

## **NATIONAL FORUM FOR POLICY DIALOGUE**

Critical issues facing the nation and those that have a global implication often need to be considered, debated and understood. Realizing this need, the NMML took the initiative, in 2007, of providing a forum and a neutral platform to interested persons to deliberate on these concerns under the new 'National Forum for Policy Dialogue' programme.

The NMML's initiative has brought together representatives of government, including Ministers, experts from academia, representatives of civil society organizations as well as other stakeholders to sit together and discuss recent government policies.

**Discussions held in NMML under the 'National Forum for Policy Dialogue' are :**

### **2007-08**

1. **19 November 2007:** The NMML hosted the inaugural meeting of the **National Forum for Policy Dialogue** by taking up for scrutiny the recent government policy on **Rehabilitation and Resettlement**. The purpose of the National Forum for Policy Dialogue is to bring together representatives of government, experts from academia, representatives of civil society organizations as well as other stakeholders to share their viewpoints on any recent or desired policy initiative with a view to promoting dialogue and debate between policy-makers and civil society. (*Collaboration: Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study, Jawaharlal Nehru University*)
2. **14 January 2008:** Meeting of the National Forum for Policy Dialogue on **Environmental Impact Assessment Policy**.
3. **15 January 2008:** Meeting of the National Forum for Policy Dialogue on **Genetically Modified Foods: Implications of Changes in Government Regulations**.

### **2008-09**

4. **22 April 2008:** The NMML, in collaboration with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, held a meeting of the National Forum for Policy Dialogue on 22 April 2008 to discuss issues relating to **'Right to Education and Child Labour'**.
5. **10-11 November 2008:** The NMML, in association with M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) of the Government of Switzerland, organized a **"National Policy Dialogue on Adaptation to Climate Change."** The overall objective of the dialogue was to share the experiences gained and the lessons learnt so far in the area of adaptation, contribute to policy

development processes at the national level, in terms of evolving a National Adaptation Framework and to provide crucial inputs to the proposed National Missions under the National Action Plan for climate change.

6. **20 November 2008:** In the series of National Forum for the Policy Dialogue, the NMML, in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, organized a workshop to discuss the TISS Report on “**Performance and Development Effectiveness of Sardar Sarovar Project.**” The Report analysed the Sardar Sarovar Project in the Narmada Valley and aimed at generating discussion and deeper analysis in the broader interest of the people living and dependent on some of the most fertile lands in the country, and enabling the nation to enhance its food security. Welcome addresses were made by Prof. Mridula Mukherjee, Director, NMML and Prof. S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The main participants were Dr. L. C. Jain, Ms. Medha Patkar, Mr. Shekhar Singh among others. Around 100 participants attended the Workshop.
7. **3 February 2009:** Under the National Forum for Policy Dialogue series, the NMML, in collaboration with Kalpavriksh and GRAIN, organized a one day seminar on “**National Dialogue on Six Years of the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act 2002.**”
8. **26 February 2009:** A meeting under the National Forum for Policy Dialogue Series was held in collaboration with People’s Action for Employment Guarantee Plan to review the situation of the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [NREGA]** in the country. Some important persons who attended were Ms. Aruna Roy, Ms. Jean Dreze, Ms. Jayati Ghosh, Mr. Nikhil Dey, Mr. Dunu Roy, Ms. Yamini Aiyer, Ms. Reetika Khera, Ms. Annic Raja, Ms. Kiran Bhatta, Mr. Subhash Bhatnagar and Mr. Gautam Modi.
9. **20 March 2009:** Under the National Forum for Policy Dialogue Series, the NMML, in association with National Campaign for People’s Right to Information and People’s Action for Employment Guarantee, organized a meeting to prepare for the **Janmanch** to discuss both NREGA and RTI.

#### **2009-10**

10. **16-17 November 2009:** Two-day national consultation on Millets. Prof. Mridula Mukherjee, Director, NMML, inaugurated the consultation. Speakers included Shri P.V. Satheesh, Convenor, Millet Network of India, Shri Tambaki, KRRS, Karnataka, Shri Vijay Jawandhia, Shetkari Sangathana, Maharashtra, Shri Vijay Jardhari, Beej Bachao Andolan, Uttarakhand, Dr. C.V. Raghu, MD, Pristina Organics Pvt. Ltd. Bangalore, Dr.

Malleshi, CFTRI, Mysore, Shri Shivram Pailoor, All India Radio, Shri P.V. Satheesh, National Coordinator, MINI, Ms Sunita Narain, Director, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi and Dr. Anantha Rama Rao, Senior Scientist, CRIDA, Hyderabad and others. (*Collaboration: Millet Network of India*)

11. **18 February 2010:** A panel discussion on “**Can IB and RAW be Accountable? A Case for Media Scrutiny and Legislative Oversight**”. The panellists were Shri Manish Tewari, Lok Sabha MP and Congress spokesman; Shri Asaduddin Owaisi, MP, All India Majlise-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Hyderabad; Shri Ajit Doval, former Director, Intelligence Bureau; Shri Rana Banerji, former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat; Ms. Menaka Guruswamy, Advocate, Supreme Court and constitutional expert; Maj. Gen. V. K. Singh, former Joint Secretary at Research and Analysis Wing and journalists Shri Praveen Swami, Shri Josy Joseph and Shri Saikat Datta.
12. **31 March 2010:** A media dialogue on “**North-East Fallen off the Media Map?**” was organized by the NMML. Speakers included Mr. Subir Bhaumik, BBC Eastern India correspondent and author of *Troubled Periphery*, Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam, owner-editor, *Imphal Free Press*, Mr. R. S. Pandey, former Chief Secretary of Nagaland, Mr. Syed Zarir Hussain, Managing Editor, News Live, Assam, Mr. Dibang, former Managing Editor, NDTV India and Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika, former consulting editor at *The Statesman* and former correspondent for *The New York Times* (*Collaboration: The Foundation for Media Professionals*).

#### **2010-11**

13. **3 January 2011:** Panel discussion on “**Our Nuclear Future: Perspective and Prospects**” initiated by Prof. Swadesh Mahajan, Institute of Fusion Studies, Austin University of Texas, U.S.A. and presided by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Environment and Forests. The panellists were Dr. R. Ramachandran, Associate Editor, Hindu-Frontline and Prof. V. C. Sahni, Homi Bhabha Chair Professor, Department of Atomic Energy, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai with moderator Prof. Vikram Soni, UGC Professor, Centre for Theoretical Physics, Jamia Millia Islamia.
14. **18-19 January 2011:** Two day seminar on “**Rational Minimum Wage Policy for the Unorganized Sector**”. Justice A. P. Shah chaired the inaugural session and Shri Harish Rawat, Minister of State for Labour was the Chief Guest. The main speakers were Ms Aruna Roy, social activist, Shri Harsh Mander, social activist, Swami Agnivesh, Prof Madan Gopal, Director, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal and Shri B. K. Saxena,

former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development. (*Collaboration: Bonded Labour Liberation Front and the Planning Commission*)

15. **18 February 2011:** A debate on “**Media and Corruption; Watchdogs or Lapdogs?**” was organized jointly by the NMML and Foundation of Media Professionals. The speakers were Mr. Bharat Bhushan, Mr. J. Gopikrishnan, Mr. Sunil Jain, Mr. Shalini Singh, Ms. Josy Joseph, Mr. Prabal Pratap Singh, Mr. Jagdeep Chhokar and moderator was Mr. Paranjoy Guha Thakurta. (*Collaboration: Foundation of Media Professionals*)

## **2011-12**

16. **3 April 2011:** A public consultation on the **draft Jan Lokpal Bill** drafted by civil society was held under the National Forum for Policy Dialogue series. The speakers included Shri Shanti Bhushan, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court; Smt. Aruna Roy, Member, NAC; Shri Nikhil Dey, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan; Shri Arvind Kejriwal, Parivartan and India Against Corruption; Smt. Usha Ramanathan, Advocate; Shri Yug Chaudhry, Advocate; Prof. Jagdeep Chhokar and Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Association for Democratic Reforms; Shri Kamal Jaswal and Shri Sarvesh Sharma, Common Cause; Smt. Anjali Bharadwaj, Satark Nagarik Sangathan; Shri Manish Sisodia; Mr. Kabir; Shri Saurabh Sharma; Shri Bibhav Kumar; Ms. Aheli Chaudhary; Josh; Shri Venkatesh Nayak and Ms. Vrinda Choraria, Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative. (*Collaboration: National Campaign for People’s Right to Information*)
17. **16 April 2011:** A day long consultation to discuss the proposed **Lokpal Bill** where the group finally concluded that the best way of addressing the various concerns raised in the meeting would be to work towards a basket of measures to address problems of governance, including grievance redressal and corruption. (*Collaboration: National Campaign for People’s Right to Information*)
18. **5-6 July 2011:** A two day public consultation on the draft **Lokpal Bill** and need for a broad and multi-sectoral approach towards fighting corruption was organized by NMML, in association with National Council for People's Right to Information. Ms. Aruna Roy, Shri Nikhil Dey, Shri Harsh Mander, Shri Shekhar Singh, Shri Prashant Bhushan Justice A. P. Shah, Ms Madhu Kishwar, Smt. Medha Patkar, grassroots workers, academics and media persons participated and deliberated.