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# Kick-off workshop

**Protection of forest-dependent people from  
forest destruction, plantation economy,  
climate change and landgrab**

**20 July 2025**

**Venue: CIRDAP Auditorium,  
17 Topkhana Road, Dhaka-1000**



***Organized by***

**Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD)**

***Development partners: The European Union and MISEREOR***

Dear Sir/Madam,

The pressing issues and core concerns for the indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent peoples living in the forest regions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the north-central districts of Tangail, Gazipur, and Mymensingh are centered around forests and land. Prior to the British colonial rule, the forest-dwelling peoples of these two geographical areas lived in the forests without any trouble and freely collected necessary materials and food from the forest. However, the process of stripping them of their customary land rights began with enactment of Act Seven in 1865. Subsequently, development projects, plantation economy, Bengali settlement in the forest, and various other factors, led to the original inhabitants of the forests massively losing their customary rights over land and forest resources, rendering their lives and livelihoods unprotected.

Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) has been working for over three decades for the protection of forest and forest-dependent peoples. Cashing in on the valuable knowledge resources and experience gained over decades, SEHD started a programme from February 1 this year to study the state of the forest, forest commons, condition of the communities living in the forest areas and to develop a roadmap for promotion of customary rights of the indigenous and forest-dependent people. This programme is supported by the European Union and MISEREOR. The purpose of this kick-off workshop is to share plan for research, investigations, and other activities to be conducted under this programme with a broader audience. In addition to the exchange of ideas and suggestions, there will be an exhibition of knowledge resources, photographs, and screening of documentary films.

Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud, an eminent economist and the planning advisor, will grace the workshop as the chief guest. The workshop will be chaired by distinguished economist, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman. The special guests at the workshop are Mr. Michal Krejza, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh; Prof. Tanzimuddin Khan, member, University Grants Commission (UGC) and faculty of International Relations at the University of Dhaka; Ms. Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori and country coordinator, One Billion Rising; Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, vice chancellor of the University of Dhaka; Md. Amir Hossain Chowdhury, chief conservator of forests (CCF), Mr. Gautam Dewan, president, CHT Citizens Committee; Md. Yunus Ali, former CCF; and Mr. Prashanta Tripura, country director, The Hunger Project and former university professor. The keynote presentation will be presented by Mr. Philip Gain, director, SEHD. In the main session of the workshop, community representatives from the two geographical regions will also share their perspectives.

We sincerely invite you to join us at this Kick-off Workshop.

Philip Gain  
Director, SEHD

# PROGRAM

09:15 *Registration and tea*

10:00 *Welcome address*

Prof. Tanzimuddin Khan, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka and member of the University Grants Commission (UGC)

10:10 *Keynote presentation*

Mr. Philip Gain, Director, SEHD

10:30 *Community voices*

Ms. Joya Tripura, president, CHT Woman Headman Karbari Network

Mr. Zuam Lian Amlai, chairperson, Bandarban Chapter, Movement for the Protection of Forest and Land Rights in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

Mr. Lelung Khumi, human rights activist, Chittagong Hill Tracts

Mr. Eugin Nokrek, president, Joyenshahi Adibashi Unnayan Parishad

Ms. Alpona Sarker, general secretary, Bangladesh Koch Adivasi Mohila Songathan

11:00 *Special guests*

Mr. Michal Krejza, Head of Co-operation, the European Union

Ms. Khushi Kabir, coordinator, Nijera Kori and Bangladesh coordinator, One Billion Rising

Md. Amir Hosain Chowdhury, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Bangladesh Forest Department

Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka

Mr. Gautam Dewan, chairperson, Chittagong Hill Tracts Citizens' Committee

Md. Yunus Ali, former Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF)

Mr. Prashanta Tripura, country director, The Hunger Project and former professor of Jahangirnagar University

12:30 *Chief Guest:* Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, eminent economist and planning adviser, interim government adviser,

12:50 *Chairman:* Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC)

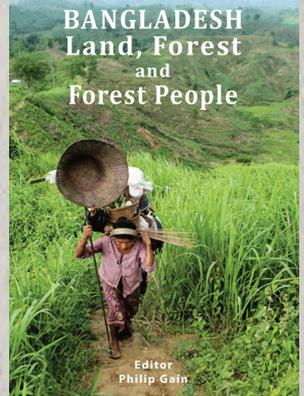
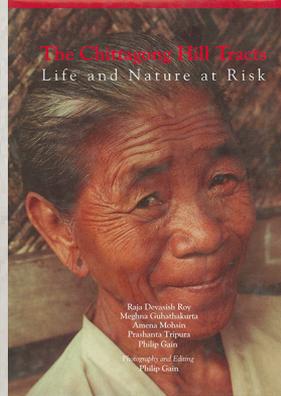
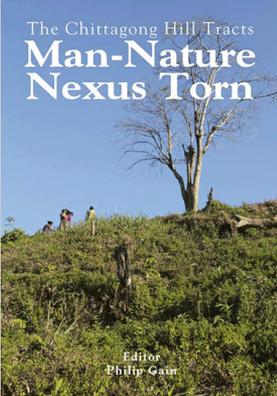
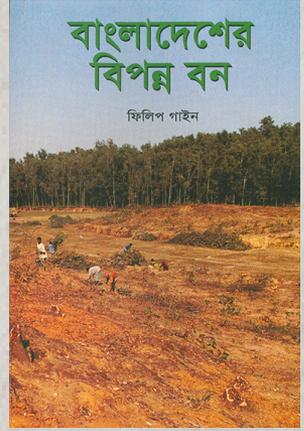
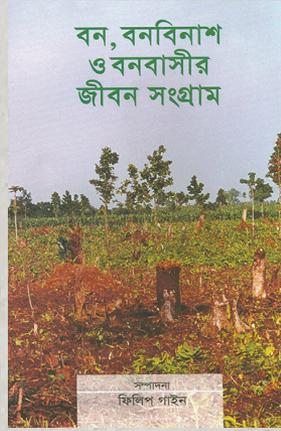
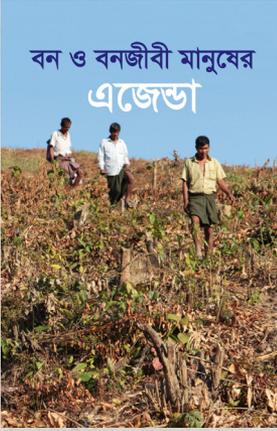
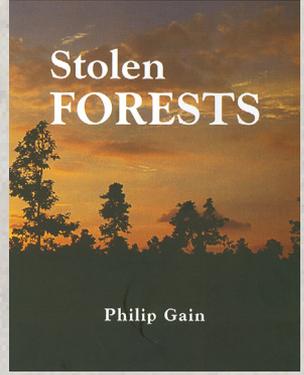
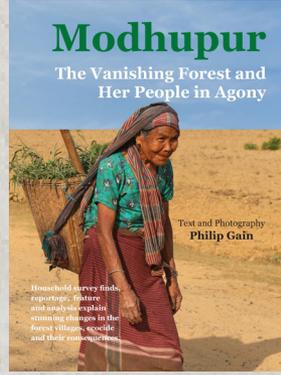
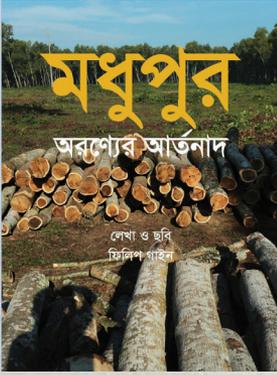
1:00 Lunch

## **Information fair and discussion**

02:30 Slideshow and screening of documentary film

03:30 Open discussion

04:30 Closing and tea



### Contact

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