



Press Conference.

12 Farmers' Organizations express frustration over the inadequate allocation for Agriculture in the proposed Budget

Visionary and Specific Allocation to Face the Long-Term Challenges Towards Achieving the Food Security Demanded

Dhaka, 11 June 2018. Today in a press conference 12 local and national farmers' organization expressed their frustration over the inadequate allocation for the agriculture in the proposed national budget for the year of 2018-19. Today from a press conference organized in the National Press Club the organizers also demanded visionary and Specific Allocation to Face the Long-Term Challenges Towards Achieving the Food Security Demanded.

The press conference titled 'Only 2.99% allocation for the sector with 46% of labour force is really not appropriate: We Demand specific allocation and initiative to solve recent and long term crisis of the farmers of Bangladesh' was jointly organized by Coastal Farmers' Association, Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation, National Women Farmers and Workers Association, Bangladesh Adibashi Samity, Haor Farmers and Fishers Alliance, Gram Labour Resource Centre, Nolchira Pani Unnayan Somity, Dighon CIG, Kendriyo Krishak Moitree, Bangladesh Farmers' Forum and COAST Trust.

The press conference was moderated by Mustafa Kamal Akand of COAST Trust and Md. Mujibul Haque Munir, Secretariat Coordinator of Bangladesh Farmers Forum presented the key positions of the group. Among others Abdul Majid, secretary of Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation, Md. Shahabuddin, Secereaty of Secretary of Coastal Farmers Association, Samsuzzaman Khokon, Chief of the Gram Unnayan Sanagstha and Syed Aminul Haque, Secretary of EquityBD also spoke at the occasion.

Md. Mujibul Haque Munir said, the allocation for agriculture proves that, the proposed budget clearly doesn't pay proper attention to the agriculture sector. Though the total budget has been increased by about 16%, the allocation for the ministry of agriculture has been decreased by 0.41%! In the Annual Development Plan the allocation for the ministry is only 1.1%, while about 46% of the total labour force is engaged with important sector. Agriculture sector is already experiencing negative impact of climate change, our agricultural land is decreasing by 1% each year, due rapid urbanization we are also losing land, food deficit is increasing- these challenges are going to create serious threats for Bangladesh in achieving food security, budget allocation must keep those challenges in mind, special allocation is needed to enhance our capacity to face these challenges in future. Unfortunately, the proposed budget doesn't not seem to consider those.

Syed Aminul Haque said, by 2050 demand for food crops will be increased by 30%, but we are experiencing bellow 1 percent crop production growth during last three years. If this trend is going on, Bangladesh will be in serious threat regarding the food security, In the proposed budget there in reflection of preparation for such crisis.

Abdul Majid said, excise duty has been increased to 28% in rice import, but this will not bring any benefit for the farmers, as they have already sold their production. This initiative will benefit the middlemen. Rice collection time must be reconsidered so that marginalised farmers can be benefited.

Saiduzzaman Khokon said, farmers are not getting just price of their products, our demand was a Price Commission, the budget once again has ignored that demand.

Md. Shahabuddin said, in 2017-18 allocation for agriculture subsidy was 9000 crore taka, but 3000 crore taka was not spent. We demand to increase the allocation for subsidy as well as the proper utilization of the allocation. in many cases agriculture subsidy is going to wrong hands, who are not involved with agriculture. This has to be changed.

Mothahar Hossain said, just price of the farmers production must be ensured. Special attecntion in regard in the budget is needed.

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