

Dhaka, Monday
March 17, 2008

**NEW
AGE
METRO**

Allocation of govt land among landless suggested to reduce poverty

Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh should allocate government lands among landless people, who contribute to the overall agriculture production and national economy, International Land Coalition director Bruce H Moore said in Dhaka on Sunday.

The country also needs enforcement of the regulations on sharecropping and ensuring fair employment conditions and wages for agriculture workers to reduce poverty, Bruce told a news conference, organised by the ILC's local partner Association for Land Reform and Development of Bangladesh, at the Dhaka Reporters Unity.



‘It is tragic and ironic that hunger and poverty are highest among those who grow food,’ the ILC director said adding that over 60 per cent of the Bangladesh labour forces are employed in agriculture accounting for 35 per cent of the national GDP.

Replying to a question Bruce said an estimated two billion people mostly in developing countries across the globe are landless.

‘International research and on-the-ground experience confirm that small holder agriculture can produce more food per unit of land than commercial agriculture and, in aggregate terms, increase overall supplies and national food security.’ The ILC director said.

Small holder farmers have the potential to raise national food supplies and reduce the rising food import bill of Bangladesh, he added. Appreciating the measures of

the present administration, Bruce said the government has taken a very important first steps by putting land legislation in place.

The ILC, with its headquarters in Italy, is an independent platform that started its activities in 1998 to work with land rights and poverty. It has activities in at least 50 countries of the world and is involved with different UN organisations, bilateral organisations and financing agencies including the World Bank.

The ALRD executive director Shamsul Huda, quoting a survey, said around eight crore people of Bangladesh are landless. People, who have less than 0.50 acres land, are considered landless, Huda added.

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Hunger, poverty highest among those who grow food: ILC director

STAFF REPORTER

The director of International Land Coalition (ILC) Bruce H Moore yesterday said that the government would make a very positive contribution toward the reduction of poverty and liberate the landless and small holders to not only improve their own well-being but to contribute to overall agriculture production and the national economy by taking immediate steps toward enforcing the current land law.

He was addressing a press briefing, organised by Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

"With over 60 per cent of the Bangladesh labour force being employed in agriculture, accounting for 35 per cent of the national GDP, it is a tragic irony that hunger and poverty is highest among those who grow food," he said.

"Bangladesh has three pieces of legislation that all parties, the landless, the representatives of the government and the Association for Land Reform and

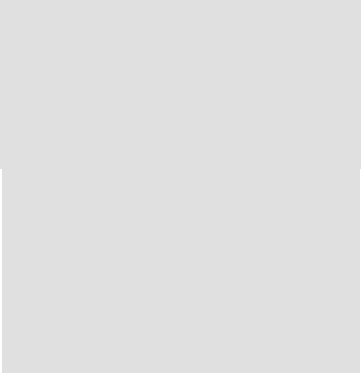
Development, consider favourable to the poor - to distribute khas land to the

landless; to enforce the regulations on sharecropping; and, to ensure fair employment conditions and wages for agriculture workers," he recommended.

However pro-poor this legislation may be, as with other countries, the government of Bangladesh does not seem willing or able to live up to its own legislation, he observed. In Bangladesh, this means making land reform possible, by standing up for the rights of the landless and near landless, instead of the "ill gotten" privileges of the few, he further said. He thought that the potential of small holder farmers to raise national food supplies and reduce the rising food import bill of Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh recognised the threat of land grabbing. As in other countries, the challenge that emerges is that the institutions that control land are in the hands of the powerful non-poor," Mr Bruce said.

The ILC director said It will make it clear that land grabbing, a primary form of corruption, will no longer be tolerated and that former abuses will be addressed. And, it will put the continued



implementation of land reform on the national agenda, regardless of which political party leads the next government. Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD was present at the press conference.
