

*Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal commit to map policies and programmes as a first step towards social protection and right to food.*

June 2, 2015 witnessed the launch of the first Global Dialogue workshop on *Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition: Building on the Experience of Brazil and India* in Dhaka, Bangladesh. An ambitious project, Global Dialogues is led by the Centre for Equity Studies (CES), New Delhi with DFID support under the Knowledge Partnership Programme (KPP). Two more such dialogues are planned in Africa later this year.



The workshop was supported locally by Right to Food Bangladesh, and drew participants from Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. Held back-to-back immediately after a South Asia Right to Food Conference, more than 60 participants attended the dialogue. Some of them from Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh stayed back on June 3 to formalise their immediate action plan along with CES.

The purpose of the workshop was to share learning from India's journey on the Right to Food as an offer of support to organisations working on social protection in other countries. To support this learning, a paper documenting ten debates of global relevance that took place during India's Right to Food process was shared. Further elaborating on the objectives, Daniel Bradley, Food and Resource Security Advisor, DFID explained, "We are trying to catalyse and connect groups through a knowledge platform between India and other developing countries. The Global Dialogues is one such effort."

Sharing experiences, Harsh Mander from CES informed how civil society and the Supreme Court played key roles in the entire process. "Several debates arose and were discussed during the formulation of the draft law and sharing of these could be of learning value for those working on social protection and food rights," said Mander.

The experience of Brazil's Zero Hunger programme was shared by Flavio Valente of FIAN International. "Several ministries have come together for this programme, wherein civil society is playing a key role," informed Valente.

Post sharing of the Indian and Brazilian experiences, participants came together in country groups to discuss what kind of ongoing engagement with Brazil/India could help strengthen approaches to national food security in their own country.

Many of the participants shared the context under which they are operating. Bobby, representing civil society from Myanmar informed that the government is moving fast and given that civil society is as yet young and not in large numbers, it was sometimes difficult to keep pace. In case of Nepal, the participants informed that Right to Food is an important component in the draft of the Constitution of Nepal currently under prepared. The unfortunate earthquake on April 25 has now delayed the process. Bangladesh informed about the commitment of the Prime Minister on working towards a Right to Food and the involvement of the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in this.

Participants from all countries appreciated the learning agenda of the discussion and requested CES to develop an e group to further share knowledge. CES has committed to take this forward. Others expressed an interest in learning more about specific programmes such as the mid day meal scheme, public distribution system and rural development programmes. Myanmar for instance was interested in learning more about rural development laws in India and the public distribution system. Exposure visits were suggested for 'on-site' learning.

As an immediate follow up, participants from Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan agreed to work with CES to map policies and programmes relating to social protection in their respective countries within the next three months. The purpose is to then hold discussions with policy makers.

The Global Dialogues project is supported by DFID under the KPP in partnership with IPE Global. KPP is a South-South cooperation programme promoting knowledge sharing in the areas of Food Security, Resource Scarcity and Climate Change; Health and Disease Control; Trade and Investment; and Women and Girls. KPP is funded by the Government of UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by a consortium led by IPE Global Private Limited under its Knowledge Initiative. The main objective of KPP is 'Gathering and uptake of evidence on issues central to India's national development that have potential for replication in LICs and impact on global poverty'.

