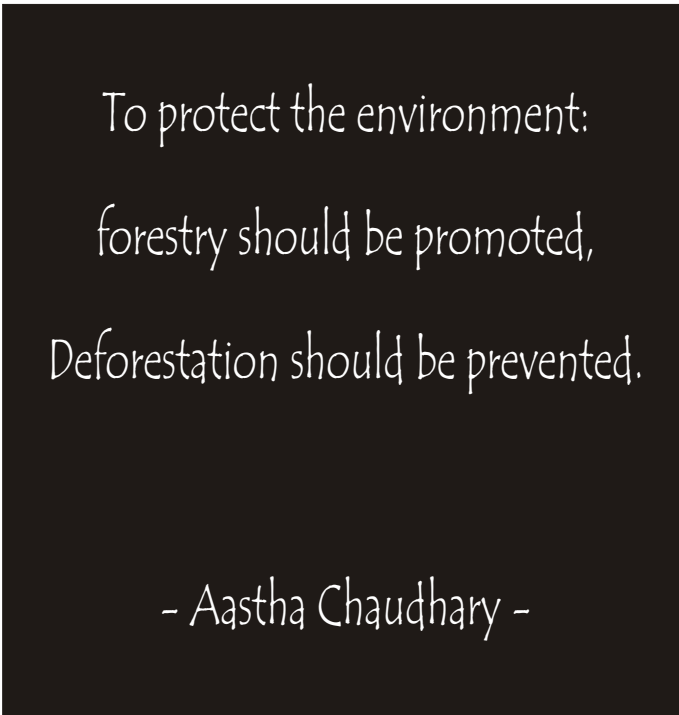
Obama's speech follows the recent passing of an executive order by the Ohio state Governor to ban outsourcing. Reacting to the order, the Indian IT sector, which gets 60 per cent of its export revenue from the US, termed the move as discriminatory and said it amounts to a trade barrier, according to The Hindu.

This move in turn follows a controversial legislation that increased fees for visas in the H-1B and L1 categories, which also hits India's IT industry.

As politicians court voters in an environment of economic downturn in the US, developing countries should be prepared and should try to counter various types of protectionism in trade, investment and fiscal measures.

SUNS #6996

***The Executive Director of the South Centre**



To protect the environment:
forestry should be promoted,
Deforestation should be prevented.

- Aastha Chaudhary -

Is Genetic Engineering Liberating Women?

More Desperate Science from Monsanto & Co. About Bt. Cotton in India Empowering Women

* Dr. Vandana Shiva

Monsanto introduced its genetically engineered Bt. Cotton in India illegally in 1997-98. As a result of a case fought in Supreme Court by the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, Monsanto Mahyco were not able to sell their Bt. Cotton seeds commercially until the 2002 planting season.

Since then, Monsanto has established monopoly in the cotton seed market through licensing arrangements with Indian seed companies and “intellectual property rights”. In India Bt. Cotton = Monsanto.

Further, since the establishment of seed monopolies and creation of dependence of farmers on seeds that must be bought every year, and increasing dependence on agrichemicals, the cotton areas have become zones of deep indebtedness for farmers. And un-payable debt is pushing farmers to suicide.

Most of the 200,000 farmers suicides in India are in the cotton belt of Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and most cotton is now Monsanto's Bt. Cotton. Instead of addressing the crisis it has created, Monsanto continues to offer a “spin” of Bt. Cotton miracles.

In yet another example of the desperate “science” of Monsanto and Company, it is now being argued that Bt. Cotton has liberated Indian women in the region of Vidharbha, Maharashtra which records the largest acreage under Bt. Cotton and highest rate of farmers suicides. Arjunan Subramanian of HRI Warwick, Dr. Kerry Kirwan, Professor David Pink and Martin Qaim have put out a paper which says that Bt. Cotton produces massive gains for women's employment in India.

This is one more in a line of earlier papers by Martin Qaim giving a spin that Bt. Cotton is creating miracles

even while hundreds of thousands of Bt. Cotton farmers commit suicide. Arjunan Subramanian is Qaim's student and Qaim represents Monsanto & Co. Every “study” done by him is public relations for Monsanto. The present paper is no different.

Every level of the paper is fraudulent. First, the argument that women have been empowered because of the introduction of Bt. Cotton.

This is false on many grounds. Firstly, women have traditionally been seed keepers and seed breeders. The knowledge and skills related to seed conservation and seed breeding have been women's expertise. The seed economy was a women's economy.

As long as seed was in women's hands, there was no debt and no suicides. Women have acted as custodians of the common genetic heritage through the shortage and preservation of grain. In a study of rural women of Nepal, it was found that seed selection is primarily a female responsibility.

In 60.4 percent of the cases, women alone decided what type of seed to use, while men decided in only 20.7 percent.

As to who actually performs the task of seed selection in cases where the family decides to use their own seeds, this work is done by women alone in 81.2 percent of the households, by both sexes in eight percent and by men alone in only 10.8 percent of the households.

Throughout India, even in years of scarcity, grain for seed was conserved in every household, so that the cycle of food production was not interrupted by loss of seed.

The peasant women of India have carefully maintained the genetic base of food production over

thousands of years. This common wealth, which had evolved over millennia, was defined as 'primitive cultivars' by the masculinist view of seeds, which saw its own new products as 'advanced' varieties.

The replacement of traditional varieties of seeds with genetically engineered Bt. Cotton is an appropriation of women's skills, knowledge and decision making on issues related to seed by corporations like Monsanto. This is disempowerment of women, not empowerment.

Secondly, women have played significant role in agriculture. As I wrote in report for the FAO, most farmers in India are women.

The replacement of biodiverse cropping systems evolved by women with monocultures of Bt. Cotton imposed by Monsanto leads to decline of food production.

This undermines women's food sovereignty and erodes food security. Food security in women's hands is women's empowerment.

Destruction of food security by destroying food crops undermines women's food sovereignty. This is women's disempowerment, no empowerment.

Further, it destroys women's work related to agricultural production and post harvest processing and food processing. Interestingly women's work related to food sovereignty has been defined as "femimanual" work.

Agriculture, the growing of food, is both the most important source of livelihood for the majority of the world people, especially women, as well as the sector related to the most fundamental economic right, the right to food and nutrition.

Women were the world's original food producers, and continue to be central to food production system in the Third World in terms of the work they do in the food chain.

The worldwide destruction of the feminine knowledge of agriculture evolved over four to five thousand years, by a handful of white male scientists in less than two decades has not merely violated women

as experts; since their expertise in agriculture has been related to modeling agriculture on nature's methods of renewability, its destruction has gone hand in hand with the ecological destruction of nature's processes and the economic destruction of the poorer people in rural areas.

Agriculture has been evolved by women. Most farmers of the world are women, and most girls are future farmers. Girls learn the skills and knowledge of farming in the fields and farms.

What is grown on farms determines whose livelihoods are secured, what is eaten, how much is eaten, and by whom it is eaten.

Women make the most significant contribution to food security. They produce more than half the world's food. They provide more than 80 per cent of the food needs of food insecure household and regions.

Food security is therefore directly linked to women's food producing capacity. Constraints on women's capacity leads to erosion of food security, especially for poor households in poor regions.

From field to kitchen, from seed to food, women's strength is diversity. Women's capacities are eroded when this diversity is eroded.

Women's work in the food system is based on their knowledge and skills. It is an exercise of their food sovereignty.

Destroying women's food related work is disempowerment, not empowerment. In the Deccan area, cotton was not grown as a monoculture. It was grown with sorghum and pigeon pea and chilies.

The knowledge of these biodiverse systems was women's knowledge. The erosion of biodiverse systems goes hand in hand with erosion of women's knowledge and their power related to knowledge.

Women's work and power in the food system has declined as a result of the introduction of monoculture Bt. Cotton.

This decline in women's knowledge, work and power

with the introduction of Bt. Cotton is perversely hidden. The monoculture of the mind, focusing only on Bt. Cotton, falsely projects women's dependence on cotton picking as increase in employment and empowerment.

And a second falsehood introduced is that the increase in cotton picking is because of increased "yields" of Bt. Cotton.

Patriarchal science and technology have rendered women's knowledge and productivity invisible by ignoring the dimension of diversity in agricultural production.

As the FAO report on Women Feed the World mentions, women use more plant diversity, both cultivated and uncultivated, than agricultural scientists know about. In Nigerian home gardens, women plant 18-57 plant species.

In Sub-Saharan Africa women cultivate as many as 120 different plants in the species left alongside the cash crops managed by men. In Guatemala, home gardens of less than 0.1 ha have more than ten tree and crop species.

In a single African home garden more than 60 species of food producing trees were counted. In Thailand, researchers found 230 plant species in home gardens.

In Indian agriculture women use 150 different species of plants for vegetables, fodder and health care. In West Bengal 124 "weed" species collected from rice fields have economic importance for farmers.

In the Expana region of Veracruz, Mexico, peasants utilize about 435 wild plant and animal species of which 229 are eaten. Women are the biodiversity experts of the world.

Women's work in cotton picking which Monsanto and Co. celebrate and project as an increase in absolute terms has increased because monocultures have replaced mixed cultivation of cotton with food crops.

The increase in cotton is because of the replacement of biodiverse farming with cotton monocultures, and the expansion of acreage under cotton. It is not

because of higher yields of Bt. Cotton.

The introduction of the Bt. Gene into crops is not a yield increasing technology. It is a toxin production technology. All that increases is production of toxin. The yield traits come from the hybrid into which the Bt. gene is introduced.

This is the case of cotton in India. It is also the case of all genetically engineered crops as shown by Doug Sherman in the report "Failure to Yield" of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The manipulated paper says that women's additional work as cotton pickers reduces their household work which men do. However, men in the Bt. Cotton area are not becoming house husbands.

They are committing suicide because of the high levels of indebtedness. Seed that used to cost Rs. 7 / kg became Rs. 3600 / kg with the introduction of Bt. Cotton.

The Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission forced Monsanto to reduce prices in response to a case brought by the Andhra Pradesh Government which argued that high prices were killing farmers. The case on seed monopolies and high seed prices still continues.

In addition, even though Bt. Cotton is supposed to control pests, the bollworm has become resistant and new pests have emerged.

Farmers in Vidharbha are using 13 times more pesticides than they did for conventional cotton. High costs of seeds and pesticides lead to debt, debt leads to suicides, creating Bt. Cotton widows, not liberated "housewives".

The tragedy of thousands of widows in Vidharbha, with the majority traced to debt linked to Bt. Cotton is now being covered up with the latest spin from Monsanto & Co. that Bt. Cotton has liberated the women of Vidharbha.

Gutter Science: Inter-Academy Report on GM Crops

* Dr. G. V. Ramanjaneyulu

I still can't overcome my disbelief. Such 'distinguished' scientific bodies, and such a shoddy report. I have always said there is good science, there is bad science but this report transgresses all earlier known brackets, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Inter-Academy Report on GM crops does not even qualify to be put in the category of bad science.

It is Gutter Science.

The Inter-Academy Report on GM Crops -- prepared by the Indian Academy of Sciences, Indian National Academy of Engineering, Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, National Academy of Medical Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences -- and submitted in September 2010 to the Ministry of Environment & Forests, is no better than the introductory write-ups any graduate student of biotechnology would come out with. In fact, I have a collection of a large number of papers/analysis written by graduate and post-graduate students who seek my comments/views that I would rate much higher than the Inter-Academy report.

The Inter-Academy Report on GM Crops is in fact a disgrace to Indian science. That Indian science was on a downhill path was never in question, but that it had already slipped into a cesspool is a revelation. I wish the presidents of the six Indian Academies had at least read the 19-page report prepared by the Minister for Environment & Forests Jairam Ramesh (and which is available on the website of the ministry) at the time of announcing the moratorium on Bt Brinjal early this year, and they would have known what academic excellence means.

Environment minister Jairam Ramesh had imposed a moratorium on Bt brinjal's release until there is widespread scientific consensus on its environmental and biosafety aspects. The Inter-Academy report fails to answer any of the concerns/questions that Jairam Ramesh had raised in his paper. The Inter-Academy report therefore is not a scientific inquiry, but a cheap public relation exercise on behalf of the GM industry. This is a scientific form of corruption, and has to be condemned in as strong words as possible.

You have probably read in newspapers how the key parts of the report -- which supports genetically modified (GM) Bt brinjal's commercial release -- have been plagiarized from a government newsletter. According to a news report entitled 'Experts Admit GM brinjal Report Faulty' in The Telegraph (Sept 27, 2010): "Six Indian science academies had earlier this week approved the limited release of GM brinjal for cultivation in a joint report that contained 60 lines of plagiarised text, a near verbatim reproduction of an article in a biotechnology advocacy newsletter which itself had lines extracted from an industry-supported publication.

"This is unfortunate we are devastated. This should not have happened," said M. Vijayan, the president of the Indian National Science Academy, and a senior faculty member at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. The cheat slur reminds me of an almost similar incident that disgraced Indian judiciary a few months back. According to a news report: "In a major embarrassment for the Andhra Pradesh judiciary, five judges were caught cheating while writing the LL.M (Master of Law) examination for which they were promptly suspended by the High Court. One of the judges was found copying from a law book hidden under his answer sheet. Written slips and pages torn from textbooks were seized from other judges."

The Andhra Pradesh High Court was at least quick in suspending the judges who were caught cheating. Shouldn't the Ministry of Science & Technology therefore sack the six presidents:

- Dr M Vijayan, Indian National Science Academy.
- Dr A K Sood, Indian Academy of Sciences.
- Dr P S Goel, Indian National Academy of Engineering.
- Dr Mangala Rai, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences.
- Dr K K Talwar, National Academy of Medical Sciences.
- Dr Asis Datta, National Academy of Sciences.

The report ends with two quotations, and this sums up the inherent but brazen bias the Science Academies had. The first quote is from a joint statement of six major Academies of the world: "...GM technology, coupled

with important developments in other areas, should be used to increase the production of main food staples, improve the efficiency of production, reduce the environmental impact of agriculture, and provide access to food for small-scale farmers.” the Royal Society of London, the US National Academy of Sciences, the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Indian National Science Academy, the Mexican Academy of Sciences, and the Third World Academy of Sciences, In Transgenic Plants and World Agriculture (2000), Document made available by the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi.

If the Indian science academies have to merely endorse what the foreign academies have done than what is the need to have this exercise in the first place. In any case, if you read what the six major academies across the world have said, it becomes crystal clear that science has simply gone into the lap of the industry. I don't know why the Inter-Academy report fails to even take into consideration another international report, which has been officially endorsed by India. I am talking of the report of the three-year international collaborative effort (2005-07) that culminated in the form of a report of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), which clearly states that 'business as usual' is not the way forward. The answer is simple. The people and environment-friendly IAASTD report does not promote the commercial interest of the agribusiness companies.

The second quotation is from Norman Borlaug. "The affluent nations can afford to adopt elitist positions and pay more for food produced by the so-called natural methods; the 1 billion chronically poor and hungry people of this world cannot. New technology will be their salvation, freeing them from obsolete, low-yielding, and more costly production technology.” Dr. Norman E. Borlaug (Nobel Prize Laureate for Peace 1970), Plant Physiology (2000). 124, 487-490. The report therefore is on the expected lines. I knew all along that Indian scientists are only capable of copy and paste. In any case, when these academies were entrusted to come out with a report on GM crops, especially in the context of the public groundswell against genetic contamination of food crops, it should have been known that all these academies are merely letter-head organisations.

These are in reality 'retiring-room' for the retired scientists, most of whom happen to be the former head of organisations which are primarily responsible for

doing the damage in the first instance. Take the case of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS). It is headed by a former Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the umbrella organisation that is primarily responsible for the terrible agrarian distress and cannot wash its hands off the spate of farmer suicides that dot the countryside.

The other national academies are no different. In fact, all these scientific bodies are promoting public-private partnership (PPP) and therefore cannot be expected to stand up against the commercial interests of the biotechnology companies. It will be interesting to know the names of the scientists who contributed to the report, and the research projects they have undertaken in the past along the funding support.

Meanwhile, Dr M Vijayan, INSA president has been quoted in The Telegraph as saying: "The academies will now examine the report again, introduce references for all text extracted from earlier publications, and release the names of all the scientists who contributed to the report. 'But, he said, the main recommendations are unlikely to change.' This should not be allowed since the report is simply a compilation of what suits the interests of these bodies.

I suggest the following:

-- Like the judges caught cheating, the presidents of the six academies should be first removed.

-- There is an urgent need to revamp the science academies. All retired scientists should be removed, and these science academies should include eminent citizens from different walks of life.

-- There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Jairam Ramesh's paper that resulted in the moratorium on Bt brinjal needs to be examined, and all public fears and concerns need to be addressed point-by-point.

Only gutter science will like to bypass social and environmental concerns.

*** Executive Director
Centre for Sustainable Agriculture
Www.agrariancrisis.in**

UN calls special meeting to address food shortages amid predictions of riots

Poor harvests and demand from developing countries could push cost of weekly shop up by 10% Global wheat harvest this year has been hit by droughts and floods.

Two years after the last food crisis, when prices surged by nearly 15% in the UK, food inflation is back. Soaring global food prices have prompted City and food industry experts to warn that the cost of the weekly shop is set to rise by up to 10% in the coming months. As in 2008, rocketing prices are the result of rising demand and supply shortages caused by freak weather and poor harvests. Moreover, these conditions are exacerbated by speculation on commodity markets and changing diets in fast-growing Asian countries.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) called an emergency meeting for 24 September to discuss the food crisis. In Mozambique, riots broke out following the government's decision to raise bread prices by 30%, leaving seven people dead and hundreds injured. At the same time the Russian government extended its export ban on wheat by another 12 months as it battles drought, shortages and inflation at home, which threatens to push up prices further. European wheat prices hit more than €231 (£192) a tonne last week, just below last month's two-year high of €236 but still 60% higher than a year ago in sterling terms. Corn prices are at their highest level since June 2009 while sugar has been on a rollercoaster ride after hitting a 29-year peak in February.

FAO economist Abdolreza Abbassian raises the prospect of further civil unrest in less developed countries if the price of basic food continues to rise: "Russia's move is another unfortunate development that will prolong upward pressure on grain prices and contribute to higher price instability in world markets. Rioting may reappear in poor districts around the world if prices of basic foodstuff commodities continue to rise further."

Surging wheat prices, along with higher sugar and oil-seed costs, drove the FAO's international food price index up 5% last month, the biggest rise since last November. The organisation estimates this year's

wheat crop at 646m tonnes down 5% from last year while world barley production, also hit by bad weather in the former Soviet Union and the EU, is forecast to drop by 22% to a 30-year low of 129m tonnes. Last month global meat prices hit a 20-year high.

In the UK, Premier Foods, owner of the Hovis brand, has warned the global shortage of wheat could push up the cost of bread by at least 5p a loaf, while other food brands such as McDougalls flour and Mr Kipling cakes will also cost more. A leading UK supplier of flour, Rank Hovis, is to increase its prices from 6 September. Soaring barley prices mean that the pub price of a pint of beer could top £4 this time next year.

Experts fear that UK food price inflation, which was running at an annual rate of 3.4% in July, could now rise to 10% depending on whether costs continue to climb and to what extent food manufacturers absorb the increases.

The Grocer's food and drink editor Alex Beckett reckons that if prices for commodities such as wheat, sugar, cocoa and palm oil remain at current levels, by January the weekly shop could cost 10% more than 12 months previously. Philip Shaw, chief economist at Investec, said: "If the current rise in prices is sustained, food price inflation might climb to 7-8% by mid-2011." And Philip Rush, at Nomura, sees food prices going higher over the next year, tipping back up to above 5% year-on-year growth.

Meat

Global meat prices have risen sharply as a drop in production from exporters such as Argentina and the US has coincided with rising demand from China, where consumers are eating more meat than they used to. The FAO's index of meat prices in August climbed to its highest level since it started compiling the index in 1990, up 16% over the past year. Lamb prices are at a 37-year high, beef prices are at their highest level in two years and pork and poultry have also become dearer.

Mark Topliff at Eblex, which represents the English beef and sheep industry, explains that in recent years, falling cattle prices have led to fewer farmers keeping

cows in major exporting nations like Argentina, Brazil and the US, the world's biggest beef producer. The removal of EU subsidies under the common agricultural policy for British and European sheep farmers has also led to a decline in sheep numbers.

Wheat

The European flour milling association has highlighted the role of speculators in driving up wheat prices, although the global shortage appears to be the main factor. The main culprit is the weather – wheat prices have been going up since the summer when crops were hit by a drought and wildfires in Russia and dry weather in Ukraine and Kazakhstan, compounded by unusually wet weather in Canada and the floods in Pakistan.

Russia, the world's fourth-biggest wheat producer, has imposed an export ban on grain amid its worst drought in at least 50 years, and prime minister Vladimir Putin warned last Thursday that the ban could stay in place until after the 2011 harvest, forcing importers in the Middle East and North Africa to turn to Europe and the US for supplies. "This has completely changed the complexion of the market," said Sudakshina Unnikrishnan, a commodities analyst at Barclays Capital. "We see further upside for corn and wheat prices. Consuming countries are scrambling to gain access to supplies," she warns.

Britain's wheat crop is expected to be close to average this year, but Germany, which had more rain in August, could become reliant on wheat imports for the first time in 10 years. The winter wheat harvest will be 9% lower this year than last, according to the German farmers' association, forcing Germany to import grain from France and the US. Bad weather has also affected the quality of the wheat, which suffers when it stands too long in the rain. Lower-quality wheat is used as animal feed. The premium for high-quality milling wheat used in bread, cereals and biscuits, which now costs about £195 a tonne, has climbed to £30-£40 from the typical £10-£15.

"If we don't get a bumper harvest from the southern hemisphere, namely Argentina and Australia [due at Christmas], the wheat price could continue to stay where it is," said Guy Gagen, chief arable adviser at the National Farmers' Union. The Northern hemisphere the US, Canada, Russia and northern Europe produces 80% of the world's wheat supply.

Experts note, however, that the market is not in the same position as it was in 2007/08, when global wheat stocks were very low, as there have been two seasons of replenishment. The problem is that many countries will not release their surplus stocks to the market but are hoarding them, says Alexander Waugh, director general of the National Association of British and Irish Millers. On a brighter note, he adds: "High prices tend to encourage farmers to plant more crops. The situation may be uncomfortable but it's not out of control or unmanageable."

Cocoa

In mid-July, a US commodities trading company, Armajaro, attempted to corner the market in cocoa by taking delivery of 7% of the world's supply at a time when prices were at a 32-year high of \$3,200 per tonne (£2,077) – a \$1bn bet. The fear was Armajaro would squeeze the market, forcing prices even higher. In the event prices have gone into reverse, falling by more than 25% as fears have receded that supplies from Ivory Coast, which produces 40% of the world's cocoa, would be hit by bad weather. However, last week Barry Callebaut – the world's biggest chocolate company, which supplies confectioners such as Nestlé – said prices would stay high. "Retailers do not want to accept higher prices at the moment in spite of higher raw material costs," said the company's chief executive. "But pressures will rise, prices will just have to increase."

Sugar

Sugar prices hit a 29-year high in February, but then fell back sharply. However, last week Brazil – the world's biggest sugar producer – warned crops may be lower than expected as a result of dry weather and the price climbed back to its highest level since March.

Coffee

Coffee prices are at a 12-year high and global stocks at their lowest level for a decade. Several coffee bars have started to push through price rises, although Starbucks said last week that it would not raise prices.

[Http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/sep/05/commodities-food-drink-industry](http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/sep/05/commodities-food-drink-industry)

Japan targets India for increased trade

* **Shalini Bhutani**

Japan is a user country that needs to access biological resources from others for its bio-trade.

Japan seems to be written all over India's official calendars. The commerce minister was in Tokyo in early September after agreeing 'in principle' to an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Japan. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will be in Tokyo in October to sign that deal once the Cabinet clears it. A Ministry of Environment and Forest delegation is also preparing to go to Japan (Nagoya) in October to attend the next big conference of the Convention of Biodiversity (CBD). With the above trips, the bilateral dealings with Japan as well as trade and biodiversity are high on the agenda. Let's just take a look at Japan's treatment of both.

Till the late 1990s, Japan's trade policy was single-mindedly focused on the World Trade Organisation as a means for global trade. There has been a shift in the Japanese government position towards a 'multi-layered trade' approach through bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs). Nippon Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organisations) comprising 1,300 companies and 130 industrial sector associations is behind both approaches. Trade and business interests determine the course. The Japanese government announced a new growth strategy in December 2009, which was approved by its cabinet in June 2010. It expressly states "Achieving growth by pioneering new frontiers," as one of Japan's strategic focus areas. This includes increasing trade with other Asian countries, India being just one of them.

Regional integration

The Japan-Singapore FTA (2002) was the first such bilateral for Japan. It has also inked an EPA with the 10-member Asean (2007). Japan is also pushing India and others into a 16-country regional integration initiative of comprehensive economic partnership in East Asia. Its strategy also targets a free trade area of the Asia-Pacific by 2020. The India side seems only to be reacting in response than pro-actively defining its own strategy. And to develop one, Japan's approach to biological resources has to be located within the context of its aggressive economic strategies. Japan, hosting the CBD's tenth conference doesn't really have a respectable track record on biodiversity conservation. See for instance, its practices of unsustainable whaling and dumping wastes in other countries.

In the 1990s, the Japanese cosmetics MNC Shiseido patented over 10 compounds from Indonesian traditional medical

system Jamu. In 2002, Cupuaçu -- an Amazonian fruit, was registered as a trademark in Japan by the Asahi Foods company. It took legal activism from NGOs and campaigns from local people to challenge these at patent offices. The main agenda of COP 10 is to negotiate an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Over 193 countries have to agree on the draft text on the table, to convince bio-rich countries like India that such cases will not occur in future.

Japan - a leading technology hub, is a user country that needs to access biological resources from others for its bio-trade. So it has a vested interest to show that ABS regimes can work for local communities. That also explains why its nodal agency for ABS to implement CBD objectives, is its ministry economy, trade and industry. The same portfolio in India is held by the MoEF. In 2005, Japan developed 'guidelines on access to genetic resources for users in Japan' as a practical guide for its private sector and research institutes. Japan is heavily investing in the PR to come across as a country that is committed to share the benefits it reaps from others bio-resources.

In real time however, in its FTAs with Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand, intellectual property rights (IPR) on seeds were on the negotiating table. Seeking private monopoly rights over biological resources goes against the intention to share benefits. India too has been the focus of Japanese biodiversity diplomacy. The Japan Bioindustry Association (JBA) has been 'helping' the MoEF to develop India's ABS regime. Japan has a keen interest in agricultural and medical biotechnology, and India's ministry of commerce has been luring foreign investors highlighting India's biotech strengths. India's biological resources are on that menu.

The Indian people don't even know what has been agreed to under the EPA, as the negotiations and the text remain closed. Meanwhile, an India-Japan global partnership summit is scheduled in mid-December 2010 in Tokyo. Our politicians and Indian businesses may have found Nippon partners. And like delicately cut and beautifully plated sashimi, the Japanese platter might make for them a pretty picture. But if its raw in the inside it is not going to go down well with many an Indian palette. And for those not invited to the party and for that matter otherwise too, nothing smells more than bits of leftover fish!

[Http://www.deccanherald.com/content/100174/japan-targets-india-increased-trade.html](http://www.deccanherald.com/content/100174/japan-targets-india-increased-trade.html)

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**Dr. Krishan Bir Chaudhary
President,**

रोजगार गारंटी का सच

* रमेश भट्ट



आज से को 89900 करोड़ रुपये आवंटित किये है। यह
लगभग 8 मांग आधारित कार्यक्रम है लिहाजा सरकार को
साल पहले जरूरत पड़ने पर धन की उपलब्धता करवानी
देश भर में होगी। बीते तीन साल के औसत रोजगार के
रोजगार यात्राएं आंकड़ों पर अगर नजर डाली जाए तो
निकाली जा साल औसत काम दिनों में
रही थी। गीत 2009-01 82

गाया जा रहा था। हमारे लिए काम नहीं, हमें काम चाहिए। इसी समस्या को ध्यान में रखते हुए 2006 में महात्मा गांधी ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना की शुरुआत हुई। यह विश्व की अकेली ऐसी योजना है जो मांगने पर जरूरतमंदों को रोजगार की गारंटी देती है। योजना का मकसद लोगों को गांव में ही काम मुहैया कराना है। गांव में न सिर्फ स्थाई परिसंपत्तियों का निर्माण हो बल्कि महिला और पुरुषों को समान मजदूरी मिल सके। बीते चार सालों में केन्द्र सरकार इस योजना पर भारी भरकम खर्चा कर रही है। काम का आवेदन करने पर 95 दिन में रोजगार देना अनिवार्य है। काम पूरा होने की तिथि से 95 दिन के भीतर मजदूरी देने का प्रावधान है। अगर मजदूरी समय पर नहीं मिलती तो मजदूरी मुआवजा अधिनियम 1948 के तहत मुआवजा देना होगा।

मनरेगा योजना 96000 करोड़ के बजट के साथ शुरू हुई। आज यानि 2010-11 में इस योजना

साल	औसत काम दिनों में
2009-01	82
2001-06	81
2006-10	82

इससे एक बात तो स्पष्ट है कानून बनने के चार साल के बाद में 900 दिन का रोजगार उपलब्ध कराने में आज भी हम नकामयाब रहे हैं। 99वीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के अर्धवार्षिक समीक्षा में मनरेगा कार्यक्रम में क्रियान्वयन में पश्चिम बंगाल का रिपोर्ट कार्ड सबसे खराब रहा है। पश्चिम बंगाल 21 दिन का ही औसत रोजगार उपलब्ध करा पाया है। जबकि काम मुहैया कराने का राष्ट्रीय औसत 81 दिन है। मगर 95 राज्य मसलन हिमांचल, महाराष्ट्र, हरियाणा, असम, मेघालय, तमिलनाडू, जम्मू और कश्मीर, उत्तराखंड, उड़ीसा, कर्नाटक, पंजाब, पश्चिम बंगाल, बिहार, गुजरात और केरल जैसे राज्य सालाना 81 दिन का औसत रोजगार मुहैया कराने में नकामयाब रहे हैं। सालाना आधार में देश भर में कितने परिवारों को रोजगार मिला इन आंकड़ों पर अगर गौर करें तो

साल कितने परिवारों को रोजगार मिला करोड़ों में

२००६-०७	२.१०
२००७-०८	३.३६
२००८-०९	४.५१
२००९-१०	५.०६

नरेगा के तहत ६० फीसदी न्यूनतम राशि मजदूरी के लिए खर्च करनी आवश्यक है। राज्यों ने इस बात का ध्यान रखा है कि योजना के मुताबिक ६० फीसदी न्यूनतम हिस्सा मजदूरी के तौर पर प्रदान करना है। एक नजर राज्यवार मजदूरी के औसत आंकड़ों पर

साल	आवंटित राशि का मजदूरी पर खर्च
२००६-०७	६६
२००७-०८	६८
२००८-०९	६७
२००९-१०	६८

नरेगा के तहत कानून के मुताबिक १०० दिन का रोजगार मुहैया कराना जरूरी है। मगर इस कार्य में ज्यादातर राज्यों का रिपोर्ट कार्ड निराश करने वाला है। १०० दिन रोजगार पाने वाले परिवारों की अगर बात की जाए तो रोजगार गारंटी का सच खुद पर खुद सामने आ जायेगा। २००६-०७ में १०.२६ फीसदी, २००७-०८ में १०.६२ फीसदी, २००८-०९ में १४.४८ फीसदी और २००९-१० में १३.२४ फीसदी परिवारों को १०० दिन का रोजगार मिला पाया। अरुणांचल प्रदेश, नागालैण्ड, मणीपुर और मिजोरम जैसे राज्यों में किसी भी परिवार को १०० दिन का रोजगार नहीं मिल पाया। फरवरी २००६ से सितंबर २००९ के बीच ७६

लाख कार्य चलाए गए जिनमें केवल ३१ लाख ही पूरे हो पाये जो पूरे काम का ३६ फीसदी है। २००६-१० में ४०.६८ लाख काम चलाए गए जिनमें ६७ फीसदी काम जल संरक्षण से जुड़े है।

महात्मा गांधी नरेगा में शिकायतों का अंबार है। यह बात दिगर है कि हमारी सरकारों के कानों तक कितनी शिकायतें पहुंच पाती है। जो शिकायतें आम है उनमें प्रमुख है जागरूकता का अभाव, समय से काम का न मिलना, मजदूरी का समय पर और पर्याप्त राशि का न मिलना, मस्टर रोल जैसे उचित रिकार्ड का ना रखा जाना, बैंक और पोस्ट आफिसों के बार बार चक्कर लगाना और योजना के तहज तैयार का की गुणवत्ता। सरकारी आंकड़ों के लिहाज से बीते तीन सालों में १३३१ शिकायतें सरकार के संज्ञान में आई जिसमें सबसे ज्यादा ४१६ उत्तर प्रदेश से २३५ मध्य प्रदेश १८० राजस्थान १२५ बिहार और ८७ झारखंड से है।

महात्मा गांधी नरेगा में महिलाओं की हिस्सेदारी में तमिलनाडू राज्य अब्वल रहा है। इस राज्य में मनरेगा में महिलाओं की हिस्सेदारी ७६ फीसदी है जबकि २००८-०९ साल में बिहार में ३० फीसदी झारखंड में २८ फीसदी और उत्तरप्रदेश में १८ फीसदी रही जो की कानून के प्रावधान जिसमें महिलाओं की न्यूनतम ३३ फीसदी हिस्सेदारी होनी चाहिए से काफी नीचे है। नरेगा के तहत जारी किये जाई कार्ड की वैधानिकता ५ साल की होती है।

पिछले साल सरकार के मजदूरी राशि को १०० रुपये तो कर दिया है मगर रोजगार की अवधि

१०० दिन से ज्यादा करने पर हाथ खड़े कर दिये हैं। इसके पीछे सीधा सा तर्क है जब हम १०० दिन का रोजगार ही मुहैया नहीं कर पर रहे है तो काम के दिन बढ़ाने से क्या फायदा। मनरेगा के काम का विस्तार किया गया है। इसके तहत सिंचाई सुविधा, बागवानी, पौधा रोपण और वनीकरण जैसे कामों को लिया गया है। साथ ही इस बात पर जोर दिया गया है कि रोजगार देने में गरीब, अनुसूचित जाति, जनजाति को प्राथमिकता दी जाए। सरकार ने राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना का फायदा नरेगा कामगारों को देने का रास्ता साफ कर दिया है

महात्मा गांधी रोजगार में सरकार हर स्तर पर निगरानी व्यवस्था को मजबूत करना चाहती है। इसके लिए हर जिले पर एक लोकपाल नियुक्त करने के दिशानिर्देश जानी किये गए मगर पंजाब को छोड़कर अब तक किसी राज्य ने इस पर अमल नहीं किया। समाज के जागरूक लोगों का एक पैनल गठित करने की बात कही गई है। सोशल आडिट को आवश्यक कर दिया गया है। पंचायतों को अपनी भूमिका प्रमुखता से निभानी है। इस योजना को सफल बनाने में सांसदों का भी योगदान अहम हो सकता है। दरअसल जिला स्तर में निगरानी समिति का अध्यक्ष सांसदों को बनाया गया है। बकायदा सालाना कितनी बैठकें राज्य वार होनी है या जिले वार होनी है

इसके दिश निर्देश केन्द्र ने जानी कर रखें हैं। मसलन सालान आधार में २८ राज्यों में ११२ बैठकें होनी चाहिए मगर २००६-०७ में ३५, २००७-०८ में ३६ और २००८-०९ में ३५

बैठकें भी हो पायी। हरियाणा, जम्मू और कश्मीर, मिजोरम ,दादर और नागर हवेली में पिछले २ सालों में एक भी बैठक नहीं हुई। वही ६१६ जिलों में कुल २४७६ बैठकें होनी चाहिए। मगर २००६-०७ में ६१६, २००७-०८ में ६१२ और २००८-०९ में ५७६ बैठकें ही हुई। इन बैठकों की अध्यक्षता हमारे सांसद महोदयों को करनी थी। इससे पता चलता है कि निगरानी व्यवस्था की स्तर क्या है। यहां सांसदों का यह भी कहना है कि महज अध्यक्ष बना दिया गया है उनके पास किसी तरह की कोई ताकत नहीं है।

महात्मा गांधी नरेगा एक ऐतिहासिक योजना है। इसके लिए ग्रामीण विकास का एक बड़ा हिस्सा खर्च किया जा रहा है। मगर जरूरतमंदों तक अभी भी योजना का सम्पूर्ण लाभ नहीं पहुंच पा रहा है। इसके लिए राज्य सरकारों को गंभीरता से काम करना होगा। साथ ही केन्द्र सरकार को अच्छा प्रदर्शन करने वाले राज्यों को प्रोत्साहित करना चाहिए साथ ही खराब प्रदर्शन करने वाले राज्यों पर जुर्माना लगाना चाहिए। सिर्फ पैसा बहाने से कुछ नहीं होगा । मनरेगा के तहत कराये जा रहे कार्यों की समीक्षा करनी होगी। योजना जरूरत ऐतिहासिक है मगर इसे बेहतर बनाने के लिए हम सभी को मिलकर प्रयास करना पड़ेगा।

रमेश भट्ट
एंकर
लोकसभा टीवी

FTAs and Doha provisions can make MDGs more difficult to achieve

* Sanya Smith

Geneva, 22 Sep -- The UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contained the usual statements by developed countries that they have helped achieve the MDGs and will continue to do so. Yet these same developed countries are insisting on provisions in trade agreements that will make it more difficult to achieve the MDGs.

In his statement at the Summit on behalf of the European Union (EU), the President of the European Commission, Mr Jose Manuel Barroso said that the EU has kept the fight against poverty high on its agenda. He claimed that the EU was a reliable partner, even in times of economic downturn. He admitted that aid is not a cure and no country has ever been transformed by aid and therefore it is important for developing countries to take charge of their own development, for example by mobilising domestic policies and resources.

However a paper released this week by Third World Network provides a preliminary indication of the way in which demands by developed countries in negotiations in the Doha Round at the World Trade Organization (WTO), WTO accession and free trade agreements (FTA) can actually make it more difficult to reduce poverty, develop and achieve the MDGs. Despite the statements by Mr Barroso, these demands are continuing, in the economic downturn (which was caused by lack of regulation by the developed countries), which has itself increased poverty in developing countries.

The Paper analyses the impact on each MDG of the lower tariffs; services, investment and government procurement liberalisation and stronger intellectual property and investor protection provisions that are often found in these trade agreements, in the context of the failure of developed countries to remove or effectively reduce their agricultural subsidies in these negotiations. For example, the Paper finds that lower tariffs leads to permanent revenue loss in developing countries which reduces their capacity to fund the activities identified by the United Nations as being needed to achieve the MDGs. In addition, according to the Paper, the effects of stronger intellectual property (IP) protection on development can include raising the cost of inputs for

farming. This makes food security and poverty reduction in the rural sector harder to achieve, with all the flow on effects that has for other MDGs such as health and education. Stronger IP protection, such as the data exclusivity that developed countries such as the EU and USA are requiring developing countries to agree to in WTO accession and FTA negotiations, has been shown to increase medicine prices by 845600%. At those prices, it is obviously much more difficult to achieve the health MDGs (such as Goals 4 and 6) as well as those dependent on good health (such as Goal 1 which requires people to be healthy enough to work)

Some of the effects of services and investment liberalisation according to the Paper include increasing financial instability and thus making a financial crisis more likely (as well as making it more difficult to exit from). The current financial crisis has shown how such crises and any recession that follows cause unacceptably large numbers of people to fall back into poverty. (According to the International Labour Organisation, 233 million more people became working poor between 2007 and 2009 and 64 million additional people worldwide fell into extreme poverty in 2010 alone according to the World Bank. The ILO notes that this severely undermines the prospects of attaining the MDGs (one of which is eradicating extreme poverty and hunger).

The Paper goes on to investigate the way in which other provisions in these agreements, such as government procurement liberalisation (which the EU is also proposing in services negotiations at the WTO, for both services and goods up to 50% of the value of the contract) and investor protection can make it more difficult to attain each MDG. On the other hand, the WTO has recently released a report on "The WTO and the Millennium Development Goals" in which it fails to take these types of concerns into account. For example, it claims that "The development dimension permeates all negotiating areas.

When the Doha Round is concluded, the multilateral trading system will be more open particularly for developing countries' exports". Yet the deal currently on the table in the Doha Round does not involve cutting any of the US and EU's actual agriculture subsidies to provide

developing countries with meaningful market access by allowing their exports to compete on an equal basis. Similarly, there has still been no negotiation on cutting cotton subsidies in the Doha Round, a simple, immediate and costless move that would concretely help millions achieve the MDGs.

According to an Oxfam UK study, more than 10 million people in Central and West Africa alone depend directly on cotton production, with many millions more indirectly affected. The Cotton 4 countries of West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali) are among the poorest in the world they rank between 173 and 193 of about 208 countries ranked by the World Bank in terms of Gross National Income per capita. Furthermore, farm families are typically poorer than non-farm families in these countries. Yet the study notes, 'America's cotton farmers receive more in subsidies than the entire GDP of Burkina Faso a country in which more than two million people depend on cotton production. Over half of these farmers live below the poverty line. Poverty levels among recipients of cotton subsidies in the US are zero.' US cotton farmers also receive 'three times more in subsidies than the entire USAID budget for Africa's 500 million people.' The losses Africa experiences due to American cotton subsidies is equivalent to almost one-quarter of what it receives in American aid according to Oxfam's calculations.

Removal of America's cotton subsidies alone would increase cotton prices by 26%. When cotton farmers say 'Cotton prices are too low to keep our children in school, or to buy food and pay for health', the link between continued cotton subsidies and failure to achieve the MDGs (such as Goal 2: universal education, Goals 4, 5 and 6 on health and Goal 1: end hunger) is clear. Oxfam calculates that the higher cotton prices in West Africa due to removal of US cotton subsidies would enable:

- Re MDG 1: ending hunger: one to two more children per household to be fed for an entire year. 'This income could have a real impact on rates of malnutrition in cotton-growing zones of West Africa, where 40 percent of children under age 5 are malnourished. With more than 10 million people in cotton-growing households in West Africa, about half of them children, higher incomes could help feed several million impoverished children every year.'

- Re MDG 2: universal education: families to send two to 10 additional children to school each year.

- Re MDGs 4,5 and 6 on health: families to pay for life-

saving medicines, hospitalizations, and consultations for four to 10 individuals for an entire year.

According to the Oxfam study, West African cotton producers have said with regard to the continued subsidising of cotton in certain developed countries such as the USA, "Frankly, we are starting to doubt whether rich countries really want to reduce poverty in developing countries." Yet so far, the USA has refused to discuss cotton subsidies in the Doha Round (this was widely believed to be the real cause of the failure of the July 2008 negotiations: see SUNS #6546) and when President Barack Obama's US Trade Representative Ron Kirk visited Geneva, he made it clear that there would be no early harvest on cotton, one of the easiest ways (that would in fact pay the US Government, through the spending saved on subsidies) to make substantial progress on achieving the MDGs in regions like West Africa.

The WTO's report on the MDGs also boasts that "the principle of special and differential treatment (S&D) in favour of developing countries governs all areas of negotiation in the Doha Round". Yet in the Doha negotiations, the coefficients in the Swiss formula for tariff cuts in the current Chair's text on non-agricultural market access (NAMA) require developing countries to cut their tariffs by more than developed countries. This is special and differential treatment in favour of developed countries. For real special and differential treatment, (for example for India to cut its tariffs by 2/3 of the EU's cut), developing countries would need a coefficient of 125. They are currently being offered a maximum of 25 (in the December 2008 Chair's text) and to receive even this, they have to forego all flexibilities.

Unsurprisingly therefore, the Round (which, according to the WTO Report, special and differential treatment in favour of developing countries governs all negotiations), actually results in 23 times greater gains from the Doha Round per capita for developed countries than developing countries. The WTO Report also uses Médecins Sans Frontières' graph to show the fall in HIV-AIDS medicine prices from US\$10439 per patient per year (in 2000) to US\$80 (in 2009), stating that since the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health in 2001, "prices for many treatments have fallen significantly, in part due to generic competition". Yet it fails to mention that the reason that HIV-AIDS medicines used to cost US\$15000 per patient per year was because of patents. The requirement to issue patents - a 20 year monopoly on medicines was introduced for all WTO Members by the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of

Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

(Least-developed countries later exercised their rights to extend the transition period before they have to apply the substantive provisions, such as on patents, of TRIPS). Prior to TRIPS, the United Nations found that most of the developing world as well as the Soviet Union and the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe, Austria, Canada, Italy, Japan and Switzerland did not allow patents on medicines. Therefore it is the WTO and its TRIPS agreement which are responsible for imposing enforceable requirements to allow patents (and therefore monopoly prices, such as US\$15000) on medicines. This part of the story was omitted from the WTO Report.

The WTO Report also claims that “Countries without sufficient manufacturing capacities can make effective use of compulsory licensing through the so-called “Paragraph 6 System”, which gives poor countries an additional flexibility under the TRIPS Agreement to gain access to affordable essential drugs.” Yet this system has been widely criticised by generic medicine manufacturers, ie the intended users of the system, as unworkable and too burdensome to use. In the seven years it has been in operation, it has only been able to be used once.

On achieving MDG 7 (environmental sustainability), the WTO Secretariat's Report asserts that the negotiations to liberalise trade in environmental goods and services will help achieve this goal. It fails to mention that countries which wish to have cheaper access to environmental goods and services and believe that this can be done through liberalisation, can unilaterally lower these tariffs and liberalise these service sectors tomorrow. There is no need to wait for negotiations at the WTO to do it. Its assessment of the links between the WTO and MDG 7 also does not include the way in which the intellectual property protection required by TRIPS makes environmental technology (including to deal with climate change) unaffordable for many developing countries and therefore puts MDG 7 further out of reach. (The role of TRIPS in making technology unaffordable and the way in which liberalisation under the General Agreement on Trade in Services can prevent the requirement of technology transfer is also not mentioned in the WTO's discussion of technology transfer in its Report).

Finally, the WTO Report carefully cites studies (such as the 2009 Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper) which show large projected benefits from the Doha Round, without including the

comprehensive critiques of these studies (for example by Tufts University and published by the SouthCentre: [Http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/SouthCtrPB18IsDevBackNov09.pdf](http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/SouthCtrPB18IsDevBackNov09.pdf)).

The WTO Secretariat fails to include in its Report the results of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development study which found that tariff losses for developing countries in NAMA alone are predicted to be \$63.4 billion. These predicted losses for developing countries, from NAMA alone, are 16 times greater than the total projected gains from the whole Doha Round for developing countries (using the adjusted World Bank estimates of gains from the Round of 0.25UScents per person per day in developing countries).

President Obama said at the MDG Summit on Wednesday (22 September) that he believes that development should allow people to take control of their own destiny and offer nations a path out of poverty. This echoes statements by the G8, for example at the Gleneagles Summit where they declared that 'We agreed that poor countries must decide and lead their own development strategies and economic policies.' This would entail developed countries allowing developing countries to liberalise at the pace they wish. In an optimistic start, President Obama also announced a new US Global Development Policy at the Summit. This Policy includes using US trade and investment policies for development and touts his food security initiative that helps develop agriculture in developing countries.

Yet later in the same speech, he said the USA would keep pushing for a Doha round that is “ambitious and balanced” exactly the same phrase his USTR Kirk used in May 2009, before the new US Global Development Policy was launched which was going to harness trade for development in a new way.

(In trade circles, “ambitious” usually means deeper liberalisation for developing countries to provide market access to developed countries' firms and industries.) According to President Obama, 'the days when your development was dictated in foreign capitals must come to an end' and called for donor countries to 'resolve to put an end to hollow promises that are not kept.' It remains to be seen whether this rhetoric (and that of other developed countries) is matched by their behaviour in current and future trade negotiations with developing countries.

([Http://www.twinside.org.sg/announcement/MDGs&tradeagreementsSeptember2010.pdf](http://www.twinside.org.sg/announcement/MDGs&tradeagreementsSeptember2010.pdf))

Holy cow Acclaimed abroad, despised at home

* Devinder Sharma

For years we were made to believe that Indian cows are unproductive. They give less milk and therefore are a drain on farming. The entire focus has therefore been to crossbreed with the exotic high-yielding milch cattle from abroad.

For a nation, which has rarely been proud of its natural assets, expecting the holy cows to be scientifically and technically revered was certainly out of question. While India refused to acknowledge the distinct and superior traits of its indigenous cattle breeds, and in fact derided all efforts to develop the production potential of its own local cattle breeds, another developing country saw the virtues of the Indian cattle breeds and has over the years emerged as the major supplier of semen and embryos of high-yielding milk cattle breeds. These improved cattle breeds actually originated from India.

It was in the 1960s that Brazil imported three cattle breeds from India -- Gir and Kankrej from Gujarat, and Ongole from Andhra Pradesh. These were essentially imported for beefing up its meat exports. It was only when these breeds landed in Brazil that they found them to be also a good source for milk production. In a recent FAO publication on traditional knowledge, it has been observed that what was (and is still) considered a 'waste' in India, has turned out to be a great economic wealth for Brazil.

Brazil has in recent years emerged as the world's biggest supplier of improved cattle embryos and semen of Indian origin now rated amongst the best dairy breeds in the world. The demand for Indian breeds is particularly high from the African and Southeast Asian countries. Suitable for the tropical conditions, these countries find the improved cattle germplasm to be ideal for their cattle breeding programmes. If only Indian dairy and animal scientists had not ignored the domestic cattle breeds, the fate of the Indian cows would have been much different these holy cows would have then been truly revered.

Believe it or not, the world's best Gir cows today give 5500 litres of milk on an average per lactation. Compare these with the neglected cousin back home,

which do not yield more than 980 litres, the Brazilian Gir yield roughly six times more.

And that's not the maximum limit, milk yields as high as 9000 litres per lactation have been recorded in Brazil. Imagine the Indian Gir breed giving that much of milk. The fate of the Indian cattle would have undergone a dramatic change for the better. In India, where agriculture research and education has been more or less westernised after the advent of the land grant system of education, agriculture scientists considered it worthless to work on the native breeds.

Cattle improvement realised on the sole methodology of bringing in alien breeds of Jersey and Holstein-Friesian and using them in a nation-wide crossbreeding programme to improve the domestic milk production capacity. The imported Jersey purebreds, which were used extensively for improving milk production in Indian breeds, on an average produce 3,000 to 5,000 litres in a lactation year. On the other hand, the resulting Jersey crossbreds that were born do not give more than 2500 to 3000 litres. Imagine if the country has instead gone in for developing its own indigenous breeds yielding almost double than the crossbreds, India's milk production would have surpassed all global records.

Indiscriminate crossbreeding of Indian cattle with the exotic breeds under the Intensive Cattle Breeding Programme (ICBP) has already rendered more than 80 per cent of the Indian cattle in the non-descript category. In a country, which has the largest population of cattle in the world, and some 30 recognised breeds of cattle, genetic contamination had taken its toll. More than a dozen of the Indian cattle breeds have almost disappeared. So much so that some years back, Oman made an unusual request to India. The oil-rich Middle East country was looking for four purebred animals of the cattle breed Tharparkar -- found only in the dry and arid regions of Rajasthan.

Tharparkar derives its name from its unique genetic ability that enables the animal to walk across the massive desert of Thar in Rajasthan. A frantic search for procuring four genetically pure Tharparkar males, failed. While India ignored the strength and capabilities

of its domestic cattle, Brazil realised the unique genetic potential of Indian breeds.

It has meanwhile developed a number of commercially important crossbreeds: Girolando, a dual purpose cattle for beef and milk and Zeboain, developed from crossing Kankrej and Ongol. A breed evolved for meat, and currently being developed for milk is Nellore. Another breed Indo-Gujarat is a genetic mixture. In Minas province, a research company, EPAMIG, has produced 50 dairy cows recording 10,000 litres per 307 days of milk period. These high-yielding cows are being used for embryo collection, fetching US \$ 220 per embryo. Semen from the progeny bulls of this breed fetches US \$ 11 a dose.

Not only in Brazil, animal genetic wealth from India has been the building block of numerous improved breeds all over the world. Take poultry, a rare Indian breed - Brahma -- is among the parents of modern broilers. The development of Anglo-Nubian breeds of goat in Europe is traced back to Jamnapari breed from India. In the case of buffaloes, some of the best breeds available world over are from India. And yet, India has

been regularly sending official missions to scout for improved breeds of sheep, horses, rabbits, poultry and you name it. The accepted logic being that India's own domestic breeds are unproductive and importing exotic breeds is the only practical way to improve productivity.

The same reasoning also extends to plant varieties and the traditional medicinal systems. While the production potential of high-yielding crop varieties is often exaggerated, there is not even a single official research programme to identify and improve the traditional and locally adaptable crop varieties.

It is primarily because of our inability to appreciate the genetic wealth existing in our backyard that much of it has already been taken and deposited in the plant and animal repositories in Europe, United States, Japan and Australia. #

(Devinder Sharma is a New Delhi-based food and trade policy analyst)

Chemical pesticides linked to ADHD in children

* David Gutierrez

NaturalNews, October 01, 2010 -- Exposure to pesticides may be one of the causes of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), according to a study conducted by researchers from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York and published in the Journal of Pediatrics. "It's consistent with other studies that have looked at organophosphate pesticides and have found that exposure of children to organophosphates in early life can cause brain injury," researcher Philip Landrigan said. "This study builds on those other studies."

The researchers analyzed urine samples from more than 1,000 children between the ages of 8 and 15 for the presence of several different pesticides, including at least one commonly used on fruits and vegetables. They found that children with higher concentrations of pesticides in their bodies were significantly more likely to suffer from ADHD than children with lower concentrations. ADHD is marked by inattentiveness, hyperactivity and poor impulse and behavioral control. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4.5 million children in the United States suffer from some form of the disorder.

Although the study was only designed to look for correlation and not for cause, prior research has shown that pesticides in tiny amounts can change the chemistry of children's brains. According to the researchers, this can interfere with thinking, communication and behavior.

"The next step is we need to do a prospective study, a study that measures pesticide exposure very early in life ... then follow the children over five, six, seven years and see if the early exposure actually causes the disease," Landrigan said.

Parents seeking to limit their children's exposure to pesticides are advised to limit or eliminate all household or garden use of pesticides, including poisons such as bug sprays and garden insecticides, herbicides and fungicides. Another way to reduce pesticide exposure is to buy organic produce whenever possible. Among non-organic fruits, the safest are those that can be peeled or have a hard skin that can be washed, such as apples. The highest pesticide residues are typically found in soft-skinned fruits such as strawberries and peaches.

[Http://www.naturalnews.com/029908_pesticides_ADHD.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/029908_pesticides_ADHD.html)

Russia Resolves U.S. Objections to Its W.T.O. Entry

*** ANDREW E. KRAMER**

MOSCOW, October 1, 2010 Russia said that it had resolved all the outstanding trade disagreements with the United States that had been holding up Russian membership in the World Trade Organization. The Kremlin press service made the announcement after a phone call between the two countries' presidents.

Russia has sought entry to the W.T.O. since soon after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The deal wrapped up 17 years of negotiations on issues ranging from frozen chicken to intellectual property, and moved Russia, now the largest country outside the W.T.O., a big step closer to joining. While American backing does not ensure Russia's entry, Washington's opposition would have made it impossible. "Today, I can say that with the U.S. we have settled all issues related to Russia's accession to the W.T.O.," Russia's finance minister, Aleksei L. Kudrin, said in comments carried by Russian news agencies from a conference in Yalta, in Ukraine.

Mr. Kudrin said a formal bid to join the trade body would be ready in two to four months. Russia could join between six months and a year after it is submitted, he said, after President Dmitri A. Medvedev and President Obama talked by phone, the Russian presidential press service confirmed the deal. The White House issued a news release Friday afternoon, saying in part, "President Obama pledged to support Russia's efforts to complete remaining steps in multilateral negotiations so that Russia could join the W.T.O. as soon as possible."

The administration's apparent willingness to help usher Russia into the W.T.O. would be another touchstone moment in a wider give-and-take on matters of world import between Russia and the United States, under an administration policy known as the reset. President Medvedev, for example, recently compromised on longstanding Russian policy toward Iran, putting on indefinite hold a major anti-aircraft missile sale to that country that the United States had opposed. But membership into the W.T.O. is still not certain for Russia, which has had thorny trade relationships with several countries. There have repeatedly been false starts in Russia's membership bid over the years.

The Russians have been bargaining for entry longer than any other country ever has, including China, which was admitted in 2001. Under the rules of the W.T.O., which sets standards for customs and tariffs policies, Russia

must now turn its attention to smaller trading partners. Some of them are angry. Georgia, for example, is already a member of the W.T.O. with veto power, and has been subjected to a de facto Russian embargo on wine, produce and mineral water for years. For a time, it appeared Russia was hardly striving to join the W.T.O., whose rules protect exporters against unequal tariffs and counterfeiting. Because Russia's exports are principally oil, natural gas and other raw materials products that few, if any, countries are in a position to restrict with tariffs, and which nobody can counterfeit it seemed Russia had little to gain in joining the W.T.O. But Russia might benefit in the future if it meets its stated goals of diversifying the economy away from oil.

Several Russian trade disputes with the United States festered for years. Russia's accession was smoothed by new regulations adopted here on intellectual property rights, including protections for patented pharmaceuticals. For the deal to close, Washington and Moscow also had to settle disagreements on trade rules for Russian state companies, agricultural subsidies and inspection procedures for frozen chicken parts, a major headache for negotiators and an emotional issue here. The United States began bulk exports of chicken to Russia as food aid in the early 1990s; the frozen thighs became known as "Bush legs," after the first President Bush. Russia, which for a time became the largest importer of American chicken, has since then periodically blocked all of that trade, ostensibly for health reasons. In the meantime, the Russians have built a robust local poultry industry.

If Russia joins the W.T.O., the United States will be compelled to repeal a Cold War-era trade restriction that was intended to encourage the Soviet Union to allow Jewish emigration. Though emigration controls fell away with the collapse of Communism, the United States had kept the law on the books as leverage over disputes like the chicken fight. But that American law would violate W.T.O. rules if Russia were a member. American diplomats have said they will ask Congress to repeal this rule, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, and grant Russia permanent favored trade status that would become effective upon Russia's accession to the W.T.O.

[Http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/02/business/global/02trade.html?_r=1&src=busln](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/02/business/global/02trade.html?_r=1&src=busln)

Class and conflict: tensions at the heart of Asia and Europe

September 2010 -- Due to the nature of capitalism, we know that there will be increasing class tensions and social conflicts which will grow within Asia even as certain states start to dispute hegemony in West. This interview is part of a series in the run-up to the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum examining the economic and social state of Europe and Asia and the challenges for social movements committed to social, economic and environmental justice.

How has the emergence of Asia as an economic power changed the balance of power globally?

Well I think on the one hand that definitely there has been a major change on the international economic scene. Clearly we now have a multipolar world, with two global economies in particular India and China emerging on to the global economic stage.

Meanwhile Europe is basically in stagnation and the US is still unable to emerge from recession. The US is tied up in unwinnable war in Afghanistan after another disastrous war in Iraq so has lost its credibility as an imperial power. It no longer is able to shape the world according to its wishes, as we have seen with the challenges it is facing even in its own backyard with Venezuela and Bolivia showing that there are alternatives.

What is the implication of the rise of Asia for Europe?

The rise of Asia is significant because it is changing the correlation of forces globally and weakening the political hegemony of the US and Europe. This is important - whatever we think about the character of India and Chinese growth as it means that a few countries have less power to impose on others internationally.

At this point Europe is being battered economically. It seems to be unable to get out of its economic rut and stagnation. It is going to enter an even deeper crisis, because the move to austerity budgets will only exacerbate the economic crisis and lead to an ever

greater social crisis.

Europe is going to enter an even deeper crisis, because the move to austerity budgets will only exacerbate the economic crisis and lead to an ever greater social crisis.

The European agenda is already running into trouble with the crisis in Eurozone, which has led to richer countries beginning to push austerity programmes on poorer ones. This will exacerbate the rich-poor country divide in the EU, which has been papered over in the past by a number of things, such as EU subsidies led by German finance. But those days are now clearly over.

Does the rise of India and China not demonstrate the success of neoliberalism or capitalism?

China was never a neoliberal economy. It is a highly protected economy with a strong state role. For example, China has no capital account liberalisation why is why its currency is doing well. It has also retained control over its financial sector which is why it has not been sucked into the financial crisis.

But China is clearly a capitalist economy par excellence. In fact the integration of China into the global capitalist economy was a key mechanism to continue to reproduce the system. This is an intrinsic part of capitalism, that it contains a dynamic to reproduce itself, which was a core insight of Rosa Luxemburg.

The capitalist nature of the economy has meant China's growth has been based on repression of its working class, the marginalisation of peasants and workers and the growth of huge inequalities. So if people ask if China is a model for developing countries, the answer is definitely no. Even if some aspects of the state role in the Chinese economy are important and worth replicating.

What about India?

Well we also need to demystify India's 'success.' Behind the growth rates, India is a country in crisis. The continuing neglect of the peasantry and the exclusion of the majority from any benefits from its economic growth is what is fuelling the Maoist insurgency.

Measuring success on growth rates is inadequate. If we look at actual social conditions in India and China, we can see this has been growth with great social costs.

What will be the consequences of these growing economic and social divides in Asia?

It is clear that the economic rise of Asia has not yet been accompanied by a growth in political and economic rights. However the organising potential of lower classes working and disputing with capital is going to become much more important. Due to the nature of capitalism, we know that there will be increasing class tensions and class conflicts which will grow within Asia even as certain states start to dispute hegemony in West.

The organising potential of lower classes working and disputing with capital is going to become much more important.

In China we are already seeing working classes revolting, with strikes against Foxconn and Honda. This has shown that workers, who for a long time have had a very submissive role, are starting to gain class consciousness and to organise. So we are entering a significant process of conflict and hopefully of democratisation both economic and political.

What has been the impact of the financial/economic crisis in Asia? How has Asia responded?

Asia has largely escaped the economic crisis up to now. The one thing that has made a big difference, beyond all countries taking measures to prop up their domestic economies and stimulate with greater spending, has been China which has proved to be the real dynamo of the region. Its expenditure of \$585 billion in stimulus spending and its ongoing demand for raw materials and components has made a real difference, and led to high growth rates in South East Asia

including here in the Philippines

However that doesn't mean that Asia will be fine in the long-term. The problems Asia will face is that the Chinese economy is still highly dependent on exports to the US and Europe. The capacity of China's domestic market to be a fall back is very limited, as the Chinese strategy for last 25 years has been export-led growth at the expense of peasantry and lower classes. Increased government spending can only fill a gap for a short time. Unless EU and US recover, this recovery won't last very long. The latest figures show that the US economy is weakening. Europe is entering a double dip recession.

Technocrats in Asia have still not internalised that domestic markets are key and this means redistribution of income. They are still waiting for recovery in West. This is the price Asia will pay for creating economies greatly dependent on exports, particularly to the North.

How will these dynamics shape the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the debates in October?

I think that the ASEM project has been limping along. For European elites, the main drive behind ASEM was to try and counter US hegemony to see if Europe could establish new working economic relationships with Asia. This fell apart at the time of the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, with a loss of interest by European countries. This has revived recently, with a focus not so much on Asia but India and China.

Basically ASEM is a forum where European and Asian countries can dialogue independent of US. It seems to be mainly a talking shop, as no significant economic initiatives have emerged from the meeting that have prospered. For Asian elites, it is seen as an interesting forum but not really an important one.

For civil society, however, this yearly meeting has given a chance to strengthen ties between civil society groups between Europe and Asia and this has been very positive development. For example, it has enabled important work on migrant labour, highlighting the pressure immigrants face in Europe, and all the reasons for why they migrate. AEPF has been a very important vehicle where these kind of discussions and international solidarity have been

strengthened.

What key issues do you think the Asia-Europe Peoples' Forum should address and highlight?

I think that AEPF needs to keep the up focus on human rights in a number of areas especially Burma. I think it should push for withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. I think it should focus on migration , since migrants are facing increasing discrimination within Europe especially as the economic crisis worsens.

In terms of climate, civil society needs to push Europe to be more proactive and make deep cuts, independent of US inaction. The forum also should encourage China and India to undertake commitments that will reduce their current output of greenhouse gases. Although historically US and Northern countries have been by far the larger emitters and have the main responsibility to undertake commitments, AEPF could put forward a positive agenda calling for commitments by all countries.

Of course AEPF should also be talking about alternative development models. Clearly neoliberalism has failed in both Europe and Asia, so how can we influence governments to change direction?

One key area where we need to strengthen ties is between labour unions in Europe and workers in South East Asia. Labour unions need to be less protectionist in their views in Europe. While it is right for unions to be worried about job losses and protecting their jobs, they also need to be much more active in supporting workers organising in India, China and South East Asia. Only by intensive efforts to unite workers, can labour movements recapture their dynamism and rectify the imbalance between management and capital that has been so prominent in the last 20 years.

[Http://www.tni.org/interview/class-and-conflict-tensions-heart-asia-and-europe](http://www.tni.org/interview/class-and-conflict-tensions-heart-asia-and-europe)

Experts admit GM brinjal report fault

* G.S. MUDUR

New Delhi, The heads of India's science academies today conceded that they had unknowingly used a plagiarised report to declare that genetically-modified (GM) brinjal is safe and said that they would correct the mistake. Six Indian science academies had earlier this week approved the limited release of GM brinjal for cultivation in a joint report that contained 60 lines of plagiarised text, a near verbatim reproduction of an article in a biotechnology advocacy newsletter which itself had lines extracted from an industry-supported publication.

“This is unfortunate we are devastated. This should not have happened,” said M. Vijayan, the president of the Indian National Science Academy, and a senior faculty member at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

The academies will now examine the report again, introduce references for all text extracted from earlier publications, and release the names of all the scientists who contributed to the report, Vijayan told . But, he said, the main recommendations are unlikely to change. The report had recommended limited release of GM brinjal for cultivation to be followed by surveillance to look for effects, if any, on the health of people.

In preparing the report, the academies had relied on oral, written, and documentary information provided by fellows

of the academy, and the error appeared to have occurred in this process, another head of an academy said.

“There is absolutely no justification for what has happened,” said Ajay Sood, president of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore and a professor of physics at the IISc, Bangalore. “But many scientists are involved in the consultations we cannot police each other.” A coalition of environmental groups has said the cut-and-paste job in the report suggests that instead of pursuing an independent and rigorous evaluation of GM crop science, the academies appeared to have relied on scientists known to be leaning towards GM crops.

“Where is the independent, non-biased scientific review?” the coalition said in a statement today. The coalition had shown that a section of the academies' report contained text from an article written by P. Ananda Kumar, director of the National Centre for Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi, who has himself been involved in developing GM brinjal since the mid-1990s.

[Http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100927/jsp/nation/story_12986605.jsp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100927/jsp/nation/story_12986605.jsp)

GM foods are more dangerous for children than adults

*** Jeffrey M. Smith's**

Swapping genes between organisms can produce unknown toxic effects and allergies that are most likely to affect children. Vyvyan Howard, expert in infant toxico-pathology at Liverpool University Hospital, United Kingdom

Changes in nutrition have a greater impact on the structure and functioning of young, fast-growing bodies. More of the food is converted to build organs and tissues, whereas adults convert more to energy and store this as fat.

The UK Royal Society said that genetic modification “could lead to unpredicted harmful changes in the nutritional state of foods” and recommended that potential health effects of GM foods be rigorously researched before being fed to pregnant or breast-feeding women and babies.”

Epidemiologist Eric Brunner said that “small changes to the nutritional content might have effects on infant bowel function.”

Children are more susceptible to problems

Children are three to four times more prone to allergies than adults and “are at highest risk of death from food allergy.” Infants below two years old have the highest incidence of reactions, especially to new allergens encountered in the diet. Even tiny amounts of allergens can sometimes cause reactions.

One reason for this sensitivity, according to the EPA, is that “An immature gut or permeable mucosal epithelium is more likely to allow a higher degree of macromolecular transport and access to the immune system than the intact barrier of a normal mature gut. . . . The immune system must also be of sufficient maturity. . . . Both systems appear to be functioning optimally by age three to five.”

According to the Royal Society of Canada, “The potentially widespread use of GM food products as food additives and staple foods, including use in baby foods, may lead to earlier introduction of these novel

proteins to susceptible infants either directly or via the presence of the maternally ingested proteins in breast milk.”

The UK Royal Society suggested that “post-marketing surveillance should be part of the overall safety strategy for allergies, especially of high-risk groups such as infants,” but acknowledged that it is not clear “whether such monitoring is feasible for GM food.”

Children can react to much smaller doses of toxins than adults. Exposure to hormones or endocrine disruptors may also severely affect normal development.

And children who are prone to infections may be severely impacted if antibiotics lose their effectiveness due to antibiotic-resistant genes in GM food and the overuse of antibiotics in rbGH treated cows.

Children have a high exposure to GMOs

Children consume a large amount of products that may be genetically engineered. They eat a higher percentage of corn in their diet compared to adults, and allergic children often rely on corn as a source of protein.

Mothers using cornstarch as a talc substitute on their children's skin might also expose them via inhalation. Infants are sometimes reared on soy infant formula.

The Royal Society wrote, “Infant formulas, in particular, are “consumed as a single food over extended periods of time by those who are especially vulnerable” and “should be investigated most rigorously.”

Among the potential side effects are changes in soy's natural estrogen mimickers, which may influence sexual development.

Children consume a disproportionately large amount of milk. In the United States and elsewhere, dairy

products may come from cows treated with the genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rbGH).

The milk contains increased amounts of hormones and antibiotics and an altered nutritional content. According to a discussion paper on the public health implications of rbGH, published in the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, an "infant would be exposed to a dose of IGF-1, which was 12.5 times the recommended minimum." Samuel Epstein, chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition and an expert on the health effects of rbGH, says that risks of high exposure to IGF-1 are "of particular concern . . . to infants and children in view of their high susceptibility to cancer-causing products and chemicals." He also suggests that regular exposure might promote "premature growth stimulation in infants, gynecomastia [development of abnormally large breasts on males] in young children."

Safety assessments ignore children

An FAO/WHO task force on GM food said that "Attention should be paid to the particular physiological characteristics and metabolic requirements of specific population subgroups, such as infants [and] children." In practice, GM safety assessments ignore them. In fact, industry funded studies often use mature animals instead of the more sensitive young ones, in order to mask results.

Biologist David Schubert warns, "Since children are the most likely to be adversely effected by toxins and other dietary problems, if the GM food is given to them without proper testing, they will be the experimental animals. If there are problems, we will probably never know because the cause will not be traceable and many diseases take a very long time to develop."

[Www.ResponsibleTechnology.org](http://www.ResponsibleTechnology.org)

NAMS distances itself from pro-Bt brinjal report

Sep 29, 2010 -- NEW DELHI: The National Academy of Medical Sciences has distanced itself from the controversial pro Bt-brinjal report that it had co-authored with five other premier national science academies. It also pushed for a fresh report with scientific rigour and not just a reiteration of the existing report with referencing of sourced information.

The move to distance itself from the report came after the NAMS council met to discuss the issue after it was highlighted that important sections had been copied from a pro-GM newsletter. Council president K K Talwar had, even before the meeting, expressed his disapproval in a letter to other academies pointing out the controversy and the plagiarised parts, sources in NAMS said.

NAMS has now decided that it will not endorse the new report till each section of the report has been cleared by all council members. Sources said even though an elaborate consultation process was undertaken before the report was finalised, the varied views were not included in the discredited first report.

A source told that almost 90 scientists from six academies were invited for expert comments in the run-up to finalising the report. But, at the end, each academy went on to write the part it had expertise in, the source said. A key

official in the know of the process said the plagiarisation had discredited the academies and even with a new report, it would be difficult to convince policymakers and the general public that what they noted was authentic scientific information.

"There was a lot of scientific information available which was not included and several scientists had contributed different views but this did not find a way into the report," the official said. Instead, key paragraphs giving a clean chit to Bt-brinjal were cut-paste into the report which was meant to assess the scientific basis for further action on GM food crops. One of the cut and paste parts noted, "Bt brinjal 'Event EE-1' has been subjected to a rigorous biosafety regulatory process encompassing all aspects of toxicity, allergenicity, environmental safety, socio-economic assessment etc."

The paragraph was picked from a non-peer reviewed article written in a pro-GM newsletter of the department of biotechnology called Biotech News in December 2009. The article was authored by P Anand Kumar, director of National Research Centre for Plant Biology and a member of the GEAC that had first passed Bt-brinjal before the environment ministry put a moratorium on its commercial introduction.

(TNN)

Academies copied to push for Bt brinjal

*** Dinesh C. Sharma**

New Delhi - India's top science academies have done the unthinkable. They have copied and quoted extensively from an industry lobby report to give a clean chit to the controversial genetically modified (GM) brinjal.

Key portions and data in the much touted Inter-Academy Report on Genetically Modified Crops have been lifted straight from a report of a lobbying group funded by seed companies, including Monsanto and Mahyco.

In March, Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh had asked the six science academies - the Indian Academy of Sciences, the Indian National Academy of Engineering, the Indian National Science Academy, the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the National Academy of Medical Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences (India) - to give an unbiased scientific assessment on the feasibility of transgenic crops and the proposed regulatory mechanism for GM food. They submitted the report to Ramesh, recommending the commercial release of Bt brinjal.

But it turns out that the academies have relied heavily on data generated by US-based GM lobby International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). They have recommended the commercial release of Bt brinjal and the lifting of the moratorium imposed on it by Ramesh. Earlier, science and technology minister Prithviraj Chavan had plagiarised from reports by the same ISAAA in a letter to cabinet colleague A. Ramadoss while defending Bt brinjal. This was exposed by M AIL T ODAY in February this year.

The report in question currently has copied most of the data and information in support of Bt brinjal from an ISAAA report The Development and Regulation of Bt Brinjal in India and an article Bt Brinjal: A Pioneering Push by Dr P. Anand Kumar in Biotech News - a publication of the Department of Biotechnology. Both were published in 2009. Being a developer of GM crops himself, Kumar is a vocal supporter of Bt brinjal.

The academies have declared Bt brinjal safe by copying the following paragraph verbatim from Dr Kumar's article: "Bt brinjal 'Event EE- 1' has been subjected to a rigorous biosafety regulatory process encompassing all aspects of toxicity, allergenicity, environmental safety, socio-economic assessment etc.

"Studies on food and feed safety have been conducted on rats, rabbits, fish, chickens, goats and cows. Similarly, environmental impact assessments to study germination, pollen flow, invasiveness, aggressiveness, weediness, and effect on non-target organisms were also carried out." The data that has been lifted from the industry document relates to key issues. The copied portion says: "It (brinjal) is an important cash crop for poor farmers who transplant it from nurseries at different times of the year to produce two or three crops, each of 150 to 180 days' duration."

Again, on losses caused by pests, an entire paragraph has been lifted from the ISAAA report: "Brinjal Shoot and Fruit Borer (BSFB) causes significant losses of up to 60 to 70 per cent in commercial plantings. Damage starts in the nursery, prior to transplanting, continues to harvest and is then carried-over to the next crop of brinjal. BSFB damages brinjal in two ways.

First, it infests young shoots during the vegetative phase, which limits the ability of plants to produce healthy fruitbearing shoots, thereby reducing potential yield." Another piece of data used to justify Bt brinjal has been lifted from the industry report: "Farmers usually spray twice a week, applying 15 to 40 insecticide sprays, or more, in one season depending on infestation levels."

Figures relating to the financial cost of insecticide spray by farmers too come from the industry document. The similarities in the ISAAA report and the Inter-Academy report go on without anyone getting a hint about the source of the data. No references or citations have been given, as is normal with any scientific document.

[Http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/114057/India/academies-copied-to-push-for-bt-brinjal.html](http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/114057/India/academies-copied-to-push-for-bt-brinjal.html)

A Call to Social Movements & Organizations To Protest The G20 Summit in Seoul

**20 COUNTRIES ALONE CANNOT DEFINE THE DESTINY OF THE ENTIRE WORLD FOR
SYSTEM CHANGE AND AN END TO BUSINESS AS USUAL, LET'S BUILD ANOTHER WORLD!
THE PEOPLE WILL NOT CONTINUE TO PAY FOR THE CRISIS.**

Background

The financial earthquake that hit at the end of 2008

□ the most recent expression of the grave systemic crisis of the neo-liberal capitalist model (also manifested by the climate, food prices, energy and employment crises, plus relentless poverty)

□ continues to spread throughout the world, showing its tragic face to the peoples in both the rich and poor countries of the planet.

Global powers reacted immediately to the crisis, coordinating their efforts to save the system, which, as the crisis clearly shows, is responsible for growing inequality and poverty in the world.

The leaders of the most powerful countries united in the G8[1] decided to give a new configuration to the G20[2] by inviting the Heads of State of this select group of large and 'emerging' economies to join them and Finance ministers at G20 summits.

Claiming to be the premier forum for global economic governance, the revamped and strengthened version of the G20 seeks to establish itself as the centre of global power, turning its back on the other 172 countries in the United Nations that, coincidentally, just happen to be, for the most part, the world's poorest.

The inclusion of "emerging" countries of the Global South is not a sign of the G8 altruistically consulting and joining hands with the developing countries, but rather a change in its tactics.

The G8 decided to include these developing countries in its exclusive club in order to 1) effectively prevent South-South alliances from developing further and

stifle criticisms of the neo-liberal model, 2) shore up the G8's dwindling legitimacy and 3) gain access to foreign exchange reserves accumulating in the "emerging" countries.

By acquiring access to foreign exchange reserves in global south countries, the 'old' powers of the G-8 were able to temporarily salvage the financial system from collapse and revive the ailing International Monetary Fund and other International Financial Institutions.

In turn, these reinvigorated IFIs have since gone on the offensive again with their structural adjustment programs, this time not only in the South, but also in the North.

Inclusion however does not mean equal participation.

As can be seen, the real decision-making powers remain with the former G8 and their corporations.

Furthermore, expansion does not also translate into legitimacy.

The G20 is just as equally illegitimate and undemocratic as the G8.

It is a non-elected and non-representative body that does not and should not represent nor decide on the economic and political directions of the entire world.

And just like the G8, the G20's real aim is not to solve the crisis, but rather to revive the neo-liberal regime.

The G20's "active" measures to supposedly save all the world's economies betray its true agenda and interests.

Ideas initially introduced in its debates (namely the

proposals for financial transaction taxes and measures to control tax havens) have been replaced by a push for fiscal austerity policies, further trade and investment liberalization and the fostering of new business and even more financial speculation through the promotion of false market solutions for the climate crisis, namely carbon trading.

Even its financial reforms impose no real democratic control and accountability over the operations of banks or multinational corporations.

Against all the evidence of a failed economic model, which not only has plunged millions of people worldwide into poverty (including many of the people living in G20 countries) but also continues to contribute daily to the destruction of the very basis of life on the planet, the G20 governments continue to promote business as usual.

To make matters worse, the G20 --- which originally emerged to contain the crisis --- now aims to transform itself into the political space with the power to define the course of the world economy and governance, continuously broadening its agenda to include issues such as climate change, subsidies to fossil fuels and even development aid, while doing little of real substance in these areas.

And with the World Trade Organization (WTO) bogged down in stalled negotiations, it is evident that countries are focusing their efforts more and more on the G20, which has increasingly become the centre of debate and decisions on issues of the global economy.

Our demands

We, social movements and organizations, must halt the G20's agenda and undemocratic process, while continuing to build from below socially and ecologically sustainable and democratic alternatives.

We demand:

- a change in the economic model, which implies putting an end to neo-liberalism and moving towards a new model based on systemic change and for the benefit and well-being of all peoples in the world (rather than corporate profits), including the adoption of bold economic strategies to create decent jobs, as

well as a new international financial architecture;

- a halt to market based “solutions” for climate change and the anti-democratic Copenhagen Accord (a clear step backwards from the positive aspects of the Kyoto Protocol), and the immediate adoption of profound changes to our current system of production, distribution and consumption;

- an end to a global food system based on price speculation by agribusiness corporations and its replacement by a system of food production and distribution that supports small farmers and promotes food sovereignty;

- a suspension of trade negotiations at the WTO and of bi-regional or bilateral free trade and investment regimes until a new international agreement has been reached on trade and investment rules based on truly just and sustainable development for all.

Movements fighting for democratic alternatives and social and climate justice must unite to demand real change and denounce the G20 as a threat to the people of the world and an emerging target for disputing global power.

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दिनांक :- 2 अक्टूबर 2010 समय: सायं 7 बजे
स्थान :- जी. आर. फार्म, रईसपुर (गुलधर रोड़) गाजियाबाद



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