

3rd December 2010

Ms. Bui Thi Lan
FAO Representative in Nepal
UN House, Hariharbhawan, Lalitpur

Ref: Memorandum for Compensation to the Victims of Paddy Crop Loss due to inadequate seeds provided by FAO

Dear Ms. Lan,

Nepal is persistently facing food insecurity problems. There are number of causes for this recurrent problem. One and more recent of them is the incidence of subsequent food crop failures in several districts of the country.

As we all are aware that poor farmers of nearly a dozen districts of the southern plain region, including Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Nawalparasi, Banke, Jhapa and Morang suffered with huge losses due to failures of maize crop during the last cropping season. The obvious reason was use of inadequate and poor quality seed varieties.

Subsequent to this incidence, peasants of four hill districts in far western region- Doti, Baitadi, Bajhang and Darchula are suffering from the same problem in paddy crop in this season. Ironically, the victims are poor and marginal farmers - the target beneficiary of so-called food security project launched by FAO with the financial support of European Union.

During our recent field visits and interaction with the victims and other stakeholders in the districts, we came to know that the project provided improved varieties of paddy- SABITRI and RADHA-4 to the target farm households in these hilly districts. Technically, both the varieties are recommended for warm humid tropical climatic zones of the country. It seems that these varieties could not withstand the chilling hilly climate in the specified project districts resulting into failures to set the seed adequately. This incurred huge losses directly affecting nearly 7000 poor households in Baitadi, 9000 households in Doti, 7000 households in Darchula and 600 households in Bajhang districts- totaling nearly 24000 already poor farm households in these four districts.

In light of this incidence, we representing following leading civil society organizations of the country put forward the grave concerns and submit this memorandum to you with following demand for immediate action

- a. Accept the full responsibility for the blunder with respect to inappropriate seed distribution and assure all stakeholders not to repeat such mistakes in the future.

- b. Assess detail and accurate losses incurred due to this incidence and provide adequate compensation with due consultation with the victims.
- c. Ensure distribution of certified and authentic seeds and planting materials in the future.
- d. Launch seed security programs/projects in the region; emphasize protection and promotion of locally adapted crop cultivars.
- e. Support for rural infrastructure development sectors including agricultural roads, irrigation canals, rural electrification, farm cooperatives and rural markets from sustainability perspective.
- f. Respect people's fundamental right to food and show full accountability towards them.

With warm regards,

Mr. Prem Dangal, Chairperson, FIAN Nepal (General Secretary, ALL NEPAL PEASANTS' FEDERATION)

Mr Ganga Dutta Acharya, Program Coordinator, FIAN Nepal

Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina, Chair Person, NGO Federation Nepal

Mr. Jagat Basnet, Coordinator, Community Self-reliant Centre.

Mr. Ram Lakhan Harijan, General Secretary, National Irrigation Water Users' Federation

Mr. Ganesh Karki, General Secretary, Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal.

Mr. Birendra Adhikari, National Program Coordinator, National Network on Right to Food Nepal