

HIGHLIGHTING AGRI-BIODIVERSITY AT COP-11

9th – 15th October 2012

The CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity, a UN Conference held once in two years is being hosted by Hyderabad, India this year. The COP – Conference of Parties takes stock of the issues confronting global biological diversity. Hyderabad, being the platform, offers us in this country an opportunity to put some of our issues forward for global attention. Over past two and half decades, Deccan Development Society has been at the forefront of Indian NGOs that are asserting the rights of the local communities on the biological diversity practiced and conserved by them. As far back as in 1995 DDS had brought over 140 organisations in Andhra Pradesh to knit the AP Coalition in Defence of Diversity, a network dedicated to the issue of agrobiodiversity. Later coalitions forged by the Society viz., Millet Network of India [MINI] and SAGE [Southern Action on Genetic Engineering] have kept agro biodiversity as the centre piece of this struggle for community controlled biodiversity.

In its capacity as the member of the AP Biodiversity Board [APSBB] and of the Agrobiodiversity Group of the National Biodiversity Authority [NBA], the DDS and its two major networks, MINI and SAGE are organising a series of events during the CBD. These events are intended to project issues related to agricultural biodiversity and the negative impact it suffers because of genetic engineering in food and farming by projecting them and analysing them in an Afro-Asian plain. This is also an effort forge new coalitions at the Afro Asian level.

The details of the events are:

1. ***An Interface with Frances Moore Lappe: On October 8, 2012***, we are organizing an interface by Frances Moore Lappé, the author of 18 books including the three-million copy 'Diet for a Small Planet'. She is the cofounder of three organizations, including Food First: The Institute for Food and Development Policy and, more recently, the Small Planet Institute, a collaborative network for research and popular education seeking to bring democracy to life, which she leads with her daughter Anna Lappé. Frances and her daughter have also cofounded the Small Planet Fund, which channels resources to democratic social movements worldwide. Frances appears frequently as a public speaker and on radio, and is a regular contributor to Huffington Post and Alternet. Frances Lappe is the winner of the Right Livelihoods Award, considered by many to be the Alternative Nobel. Therefore we feel that an interaction with her will offer us in this movement some fresh insights and build larger solidarity groups. ***Venue : CESS Seminar Hall, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Time : 10 am to 2pm***



2. ***Bt Cotton Web Around Food, Farming and Livestock Systems: Continental Perspectives From Africa and Asia***, the first of the two events is being organized on ***October 9, 2012*** to focus on the threat posed by Bt Cotton in particular and GM Crops in general, to the agricultural biodiversity of nations in Asia and Africa, and the dangers of this technology to the food, farming and livestock diversity of these regions. This one-and-a-half hour session will see the participation of members from Western Africa, Asia-Pacific, South and South-East Asia. ***Venue : HICC, Room 1.09 - Level 1; Time : 18:15 - 19:45 ; ID : 2818***

3. ***Afro-Asian Food Sovereignty: Can Millets be the Bonding Crops?*** This one-and-a-half hour program being organized on ***October 15, 2012*** will see farmers and pastoralists from Western Africa, South and South East Asia discussing the global challenges and threats facing indigenous knowledge systems and traditional farming and pastoralist communities; and the tools that can be employed in order to counter these threats. This session will explore millets as a crop that can be a global counter-narrative to the widely prevailing paradigm of agriculture. ***Venue : Room 2 - HITEX 1 - Ground Level. Time: 13:15 to 14:45; ID : 2806***

4. Finally, DDS, MINI and SAGE will together organise an ***Exhibition on Crop Diversity*** that will be on concurrent to the COP-11 proceedings. The exhibition is a unique opportunity to show-case the extraordinary biodiversity in the regions where MINI and SAGE are working and to showcase the voices and vision of women and men farmers in a creative manner. The Exhibition is likely to be held ***at Shilparamam (NightBazar), Kondapur, Hyderabad, and from October 1-19, 2012, Time 10 am to 1 am (Midnight) Stall Numbers : 1, 2, 22, 23, 24***

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