

**HASIRU USIRU
&
Environment Support Group, Alternative Law Forum, Equations, CIVIC, Open Space,
SICHREM, Samvada, Arkavathy Kumudavathy Punashwethana Samithi, The Other
Media**

**22 June 2008
PRESS RELEASE**

Fantastic Response to Human Chain against Privatisation of Lakes

Over 300 local residents and concerned individuals from across the city participated in the Human Chain at Agara Lake (Koramangala) protesting the ongoing privatisation of lakes in Bangalore, by the Lake Development Authority. Gracing the occasion were Justice A. J. Sadashiva, former Judge of the High Court of Karnataka and noted actor Smt. L. V. Sharada.

The tranquil Agara sparkled with activity as tens of children and adults held out colourful posters protesting privatisation of lakes. Several demanded that the lakes were commons and not for trade. Others wondered how public commons could be traded to hoteliers and builders disregarded constitutional provisions protecting them. Others demanded that lakes are wetlands that have to be protected for posterity. Some urged the Government to legislate to protect all lakes from such devious moves.

Signing an appeal to the Chief Minister of Karnataka Shri. Yeddyrappa, those gathered urged him to seriously consider the implications of this illthought move. The appeal stated “if this trend continues, the time when our lakes will be locked out for the general public and protected for posterity, will be not be too far away. It is critical that you take the initiative of abandoning this disastrous scheme of privatising our lakes – our common properties – and ensure that this obligatory function of the State is not outsourced to private profit making builders and hoteliers to advance their commercial interests. We hope that you will take this step with due dispatch keeping in view the wider public interest, and the interest of future generations for who we are merely custodians of lakes for today.”

Speaking on the occasion, Smt. L. V. Sharada lamented that the lack of public action had seen a lot of wonderful lakes disappear due to encroachment and land grabbing. Recalling her role in appealing to various Chief Ministers over the past two decades, she lamented that none seemed to pay serious attention to the crisis of protecting lakes for posterity. To now allow lakes for privatistaion was a scandal she said, urgin the Government to instead involve local communities to protect thee critical waterbodies.

Shri. Leo Saldanha of Environment Support Group explained to those gathered the ecological and environmental importance of lakes. He highlighted that lakes are excellent habitats for a variety of flora and fauna, especially migratory waterfowl. Privatization sounds the deathknell for such excellent habitats.

Shri. Munivenkatappa, a local resident of Agara and former police official, speaking on behalf of all local residents, emphasised that the privatization of Agara will not be tolerated by anyone. He stressed that everone had a right to access public commons responsibly and freely, and stated that the privatisation of lakes was curtailing this very freedom.

Everyone gathered stood in a long human chain for two hours and dispersed after assuring that they would continue their protests if the Government did not cancell all leases and licenses privatising lakes.

Bhargavi Rao, Divya Ravindranath, Dasarathi, Deepak Arya
Enviornment Support Group Hasiru Usiru

Encl.:

Appeal to Chief Minister of Karnataka

And photograph of the event with Justice A, J. Sadashiva gracing the occasion (Man in dark blue shirt)

Address for contact:

Environment Support Group ®

105, East End B Main Road, Jayanagar 9th Block East, Bangalore 560069. INDIA

Tel: 91-80-26531339/22441977 Voice/Fax: 91-80-26534364

Email: esg@esgindia.org or esgindia@gmail.com Web: www.esgindia.org