



PRESS RELEASE

Jan Satyagraha – March for Justice - one year after

10 December 2013

International calls to fulfil Indian Government promises on land reform

International Human Rights Day is the day to send reminders from around the world to Jairam Ramesh, India's Minister for Rural Development, to keep the promises he made one year ago to 100 000 marchers in Agra.

On 11 October 2012, 100 000 marchers cheered as the Rural Development Minister joined Rajagopal PV, representing the Jan Satyagraha and social movement Ekta Parishad, to sign a 10-point agreement to address poverty and the lack of land and shelter. Over the following year the Indian Government made significant efforts to implement the agreement.

Two key policy elements points were drafted with civil society - the National Policy on Land Reform and the National Homestead Rights Bill - but they remain drafts. Neither of these vital points is even on the agenda of the upcoming parliamentary session. And time is running out.

The session of Parliament opening in Delhi on 12 December is the last opportunity to turn the drafts into law before the general elections in spring 2014. This is the last chance for the Congress Party to prove its commitment to the poor of India, who – in spite of economic growth - remain the vast majority of the population.

Ekta Parishad and the many organisations associated with the March for Justice are actively campaigning to change the agenda. Some 3000 of the original marchers and other supporters plan a sit-in outside Parliament. Friends of India and of Ekta Parishad from across Europe are contacting Indian embassies and writing to the Minister to encourage him to see through his and the government's commitment to land reform and poverty reduction.

Thérèse Snoy, Federal MP of Ecolo party, Belgium; Andreas Gross, political scientist, Swiss MP and leader of the Socialdemocrats in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Jean-Claude Frecon, French Senator and President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe; Catherine Lalumière, President of the Maison de l'Europe Paris, former French Minister and former Secretary General of the Council of Europe; Gérard Onesta, Vice-President of the French Region Midi-Pyrénées and former Vice-President of the European Parliament; Ulrich Bohner, President of the Maison de l'Europe Strasbourg Alsace and former Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe; Ton Waarts, member of the Board of Dignity International; Catherine Piau, Elected at the City of Nantes, France, and at the Regional Council; Alain Chenard, Honorary President of CPLR and former Deputy Mayor of Nantes join thousands of others to urge the Indian Government to take action and complete the process which started with a solemn pledge in front of 100 000 people a year ago.

TO JOIN YOUR VOICE TO THEIRS, receive a sample letter and the address to send it, check:

<http://ektaeurope.org/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EKTA PARISHAD and the support network Ekta Europe see: www.ektaparishad.com / www.ektaeurope.org

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