

S Asia policymakers tie up on regional food legislation

Print Edition

MONDAY, 29 JULY 2013 | AUTHOR / SOURCE: STAFF REPORTER |   

DHAKA, JULY 28: Leading food policy experts, policymakers, and legislatures from five South Asian countries including Bangladesh are meeting on 30-31 July in Kathmandu to discuss legal ways and solutions to fight food insecurity in the region where more than 304 million malnourished people live, accounting for the world's majority. The event is organised by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) in partnership with Oxfam and it's ever biggest global campaign GROW. As part of its ongoing regional programme on the issue, the agencies also developed a regional synthesis report on legislative measures relating to food security in South Asia to be launched on July 31, according to a press release, issued by Oxfam, an international confederation of 17 organisations, working to find solutions to poverty and related injustice around the world.

During the two-day regional consultation, "Food-related Legislation in South Asia", the participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka will discuss on findings of studies on food-related legislation in each of the country.

Hasanul Haq Inu, Minister for Information, will attend the consultation along with other Members of Parliaments, politicians, experts, government officials, academics, practitioners from five countries, who will assess the works undertaken under the programme and provide necessary inputs to fill the missing gaps.

"The region is at a true crossroad. With volatile food prices, erratic weather pattern, sluggish global economy and widening gap between the rich and the poor, all the progresses South Asia has enjoyed in the past two decades could be reversed unless it confronts this region-wide hunger with a sense of urgency," said Lillian Mercado, Deputy Regional Director of Oxfam in Asia.

Dr Ratnakar Adhikari of SAWTEE said the report has identified best practices in food security legislation in the region as well as highlights the challenges and loopholes in the existing measures.

"Broadly, we have four categories of factors that cause the region's food insecurity. They are related to production/productivity, consumption/distribution, environment and cooperation," Dr Ratnakar said.

"These will be the focus of the consultation along with the recommendations. We hope to come up with agreed measures and action points that are as practical and adaptable as much as possible for all the South Asian countries."