

**Press Release, 14th October 2015**

Right groups on countrywide observation of the World Rural Women Day for Rural Public Health

Immediate actions against excessive use of pesticides is must to save specially rural women and children

**Dhaka, 14th October 2015:** Today in a press conference held at the National Press Club organized by the National Committee on the Observation of the International Rural Women Day, a countrywide network of civil society right groups, urge mass people to raise voice and awareness against Pesticides and their companies to save the rural public health. According to the organizers the committee and their members in 64 districts will observe the World Rural Women’s Day this year through organizing rallies, seminars, honor to the especial rural women for their extraordinary contribution for public, drama to raise voice against the pesticides and their companies and to promote alternative methods of pesticides.

The press conference titled ‘**Pesticides and** **Health Risk: Find Alternatives and Save the lives of Rural Women’** was moderated by Mustafa Kamal Akand of Secretary of National Committee. Ms. Tasmin Chowfhury, chairperson of Savar District Committee; Ms. Romena Akter, and Chairperson of Manikgonj District Committee; Ms. Rehena Begum of Comilla District Committee and Mr. Badrul Alam, President of Bangladesh Krishok Federation also spoke at the occasion. Ferdaus Ara Rumee, Policy Research and Campaign Coordinator of EquityBD read out the keynote paper on behalf of the committee. The event was presided by Ms. Shamima Akhter, the Chairperson of the national committee.

In the written statement the committee says, during the period of 1954 to 2010 the use of pesticides in agriculture in Bangladesh has been increased six times than that time. One vegetable farmer uses pesticide around 150 times in one session. There are 377 pesticides in 97 groups are being used in our country and most of them are already banned in the developed countries. It is also said that, only 4% farmers are aware of how to use pesticides. 87% of the farmers hardly take any steps to keep away of the hazardous impacts of pesticides.

Romena Akter Mahin said our rural women are directly involved with handling of pesticides. From various researches it has been found that, exposure to excessive pesticides can cause miscarriages, she added.

Tasmin Chowdhury said, in a US research it is found that, women with regular exposure to pesticides give birth children with low intelligence. It can also cause birth of child with physical disabilities.

Rehena Begum said, most dangerously, 5% of the farmers intake different food and smoke during their pesticide spray and this is how they directly intake toxic chemicals in their body. Considering various health hazards we need immediate actions against pesticides.

Badrul Alam said, it is mentioned in the press conference that different studies show that, as the health impacts for using pesticides 30% farmers suffer from irritation, 28% farmers from respiratory diseases and 13% from eye diseases. There are several local alternative and indigenous methods instead of toxic chemical pesticides that could be used by the farmers in local level. They should be publicized and promoted.

Shamima Akhter said,our rural women are one of the major labour sources of the agriculture. To save their lives we should take actions on the expansion of alternatives to pesticides.

**Reported by**

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