



A Bi-monthly Newsletter of ANGO and the Land Watch Asia Network

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March 2008

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**ANGOC**

The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development is a regional association of 21 national and regional networks of NGOs from 10 Asian countries namely, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

ANGOC has strived for the past 28 years to ensure that Asia's rural poor are given rightful access to land and other resources in the rural areas through policy advocacy, capacity building and information dissemination and forging strategic networks.

### Project Partners



**INTERNATIONAL  
LAND  
COALITION**

The International Land Coalition is a global alliance of intergovernmental, governmental and civil-society organizations. The Land Coalition works together with the rural poor to increase their secure access to natural resources, especially land, and enable them to participate directly in policy and decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods at local, national, regional and international levels.

[Visit ILC](#)

### MISEREOR

MISEREOR was founded in 1958 as an agency "against hunger and disease in the world". It is the overseas

### Greetings!

#### **Welcome to the Land Watch Asia E-bulletin!**

*Through this space, we wish to share with you the stories, struggles, triumphs and lessons of the landless rural poor in Asia.*

*Land Watch Asia is a group of advocates from People's movements and non-government organizations from six Asian countries pursuing access to land through tenurial security and asset reform. We believe the rural poor deserves better access to land and other natural resources since 40 percent of Asian populations still depend on land for their survival. The landless poor should be given the opportunity to own, control and manage the land they till and nurture. Please distribute this newsletter freely to your contacts from all walks of life.*

*If you wish to share stories, articles, weblinks or commentaries you may have on the advocacy for access to land, please send them to Land Watch Asia [angoc@angoc.ngo.ph](mailto:angoc@angoc.ngo.ph).*

## **New Land Reforms Committee holds first meeting**

### **Ekta Parishad appointed as Committee member**

On 29 October 2007, the Janadesh, or People's Verdict, campaign in India, which had some 25,000 poor and landless farmers (coming mostly from the dalit and adivasi communities) marching to Delhi to press the government to enact a sweeping new program of pro-poor land reforms, ended with the announcement by the Rural Development Minister that a National Land Reforms Committee would be created to implement a new Land Reform Policy.

On 19 February 2008 the National Land Reforms Committee held its first meeting, which was participated in by several State Revenue Commissioners, and representatives of non-government organizations (NGOs), including Ekta Parishad, which organized the Janadesh march.

At the start of the meeting, Rural Development Minister Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad, who is also chairperson of the National Land Reforms Committee, appointed Ramesh Sharma, a senior Ekta Parishad activist and advocacy coordinator for the Janadesh campaign, as a member of the Committee. (Ekta Parishad's leader, P.V. Rajagopal, used to sit on the Board of ANGO while he was with the Gandhi Peace Foundation.)

It was decided at the meeting to take in more members to the Committee, particularly those with recognized expertise. The Committee was also divided into six major sub-groups, to take

development agency of the Catholic Church in Germany.

MISEREOR promotes development projects and processes by providing the needed funds. Key activity areas in Asia include social assistance and social security for poor population groups, networking of partners, legal aid and democratization, promotion of endangered cultures, inter-religious cooperation and peaceful conflict transformation.

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### **ActionAid International**

ActionAid is an international anti-poverty agency whose aim is to fight poverty worldwide. Formed in 1972, for over 30 years ActionAid has been growing and expanding to where it is today - helping over 13 million of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged people in 42 countries worldwide. ActionAid works with local partners, ranging from small community support groups to national alliances and international networks seeking education for all, trade justice and action against HIV/AIDS.

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### **Quick Links...**

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[PhilDHRRRA](#)

[Ekta Parishad](#)

[CSRC-Nepal](#)

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Call for Contributions**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is publishing a new magazine called *Development Asia*, which will be devoted to the discussion of development issues relevant to the Asia and Pacific region. A section of this magazine called "First Person" will feature 600-800 word articles on successful, innovative development projects written by the people spearheading them.

The magazine is open to proposals to contribute to this section. If you are interested, send a brief description of your project to:

account of specific land-related issues. The six sub-groups are: (1) Land Redistribution; (2) Housing and Women's Land Issues; (3) Tribal and Dalit Land Alienation/Tribal Act; (4) Common Property Land; (5) Land Management and Institutional Mechanism; and (6) North East India.

A convenor was appointed to each sub-committee to take charge of conducting policy research and analysis.

The next meeting of the Committee has been scheduled sometime in March 2008.

## **Filipino Archbishop calls for extension and reform of country's agrarian reform law**

Officials of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), along with members of the Philippines' Senate and House of Representatives, participated in a meeting organized by the Archbishop (Abp.) of Cagayan de Oro, Antonio J. Ledesma, S.J., D.D., on 27 February 2008 to discuss the progress of bills filed in both Houses of Congress to extend the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), which is set to expire in June this year.

The Second Bishops-Legislators Caucus on Rural Issues was called by Abp. Ledesma to discuss plans and ways to ensure the timely passage of a law that would ensure the completion of the government's agrarian reform program, particularly through the extension of the period for land acquisition and distribution. The Caucus also looked into mechanisms through which the Office of the President, the legislature and civil society could coordinate, and make a concerted effort to pass a law extending the CARP.

Two bills seeking to extend the CARP-and which are referred to as CARPER (CARP with Extension and Reforms) Bills-have been filed in both Houses of Congress. These are House Bill No. 1257 (HB 1257) and Senate Bill No. 2047 (SB 2047). Both bills contain provisions which are vital to the success of CARP, such as guarantees for adequate and secure funding for CARP, the installation of beneficiaries, the availability of competitive support services, and the rationalization of the DAR as the chief implementing agency of agrarian reform.

Supporters of the CARPER bills, including SALIGAN-an alternative legal assistance NGO-are confident that popular clamor for the extension of CARP would ensure the passage of the bills. For instance, on 13 February 2008, more than 200 people, including farmers, civil society leaders, and church heads, gathered at the Philippine Senate to show their support for the bills.

Moreover, the highly influential Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has thrown its weight behind the CARPER bills. In January this year, the CBCP leadership issued a pastoral statement, entitled "[The Dignity of the Rural Poor - A Gospel Concern,](#)" which took the government to task for the poor performance of the agrarian reform program. Citing the CARP as a tool for the empowerment of marginalized land tillers, the statement called for the extension of CARP with the necessary improvements.

The Second National Rural Congress, which the CBCP is set to hold sometime early this year, marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first national rural congress, during which the participants

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The editors will get back to you if your story fits their criteria, along with guidelines for writing the article. The magazine has a tight production schedule and the editors would need the draft of the article in about two weeks, along with corresponding photos.

**New FAO Publication**  
**"Approaches to Linking Producers to Markets - A review of experiences to date"**

*Shepherd, A. W.; FAO, Rome (Italy), 2007, English, 80 p.*

The paper deals with problems faced by farmers in maintaining linkages with the market as well as issues involved in sustaining and scaling up linkage activities. The paper also considers the enabling environment that governments must provide if linking farmers to markets is to prove successful.

A check-list of issues to address when planning market linkages is provided as an annex.

Download in pdf (1.2mb) at:  
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a1123e/a1123e.pdf>

Hard copies can be obtained by writing to [AGS-Registry@fao.org](mailto:AGS-Registry@fao.org)

enjoined the Catholic Church "to go to the barrios." The Second National Rural Congress is expected to highlight issues confronting the country's poor in the rural areas, including the need for agrarian reform.

Abp. Ledesma is concurrently vice-president of the CBCP and executive chairperson of the National Rural Congress Committee. Abp. Ledesma is a former chairperson on ANGOC, and is currently a member of the ANGOC Board.

*The articles featured in this newsletter are contributions of the Land Watch Asia partners. Feel free to send in your comments and we will forward these to our partners. Write us at:*

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*Or email your comments to: [angoc@angoc.ngo.ph](mailto:angoc@angoc.ngo.ph). Indicate in the subject line: Attention: Teresa Debuque*

*Till next issue.*

*Sincerely,*

*Nathaniel Don E. Marquez, ANGOC Executive Director*