Right to Food Bangladesh (RtF BD) is an umbrella network on 'Right to Adequate Food and Nutritional Security' comprising of civil society organizations and networks, peasants organizations, trade unionists, women organizations, youth organizations, indigenous people and their organizations, researchers, academia, small holders, deprived and marginalized people. Through the grand event of South Asia Right to Food-SARF Conference 2015, Right to Food Bangladesh has been evolved. The main objective of the network is advocating for an appropriate 'Right to Food Legal framework' to ensure right to adequate food and nutritional in Bangladesh. Besides RtF BD incorporates right to food, social security program, agriculture, safe food, water, land, food habit, food crisis, etc. issues under its 'Right to Food Campaign'. As its continual effort, RtF BD organized 'Right to Food Conference' in participation with 201 participants from 50 districts including Dhaka city on 31 March 2018 at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh, Dhaka. The daylong conference was divided into three sessions i.e. Inauguration, 2nd Annual General Meeting and Closing. After participants’ registration, the conference has started at 10 AM and it has closed at 4.30 PM including lunch and tea-time.
INAUGURAL SESSION

Chairman of the RtF BD Dr. Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad has presided over the session where Mr. Mohsin Ali (General Secretary), Mr. Anwarul Haque (Treasurer), Mr. Anwar Zahid (President, Barishal district committee and divisional representative), Mr. Ataur Rahman Miton (Secretary), Mr. Abdur Rahman (Secretary), Mr. Amanur Rahman (Joint Secretary) and MS Fahima Khanam (President, Narsingdi district committee) were present. Mr. Shakeb Nabi, Country Director, Christian Aid Bangladesh was the Guest of Honor of the inauguration.

Mr. Mohsin Ali has given the welcome speech along with a brief discussion on progress of activities and next course of action of RtF BD. He started with a brief background on current poverty and hunger situation of Bangladesh in light of economic and social growth, the seventh-five year plan and SDGs. He stated that after the 'South Asia Right to Food Conference' in 2015, RtF BD organized country wide campaign, national level seminar, discussion, meeting with policy makers on the issues related to food rights and nutrition, social safety-net programs, agriculture, land, water, food habit, etc. Achievements from these activities are along these lines: • Awareness on 'Right to Food issue and necessity to formulate a law' have increased at district and national level; • A segment of policy makers provided critical opinion on above mentioned issues. Some of them expressed their interest to play positive role for formulating an act on Right to Food; • About 800 and more organizations and networks and significant numbers of civil society representatives from different levels have been involved with RtF BD. A strong National Committee is active as well as 51 District Committees have been formed and communication is going on to form committees in other districts. General Secretary also proposed some initiatives for the year of 2018 and those are like so: • To take special initiative for organizing 'dialogue' with all political parties, 'dialogue between people and candidates' in all constituencies aimed to include 'Right to Food Act' as an election agenda and to increase mass awareness at all levels; • Media campaign at national and local levels; • To emphasize on lobbying with Ministry of Food, GoB and relevant other ministries for taking specific initiative to formulate 'Right to Food Act'. He called to play combined role by all stakeholders for the rational demand on formulation of 'Right to Food Act'. He emphasized to create 'active citizens' through organizing country wide campaign. Relevant international and national organizations and bilateral and multilateral development partners have to declare their solidarity and come forward with financial and technical support for continuing the campaign.

After presentation by the General Secretary, designated discussants have started their discussion. Mr. Anwar Zahid and MS Fahima Khanam mentioned that the nation focuses on food as a fundamental right.

Mr. Ataur Rahman Miton emphasis on involvement of youth with this movement. Mr. Abdur Rahman focused on grassroot participation with this campaign and to incorporate the issue in election manifestoes of political parties. Mr. Amanur Rahman specified that we should work for making the Right to Food issue as a prior agendum of the state. He proposed to involve farmers organizations with this movement and to focus on growing urban poverty issues. Mr. Anwarul Haque said that dimension of poverty is changing since Bangladesh is growing to be a middle income country. Strong networking is essential to move forward the movement of RtF BD. Mr. Shakeb Nabi pronounced that Right to Food is a political issue and becoming a developing country and as per commitment to SDGs, Bangladesh has to focus on food security. We must recognize food sovereignty in parallel with food sufficiency. Demographic dividend is a great opportunity for Bangladesh to achieve the SDGs including eluviation of hunger and poverty.

End of this session Dr. Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad formally declared opening of the conference and enunciated that formulation of a law is not an easy process. After endorsement of a law better implementation is important. He supplemented that to get the result faster; we need to give effort at both national and grassroot levels. However, we should continue the movement of establishing our demands.

About 800 and more organizations and networks and significant numbers of civil society representatives from different levels have been involved with RtF BD.
2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

As per agenda, General Secretary raised to reschedule the period of AGM as January to December instead of July to June period. The house passed his proposal unanimously. Coordinator of RTF BD Secretariat MS Kaniz Fatima presented the activity report on July 2016-December 2017 through a power-point presentation and the house approved the report.

Mr. Anwarul Haque, Treasurer, RtF BD presented the financial report on two phases. As per statement of income and expenditure, network received and spent total amount as BDT 775,724 in July-December 2016 period. In January-December 2017, received amount was BDT 5,177,590 and after the expenditure, surplus amount was BDT 368. This report has also been passed by the house.

To place the discussion on existing campaign, work plan and preparation for the year 2018, Mr. Mohsin Ali explained the schedule of ongoing campaign activities e.g. district level AGM, organize general meeting and gathering, discussion, rally & memorandum submission from 28 March to 10 April 2018 period, activities plan 2018 (January-December) and proposed activities on Right to Food and National Election Manifesto Campaign 2018.

Representatives from different districts, organizations and networks at the meeting expressed their activities updates and proposals in the AGM. MS Mahbuba Begum (Joypurhat), Mr. Abdus Salam (Gaibandha), Mr. Hasan Al Mamun (Jhalokathi), Mr. Md. Anwar Hossain (Sirajgonj), Mr. Md. Abu Bakar Siddique (Bogura), Mr. Iqbal Bahar Saberi (Chattagram), Mr. Sohanur Rahman Sohan (Youth Representative, Jhalokathi), Mr. Rafiqul Islam Panna (Pirojpur), Mr. ANM Fazlul Hadi Sabbir (Faridpur), Mr. Md. Solaiman Ali (Panchagarh), MS Rowshan Ara Shyamoli (Natore), Mr. Mansur Ali Khan (Jamalpur), Mr. SM Harun or Rashid Lal (Kurigram), Mr. Syed Monsurul Hossain (Dinajpur), Mr. Kazi Kamruzzaman (Magura), Mr. Qazi Shoeb Faqru (Borguna), Mr. Md. Masum Ibne Joynal (Netrokona), Mr. Fayezeullah Chowdhury (Rajshahi), Mr. Al Amin Islam (National Youth Assembly), Chowdhury Abu Bakar Siddiki (Habigonj), Mr. Abdur Rahim (Meherpur), Mr. Rahamat Ali (Thakurgaon), Mr. Md. Nazmul Alam Munna (Satkhira), MS Afsa Afroz (Kumilla), MS Baharjan Akter (Gazipur), MS Humayra Sultana (Youth, BUP), Mr. Rahamat Ali (Youth Ending Hunger), Mr. Altaf Hossain (Chapai Nawabgonj), Mr. Sheikh Asad (Bagerhat), Mr. Nilip Mrong (Sherpur), Mr. Prodip Dutta (Tangail), MS Momtaz Ara Begum (Kushtia), MS Fahima Khanam (Narsingdi), Mr. Billal Hossain (Chaudnaga), Mr. Abdullah Nayeeem (Future for Bangladesh), Mr. Delwar Hossain (Patuakhali), Mr. Razan Mehezi Mukul (Manikgonj), Mr. Jogodish Chandra Roy (Shariatpur) and Harendra Nath Saren (Human Rights Defenders’ Forum, IED) have manifested their opinion.

Chair of the AGM Dr. Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad appreciated the participation and speeches of the representatives from different corners of the country. He agreed and liked to reflect with their opinion and proposals i.e. organizing public hearing, awareness building from Union to national level and involvement of youth, farmers and women led organizations. He added that we have a long way to go. He committed to provide more amount of time for the network in the next.
K E Y P R O P O S A L S A N D O P I N I O N S

1. To involve different government and non-government organizations and persons, representatives of business community (Chamber of Commerce), small entrepreneurs, farmers organizations (men & women), school teachers, non-resident citizens, youth and women with this movement

2. To form Upazila committee of RtF BD

3. To organize district level campaign activities through own contribution of network organizations

4. District committee can incorporate more interested persons in the committee and member organizations can take responsibility one by one for organizing meeting and programs

5. Central committee members should visit the district level activities

6. Campaign activities have to be digitalized; develop short film/video documentary

7. Media campaign is important

8. To expand campaign activities and formation of committee into educational institution, especially at universities and a number of youth can involve through this process

9. Local issues should be focused in ongoing campaign

10. Take initiative to include the issue in text books
11 Secretariat should provide the list of national committee to the district committees

12 To address the crisis of haor basin, tea workers, and tribal communities

13 To organize orientation/training for district committees at district level; Central committee’s role to provide facilitator, district committee will bear the organizing cost

14 Try to involve grassroots and marginal people with the movement and to organize village based organization

15 To include youth representation in national committee

16 To organize divisional meeting in six monthly basis

17 District representation in national committee can be effective than divisional representation; It will also support to organize Upazila committee

18 To monitor social safety-net programs at grassroots level and organize public hearing at district level

19 To organize mass gathering at Dhaka

20 Cultural activities would be a tool for campaign

21 To take initiative for introducing the issue to the government officials at local level

22 Take necessary measure for financial support to continuing the campaign

KEY PROPOSALS AND OPINIONS
CLOSING SESSION

involved with our process, but involvement of schools is not viable. We always welcome women to get involved; we also think about how to add business community in this process. We will appreciate initiative to involve tea-workers, women farmers, indegenious people considering the local context. We can take initiative to include our issues in the text books. The National Committee will assemble together on 19 April for finalizing programs of this current year including the incorporation of Right to Food issue as an agendum of upcoming national election. We will discuss about the proposal of signature campaign in that meeting. Media campaign is a must for our movement. He voiced that destroying of our agricultural land is a significant issue to discuss. National Committee can consider visiting famished areas if needed.

In the closing session, General Secretary Mr. Mohsin Ali gave thanks to all participants and wraped-up their opinions and proposals. He said that formation of Upazila committee is our prior agendum for expansion the movement. Although it is tough to organize, national committee Finally, he requested to the participants for giving will consider ... reorganized District the option. Higher educational institution could be Committees require approval; ▪ Due to facing
CLOSING SESSION

In the closing session, General Secretary Mr. Mohsin Ali gave thanks to all participants and wrapped-up their opinions and proposals. He said that formation of Upazila committee is our prior agenda for expansion the movement.

Although it is tough to organize, national committee will consider to organize a huge gathering in Dhaka could be a convention. Then we like to organize divisional meeting. District level training is a long process and difficult to organize, we should consider the option. Higher educational institution could be involved with our process, but involvement of schools is not viable. We always welcome women to get involved; we also think about how to add business community in this process. We will appreciate initiative to involve tea-workers, women farmers, indigenous people considering the local context. We can take initiative to include our issues in the textbooks. The National Committee will assemble together on 19 April for finalizing programs of this current year including the incorporation of Right to Food issue as an agenda of upcoming national election. We will discuss about the proposal of signature campaign in that meeting. Media campaign is a must for our movement. He voiced that destroying of our agricultural land is a significant issue to discuss. National Committee can consider visiting famished areas if needed.

We always welcome women, higher educational institutions, business community, workers, indigenous people, to get involved with this issue all through the county.

Finally, he requested to the participants for giving consent on few decisions from the National Committee. The issues are: • In May 2018, District Committees will take initiative to form Upazila Committees; • In few cases, reorganized District Committees require approval; • Due to facing
difficulties in communication and program implementation at divisional Sadar, Mr. Fayezullah Chowdhury (President, Rajshahi District Committee) and Mr. Nazer Hossain (Chattagram District Committee) will be the Divisional Representatives of Rajshahi and Chattogram instead of MS Mahbuba Begum (President, Joypurhat District Committee) and Mr. Mahbub Morshed (President, Kumilla District Committee) respectively; • In absence of MS Monisha Biswas (Oxfam) and Mr. Sanjiv Biswas (Christian Aid), Mr. Amanur Rahman (Action Aid Bangladesh) and MS Rahat Ara Munir (Christian Aid Bangladesh) will be involved in National Committee as Joint General Secretary and Secretary sequentially; • A district level campaign will be organized on before of the national election; • National Committee and District Committees are responsible for media campaign in that order at national and district levels.

Mr. Anwarul Haque, Chair of the closing session said that we have observed three significant themes from this AGM and conference. Which are i) Commitment from the district level representatives; they would like to contribute more and to organize Upazila Committees; ii) Youth representatives have disclosed their interest for more involvement and provided the way out; iii) We have created the base of our movement; it has to be faster and well designed. He gave thanks to WAVE Foundation for playing important role for organizing this conference and providing secretarial support as well.

Action Aid Bangladesh, CARE Bangladesh and Dancharch Aid Bangladesh have been acknowledged by the Chair for their event support. He also thanked to all participants and said that they have received a number of directions here and will receive further instructions in future. This year is very important and upcoming election is an opportunity for us to make pressure to the policy level to address our agenda. The conference has been closed by the concluding speech of the Chair.