



## Press Release;

Remembering Cyclone 29<sup>th</sup> April, Coastal NGOs Alliance demanded stopping illicit business in the name of saving coastal areas;

# Reform of Water Development Board is must to save the coastal land and people

Dhaka, 29 April 2017. In remembering devastating Cyclone 29<sup>th</sup> April'91 Coastal NGOs Alliance demonstrated a Human Chain and demanded immediate reform of Water Development Board (WDB) to save coastal land and peoples. They also demanded stopping of illicit business and under-table nexus between WDB and its Contractors. In the banner of Coastal NGOs Alliance Mustafa Kamal Akanda of COAST Trust moderated the human chain and rally with upholding 8 points demand of the coastal people including establish permanent embankment to protect coastal people and ensure accountability and transparency of WDB. At the demonstration representatives of Online Knowledge Society, Arpon, Alok Jatra, Uddipan, Unnayan Dhara Trust, Udayan Bangladesh, SDO, COAST Trust, National Krishani Shova Labour Allince, National Labour Alliance, Dak Dia Jai, Dip Unnayan Society, PSI, Bangladesh Farmer Federation, Bangladesh Bhumihin Somity, Bangladesh Labour Federation, Labour Resource Centre, Bangladesh Krishi Firm Labour Federation, Songram, CDP, Muktir Dak, Sankolpo Trust, Nature Campaign, Prantojon, DACOP, Buriganga Bachao Andolon, Nirapod Nowpoth Jote, Jono Odhayan center were present as Coastal NGOs Alliance participants.

On behalf of the Alliance Shawkat Ali Tutul of COAST Trust remembered the devastating cyclone of 29th April 1991 Marian, which was category 5 caused around 0.5 million deaths in coastal regions of Bangladesh. He also added that still coastal people are not safe. Migration of people from the coastal belt towards big cities is remaining on due to hit by frequent cyclone, flood and river and sea erosion. But government is not taking appropriate measures and not allocating adequate budget for protecting coastal people.

Participants at human chain explored 8 key demands to government which are; 1) Ensuring accountability and transparency of WDB works and reduce system loss 2) Establish permanent and concrete embankment and ensure ending of all embankment repairing works before ongoing rainy season; 3) Information about the WDB works must be open for all and there must be a complaints response mechanism, 4) Tender and purchase process of WDB must be transparent, 5) WDB must be accountable to the local people and local elected bodies/local administration, 6) If needed, army can be deployed to ensure smooth and speedy works., 7) Engage Anti-Corruption commission to audit WDB current works and 8) Coastal development must be the center of all development planning of the country.

In the human chain Mr. Kader Hazari Executive Director of Arpon said, government must save our coastal areas and coastal people as to get safety and security is the fundamental rights of the people. Md. Asif Iqbal of Muktir Dak criticized the government as government is over emphasizing infrastructure to export led economic growth rather than giving importance to critical infrastructure to protect coastal people and land. He also urged to government to save the island perfect and proper utilization of budget allocation must be ensured and to allocate appropriate amount in 2017-18 National Budget.

At the ending speech Mostafa Kamal Akand draw attention of Prime Minister to accelerate ongoing embankment works complete before this rainy season otherwise people and Monpura and Kutubdia and others Roanu affected areas will suffer and will fall in the risk of displacement. He also asked to take immediate action for reform of WDB for broader benefit of the country.

### News Prepared by

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