

Federation of Integrated Farmer Organisations

Kirindi-Oya Gangasiripura- Tissamaharamaya, Sri Lanka

Press Release

Asian Development Bank avoids solving problems in Lunugamwehera

Tuesday, May 14, 2004, Lunugamwehera. There was no cultivation of paddy during the last "Yala" season due to lack of water in the new development area under Kirindi-Oya Irrigation and Resettlement project which is known as Lunugamwehera project funded by the Asian Development in 1986. Only 4000 acres have been cultivated from the old area in "Maha" season but no single plot has been cultivated in the new development area.

Kirindi Oya project was started in 1978 with the funds from the Asian Development Bank. With 5000 new settlers in the new development area, about 15,000 families were settled under this project. We were given only one hope that we will be provided with water for both "Yala" and "Maha" seasons Mr Kumarasinghe, Secretary to the Federation of the Integrated Farmers Organisation- Kirindi Oya said. But today it has become only a dream, he added. Farmers have been indebted day by day and it has developed to an extent that some farmers comment suicide.

However those responsible agencies are silent all the times. We believe that if the project is a failure, the funding agency also has a role to correct it Mr Siripala Jayaweera President of the Federation added. Since it was not happened, the Federation handed over a letter to President Chino during the ADB AGM in 2001. A detailed report prepared by the Green Movement of Sri Lanka was also presented at this AGM. There was no steps were taken to correct the problems although they received a response to this letter.

The Federation planned to bring the matter to the ADB AGM again in 2004. But it is not possible since AGM will be held in Jaju Island in Korea which is a very expensive venue. This is the third time that ADB goes to expensive places continuously. We believe that the ADB deliberately organize the meetings in such expensive places to avoid affected communities and their representative in those meetings Mr. Kumarasinghe said. Therefore we have no good faith on the ADB. We believe that all accountability and safeguard policies of the ADB are a lip service he added.

According to the response Federation received, there is a Fund to correct the failures of the Banks project. Although they had a hope that ADB will provide a new water source from this fund, it has now become a dream.

Newly settled families have now become doubled. Since the population in the project is increasing they have no income for living. There is no education for the children. Although ADB is responsible for this poverty creation we have no access to the ADB AGM this year to raise these issues Mr Jayaweera said.

Past experience shows that ADB provide funds for projects that do not give any positive benefits to the people. However ADB is clever to hide these failures from the world. While Kirindi-Oya project which was funded 25 years back need to be corrected, ADB still provides funds for new projects. We believe that this is because of the profits and not because of the development of the people.

Although the Irrigation Department given them hopes, since 1990 they have failed to provide an alternative water source. Uma-Oya and Manik Ganga diversion has been limited to discussions. Due to the initiative of the Kirindi-Oya people during last regime they were told that the government will divert excess water from Manik Ganga to Lunugamwehera with the funds from the World Bank. Farmers still have this hope. But they think that there was no initiative to take money from the ADB to solve the problem.

Therefore on behalf of the Federation of the Integrated Farmers Organisation of Kirindi Oya, we demand the ADB to provide an alternative source of water to Lunugamwehera considering the poverty created by the ADB Mr Kumarasinghe said.