**Demand Charter for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 and Preventing Future Economic, Health and Nutrition Crises**

India is going through an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The central government’s failure to strengthen the country’s health infrastructure, even after the first wave of COVID-19, has claimed lakhs of lives. The lockdowns imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, coupled with inadequate relief measures, has disrupted the lives and livelihoods of millions of workers in the informal sector, worsening their situation of food and economic insecurity. Instead of ensuring access to healthcare, nutrition, and basic income for all, the government is busy managing its public image by lodging cases against people questioning its policies, censoring social media posts on the country’s ground realities, and launching “positivity” campaigns. Furthermore, there is no transparency in the process of government decision making, including the utilization of aid provided by Indians and other countries.

To mitigate the devastating impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and prevent such a crisis from occurring again, people’s campaigns make the following demands from the central government:

**Healthcare**

* Free and quality treatment (including hospital beds and oxygen) must be provided to all COVID-19 patients.
* Ensure access to effective testing, contact tracing and isolation facilities.
* Universal and free vaccination, with priority to the vulnerable groups.
* Exploitation and irrational care by the private sector must be strictly checked and punished.
* The working conditions of all frontline functionaries, such as health workers and crematorium workers, must be safe and humane and they must receive adequate and timely pay.

**Food Security**

* The public distribution system should be immediately universalized, at least for the next six months, to provide every person 5 kg of foodgrain, 1.5 kg of pulses and 800 gm of cooking oil.
* Anganwadis must make arrangements to deliver nutritious food (including eggs, pulses and oil) to young children and pregnant and lactating women.
* Cooked and nutritious meals must be provided in all urban centres.
* The amount of social security pensions must be enhanced to at least half the minimum wage and must be provided every month to all elderly, single women and persons with disabilities.

**Income Security**

* For the duration of the pandemic, the National Family Benefit Scheme should be universalized to compensate all families that lose a member.
* The annual guarantee of work under NREGA must be increased to at least 200 days. Wage rates under the programme must not be less than the statutory minimum wage for agriculture.
* An urban employment guarantee must be initiated immediately.

**Accountability**

* To ensure that services reach people in time, there should be transparency in government decision-making, utilization of all disaster-related funds (including PM CARES and foreign aid) and the functioning of government schemes.
* Periodic audits must be conducted to verify the delivery of all entitlements.
* Grievance redress mechanisms, as provided in the National Food Security Act, should be fully functional and the mechanism must work on much shorter timelines.
* All helplines must address grievances and not function merely as post offices forwarding complaints.
* The State Food Commissions must be exceptionally proactive during this time of crisis.

*To press for these demands, various people’s campaigns will carry out a series of action in June 2021. To learn more about the action, follow @rozi\_roti on Twitter. To join the campaign, write at rtfcindia@gmail.com or call Aysha (9716048979) or Raj Shekhar (7985946875).*