

Press Release

19 August 2010

A Civil Society Delegation Headed by Ms. Supriya Sule Meets the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on Millennium Development Goals

New Delhi: A civil society delegation headed by Ms. Supriya Sule, Hon'ble MP, met with Dr. Manmohan Singh this morning to present a civil society memorandum signed by the leading civil society organisations. Members from Centre for Legislative Research and Advocacy, Oxfam India, Right to Food Campaign, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan, United Nations Millennium Campaign, etc. were part of the delegation. In the context of the high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals that is scheduled to be held in New York during 20-22 September 2010, where Dr. Singh will head the official Indian delegation and will participate in an evaluation exercise to take account of the successes and failures thus far, civil society organisations requested him to include representatives from civil organisations that have been committed in providing assistance to the government in its endeavour to achieve the MDGs by the set target of 2015.

The memorandum made several other general and goal specific recommendations that pushed for modifying policy making processes and for passing and properly implementing several social sector legislations that were drafted following promises of the government but haven't been introduced and passed in the Parliament on account of several political pulls and pressures. The recommendations that related to the former included the following: the setting up of core\ad-hoc parliamentary committees on MDGs to oversee and monitor the implementation of all MDGs related legislations and to ensure that that they are compatible with the latest up-to-date research and arguments of civil society organisations committed to the work on MDGs; pre-budgetary and pre-legislative participation of and consultation with civil society organisations in budget and policy making processes; setting up of monitoring and evaluation programmes at the district level; developing a national breakthrough plan to accelerate the progress made towards MDGs.

The recommendations that related to the latter, i.e. the goal specific recommendations included the following: introducing and passing the Right to Food Act; amending the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act to make it more inclusive; passing the Women's Reservation Bill; introducing and passing the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Bill, 2007; and the finalisation of the National Health Bill, 2009. Ms. Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India, said, "it is essential that the government increase budgetary allocations to the social sector, ensure governance accountability and provide access to natural resources like land, water and forests."

Ms. Supriya Sule, highlighted related concerns of malnutrition and urged the Prime Minister to personally look into the matter.

Dr. Singh assured the delegates that the government was committed to the MDGs and was working towards their achievement by 2015. He took note of all their concerns and said that the government will consider the civil society demand for inclusion of civil society representatives to the UN General Assembly Meeting in September 2010 and said, “I will personally look into matters of malnutrition, health, education, gender equality and work towards breaking down action plans to the district level.”

For further information, please contact the undersigned,

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Vinod Bhanu

Executive Director

Centre for Legislative Research and Advocacy

09818111915, vinudirect@gmail.com