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Bangladesh, India, Nepal

Join the Climate Justice, Gender and Food Sovereignty Caravan 2014

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â€¢ Running for 18 days

â€¢ Travelling through three countries; Bangladesh, India and Nepal

â€¢ Exchange of views, workshops, mobilisations, discussions, rallies, processions, visits

â€¢ Opportunity to eat meals with real peasants, landless and indigenous families and to stay with real peasants and indigenous families in remote villages

â€¢ Tour local areas, talk with farmers and meet many people from South Asia and from around the globe

Do you want to join us?

Why join us?

â€¢ Climate change is disproportionately affecting low-lying, vulnerable countries like Bangladesh and India.

â€¢ The people of South Asia are already experiencing crop failure, devastating cyclones and unseasonal flooding (amongst many other climate change impacts), leading to deaths and malnutrition.

â€¢ This is an opportunity to learn, share, participate, increase solidarity networks and strengthen local movements.

â€¢ You can take the rich experiences and stories back into your own campaigning.

â€¢ Not only all of this, the cost for participants from enriched (developed/Northern) countries covers the costs of one South Asian participant.

â€¢ It will be fun!

â€¢ Opportunity to stay with real peasants and indigenous families in remote villages

â€¢ Opportunity to eat some meal in real peasants, landless and indigenous families

â€¢ We, the peasants of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal are cordially inviting you!

What will I contribute?

â€¢ Having international people participating in the caravan strengthens the message and will help to raise the profile of the caravan

â€¢ Local people are interested to meet you and hear about your life

â€¢ Experience sharing – you can take the knowledge back to your own countries and help to raise the awareness of climate justice, gender equality and food sovereignty in your local communities

â€¢ Learn firsthand of the experiences of peasants in countries that are most affected by climate change

â€¢ Help someone from South Asia join the caravan too (your registration fee pays for one person from South Asia to join the caravan)

You can also help with:

â€¢ Workshop facilitation and organisation

â€¢ Translation

â€¢ Social media – blogging, facebooking, tweeting

Cost

Cost for participants from enriched (developed/Northern) countries (includes the cost for one South Asian participant also): US \$ 1500

We are targeting 160 people to travel on the caravan. There will be people attending from each country who will attend the tour only within their own country, but the tour will continue to have 160 people at all times.

We have 40 slots for developed countries delegates/individuals.

Registration is open until October, however we encourage you to book early to ensure your place and to help us organise.

Dateline for registration:

1st October 2014.

Registration fee: US \$500. It will be deducted from the total cost.

Optional:

One day pre-caravan cross-cultural training, basic Bengali lesson, and individual locally appropriate clothes shopping/tailoring assistance – approximately US \$70 (depends on type of accommodation & clothing that you choose).

Optional:

Receiving you in person at the airport and organising the transfers (both ways) US \$25

What's included?

â€¢ All accommodation - basic: with local peasants, indigenous people or in school halls (foam mattress, mosquito net, linen, pillow and blanket provided, but it wouldn't hurt to bring a camping mattress).

â€¢ All meals (Rice, roti, fish, dahl & vegetables are generally eaten for all three meals - vegetarians easily accommodated). Hygienic food, pure drinking water/ mineral water.

â€¢ All transport costs in Bangladesh, India and Nepal during the caravan.

â€¢ All climate caravan activities.

â€¢ All the above for a South Asian activist as well as for yourself! Solidarity in action!

â€¢ Medical facility will be available where necessary (Provided that cost for medicine to be paid by his/her who needs)

Flights are not included. You will need to organise your own transport to the departure location: Dhaka, Bangladesh; and from the final destination point: Kathmandu, Nepal.

You will need to organise your own visas for Bangladesh and India prior to arriving for the caravan. No visa is required for Nepal.

Caravan Objectives and Expected Results

The caravan aims to address the key issues of climate change, gender and food sovereignty and their interrelationships. There is an ongoing and urgent need to inform and mobilise vulnerable peasant populations in order to respond to the threats of climate change, and to further develop international solidarity networks concerning climate change and food sovereignty such as those nurtured within La Via Campesina of which all three movements are participants.

The Caravan will be hosted by the Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Bangladesh Kisan Sabha (In Bangladesh), the Bharatiya Kisan Union, KRRS, SICCFM, IMSE, NHF (in India), and the All Nepal Peasant Federation and All Nepal Women's Association (in Nepal).

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

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

Tour Route

Caravan Activities

Bangladesh: 4 locations in 4 districts

â€¢ Dhaka

The Caravan will commence in Dhaka.

â€¢ Sirajganj

â€¢ Puthia – District: Natore

Puthia is sub-district of northern Natore district. Natore is famous for Cholon bil (the biggest inland water-body) in Bangladesh. We will exchange our views with Cholon bil peasants, landless and fisherfolk at the late afternoon. There will be also few workshops in the morning.

â€¢ Mirpur – District: Kushtia

India: 3 locations in 3 districts

â€¢ Singur – District: Hooghly, West Bengal

Singur is in Hooghly district in West Bengal, India. Singur was in the world media in 2006 when farmers of Singur built a strong movement against the Tata Nano car factory. After the successful movement Tata left Singur. There will be a seminar in the afternoon and also a village visit and discussion with local leaders of Singur farmer's movement.

â€¢ Nandigram – District: Purba Medinipur, West Bengal

Nandigram is in southern West Bengal district of Purba Medinipur, India. Nandigram is also a famous place of peasant movement. In 2007 Nandigram people fought together against Special Economic Zone (SEZ). We will attend workshops in Nandigram. We will also exchange of views with the local farmer leaders who were active in the Nandigram movement.

â€¢ Tatraru – District: Ramgarh, Jharkhand

Nepal: 3 locations

• Damak – District: Jhapa

Damak is a small hilly town in Jhapa district of south-eastern Nepal. A peasant seminar will be organised there. We will also meet tea workers in Damak.

• Jamakpur – District: Dhanusa

• Kathmandu

Rationale

Communities around the world are threatened by economic and environmental crisis as the impacts of neoliberal capitalism and climate change increasingly impact the lives and livelihoods of the poor, peasants, agricultural workers, landless, women and indigenous peoples. The global economic system accumulates profits by dispossessing others, and this requires the constant exploitation of key resources such as land, water, fossil fuels, forests, and seeds. In particular, the global food economy is contributing to both economic and environmental crises: as subsistence, indigenous and traditional ways of farming are replaced by corporate controlled agribusiness that requires massive use of fossil fuels and agrochemicals, deforestation, and the displacement of farmers from the land. Climate change exacerbates such conflicts over resources both within and between countries, and has serious impacts on food production and yields because of increased frequency and severity of droughts, floods, and unpredictable rainfall. Indeed, climate change has already been responsible for 300,000 deaths a year, has displaced 31 million people worldwide (e.g. through floods) and is affecting 300 million people across the planet.

The South Asian region is highly sensitive to the consequences of climate change. It is known to be the most disaster prone region in the world whilst supporting a huge population of more than 1.3 billion. This is critical as climate predictions for the future highlight increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like droughts and floods (IPCC 2001); with a huge population that is likely to be exposed and affected in the region. In South Asia alone, 2.5 billion people will be affected with water stress and scarcity by the year 2050 before changes in climatic conditions have been considered.

The effects of climate change are being particularly felt by the poor, peasants, indigenous people, children and women. Peasant women already have to negotiate the inequalities associated with patriarchal societies such as 'dual labour' (working in agriculture as well as looking after the household, though cooking, childcare etc); restrictions on mobility; lack of participation in decision-making etc. The effects of climate change then exacerbate these inequalities. Climate change is deepening the food crisis for women and their families. Women are the majority of the world's small-scale farmers and produce most of the world's food. For example, because of their role in farming, women depend upon local natural resources: land, water, forests etc. These are the very resources that get impacted by climate change and extreme weather events.

In response to these threats to their livelihoods, peasant farmer's movements in Asia, Latin America and Africa – in their networks such as La Via Campesina, have occupied land, defended peasant livelihoods and created alternative, sustainable approaches to agriculture, enshrined in the concept of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty implies peasant control over territory, biodiversity, seeds and the means of food production as well as environmental sustainability and the use of traditional farmer's knowledge. Food sovereignty is one of the most important practices that enable peasant communities to both mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change because peasant farming is more resilient to extreme climatic events than industrial agriculture.

Through programmes such as farmer-to-farmer exchanges initiated by La Via Campesina and caravans such as the 2011 Climate Change, Food Sovereignty and Gender caravan in Bangladesh (supported by La Via Campesina, Grassroots International, the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation and Misereor and different individuals), peasant farmers from different communities around the world have been able to come together to share skills, information and experiences concerning the economic and environmental crises that they face. However, there is an urgent need for both continued education concerning climate change amongst peasant populations, and the mobilization of peasant communities around key issues such as access to land and food sovereignty.

Following on from the success of the 2011 Climate Caravan in Bangladesh, peasant farmer movements from the South Asia region (the Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Bangladesh Kisan Sabha, the India-based the Bharatiya Kisan Union, the All Nepal Peasant Federation and All Nepal Women's Association) are proposing a caravan that will incorporate Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

Frequent Asked Questions

Questions you may have are included below. If you have any questions that have not been covered please contact us on:
pathaklal@yahoo.com,
friendsofbangladesh@hushmail.com

Will there be translators available?

Translator will be available for English speakers to Bangla, Hindi and Nepali. The main language of the Caravan will be English. If there are any participants speaking other languages like Spanish, she/he should bring her/his own translator. Voluntary translators would be appreciated.

What information on booking flights to Bangladesh?

Information on flight booking is available online.

This is the participants' own responsibility.

Do I need a visa to enter the countries?

You will require a visa for entry to Bangladesh and India. You do not need a visa to enter Nepal. Tourist visas are usually easy to get for Bangladesh and India.

For your Bangladeshi visa you can find more information here: <http://www.virtualbangladesh.com/faq/pass.html>

If you are in Australia you can find more information for your Indian visa here: <http://www.vfs-in-au.net/>

I cannot attend the entire caravan. Can I join it part of the way through?

People can join part of the way, and fees may be able to be reduced accordingly. But participation in the whole event is advisable.

Can I stay on after the caravan is finished?

The caravan will be finishing in Kathmandu. People are most welcome to stay in Nepal or to return to Bangladesh to see the occupation movement in areas that are not covered in the Caravan, for example the Southern area the country. If you're interested there is always plenty for people to help out with! Also it is a great opportunity to travel personally and travel further through India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

I have a low-income and have difficulties with the cost involved – is there a chance of reduction?

The price goes to helping South Asian peoples attend the caravan, as well as all the organisation for trip. However, in cases of special financial need the cost may be able to be reduced. Contact us in this case.

What should I bring?

Final logistical arrangements will be confirmed closer to the date. But participants can bring: personal medical supplies including any medications which may not be available in Bangladesh, India or Nepal, mosquito preventive lotion, light warm cloths, torch, toiletries, sleeping bag, travel mattress, health insurance, camera, etc.

I cannot attend the tour but would like to make a donation to help?

We would prefer if you can come, but if you cannot, a donation will help local people to attend the caravan and is greatly appreciated. Please contact us if this is the case.

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Our Australian friends: www.friendsofbkf.wordpress.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Bangladesh/203249469842531>

Caravan organisers

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

Bangladesh Kishani Sabha

Bharatiya Kisan Union Karnataka Rajya Ryotha Sangha (KRRS)

South Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers Movements (SICCFM)