



Press Release

Rights groups termed the allocation for Agriculture in the proposed budget 2016-17 as inadequate and Suicidal

Adequate allocation is must for agriculture to ensure food security and self-reliant agriculture

Dhaka, 15th June 2016. A group of rights based civil society organizations have termed the proposed allocation for the agriculture sector in the national budget of 2016-17 as inadequate and inefficient. They said, the budget don't have specific and effective measures to face the national and global challenges of the farmers of Bangladesh. They also demanded a Just Price Commission to ensure just price of the agricultural products. The CSOs representatives were speaking in a seminar held today in the national press club.

The seminar titled "Budget 2016-17: Allocation for the agriculture and future food security" was jointly organized by Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL), Equity and Justice Working Group Bangladesh (EquityBD), Medium Term Cooperation Program (MTCP) and South Asian Association for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE). The seminar chaired by Sharmind Nilormi of CSRL was moderated by Mustafa Kamal Akand of COAST Trust while Md. Mujibul Haque Munir of EquityBd presented the keynote. Among others of Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Forest and Environment Tipu Sultan MP, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Labour Welfare Israfil Alom MP, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Social Welfare Monoronjon Shil Gopal MP, Dr. Jahangir Alam of CSRL, Subal Sorkar of Bangladesh Bhumihiin Somity, Zayed Iqbal Khan of Bangladesh Krishak Federation also spoke at the occasion.

In his key note presentation, Md Mujibul Haque Munir said, allocation for the ministry of agriculture in the budget of 2015-16 was the 4.21% of the total budget, while the proposed budget of 2016-17 allocates 4.01%, which is 0.19% lower, While the total is increased by about 29%. Allocation for the ministry of Agriculture in the Annual Development Plan has also been reduced. It was 2.00% in 2015-16 and the new budget proposes only 1.7% of the total ADP. Where against every 1 taka of subsidy farmers can refund about 15 taka to the exchequer, subsidy is once gain remained stagnant, we demand increased subsidy and proper utilization of that.

Dr. Jahangir Alom said, subsidy must reach the farmers directly. Government purchase centers can be at the village level. Subal Sarkar said, for the last couple of years the issue of just price of farmers product has been a huge issue. Rice cultivators are not even get their production cost. The proposed budget has nothing to address the problem.

Tipu Sultan MP said, Bangladesh is losing 1% of its land every year. Farmers of coastal areas are losing their land due to adverse climate. We need strong action to protect agricultural land form commercialization. By using chemical fertilizers and pesticides to increase our production we are actually killing our future. If we can't stop excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers we will be in serious threats of food insecurity. Israfil Alom MP said, we need modern technologies for agriculture, Many of our farmers don't have that much capacity to get ensure technologies, we will have to lend our support towards them in this regard. Our farmers are facing problems due to improper marketing mechanism, we will have to reform of marketing system. It should be farmers friendly. Monoronjon Shil Gopal MP said, the rice collection process form the farmers must be reformed. Government should collect rice from farmers instead of paddy. The time of collection should also be revised. Small scale farmers are not getting the benefits of subsidy in agriculture equipment. They should be provided loan with easy interest rate to collect equipment.

Report By

Mustafa Kamal Akand, Mobile: 01711455591

Md. Mujibul haque Munir, Mobile: 01713367438