

The Dhaka Declaration on Rural Development

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 28 January 2010

We, the Ministers and Deputy Ministers and high level representatives of the member countries of CIRDAP, meeting in Dhaka on 27 January 2010, underscore the significant contribution of CIRDAP to promote Integrated Rural Development (IRD) in its member countries over the last three decades and to the implementation of the "Peasants Charter" that resulted from the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979;

Recalling that the first ever Ministerial Meeting of Rural Development (RD) on 9th April 1987 and the subsequent Dhaka Declaration expressed political commitment and support to RD in improving quality of life of the rural poor;

Recognising that, in Asia and the Pacific region, poverty has a rural face and hence RD and Poverty Alleviation (PA) are two sides of the same coin;

Realising the sea changes in the social and economic contexts at national and international level;

Acknowledging that there is a multiplicity of structures involved in RD and PA programmes that includes several government agencies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), micro-finance institutions, private firms and donors, therefore, convergence/ integrated approach at national and local levels with decentralised governance will be conducive to facilitate and coordinate with these institutions for enhanced participatory development, better service delivery, self-employment generation, development and marketing of products /services for RD and PA;

Realising the effects of climate change on sustainability of rural livelihoods in Asia and the Pacific region with special mention to the Copenhagen Accord 2009, which called for enhanced action and international cooperation and adaptation for reducing vulnerability and building resilience in vulnerable developing countries;

Reiterating the New Delhi Declaration adopted by CIRDP Ministerial Retreat 24-26 June 2008 for wider use of ICT in improving the livelihoods of rural poor and empowering women in CMCs;

Recognising that CIRDP can further be developed as an effective and proactive regional level platform of RD policy dialogue to generate new perceptions, ideas and insights for policy formulation;

HAVING AGREED, WE EMPHASISE IRD AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FOR RURAL POOR THROUGH DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AS FOLLOWS:

- Ensure pro-poor policy and resources to contribute in achieving the goal of reducing hunger and poverty at least by half by 2015.
- Strengthen mechanism to listen to the voices of all stakeholders including hard-core poor, the disadvantaged women, and various marginal groups to accommodate their concerns in public spending on development.
- Empower the local governments for effective administration of policies and programmes for RD and PA

We further call for:

- intensive efforts so that rural poor can get access to resources (land, water, ICT and finance) by suitable policy reforms within the national legal provisions;
- implementation of the existing legislations for ensuring access to land and improved land records;
- priority support to the decentralised good governance with transparency and accountability in the system to ensure people's participation in the rural development activities;
- strengthening the capacity of national RD institutions to become centre of excellence, in order to provide professional services and academic inputs into the process of rural development;

- applying practices of good governance in making CIRDP an effective regional platform for providing timely interventions and appropriate issues in RD and PA policies.

We invite all countries of Asia and the Pacific to join CIRDP and share their experiences.

We invite FAO, IFAD, Commonwealth and other partner organisations of CIRDP to provide all technical support to regional level rural development organisation, including CIRDP, to play greater role in agrarian reform and rural development.

We call upon the regional organisations such as AARDO, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, ECO, SAARC and others to join hands with CIRDP for the professional inputs and services in RD and PA policies and programmes.

We invite the development partners to use the platform of CIRDP for disseminating their knowledge, experience and innovative practices in the areas of RD and PA.

WE COMMIT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS DECLARATION THROUGH CMCs.

H.E. Syed Ashraf Islam

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