



For Immediate Release
Thursday, April 13, 2006

**CONTACT: Austin: Gauri Karve, UT Austin local organizer, 512-363-8871, karve_gauri@yahoo.com,
Diane Wilson, Texas activist on hunger strike, (361) 676-0663,
New Delhi: Nityanand Jayaraman, New Delhi organizer, +91 9868474437, nity68@gmail.com**

Nationally Known Fisherwoman Diane Wilson Begins Hunger Strike to Support Victims of the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC)/Dow Chemical Bhopal Chemical Disaster

In Bhopal tens of thousands have died and hundreds remain ill from the effects of the chemical contamination.

Diane will be in the West Mall area of The University of Texas at Austin campus from 8AM till 6PM, daily. Supporters of the *Association for India's Development* (AID) a student group with 40 national chapters in the United States will also join Diane. This week in New Delhi, India six hunger strikers, including three Bhopal victims of the 1984 UCC/Dow Chemical disaster and three supporters, began an indefinite fast resolved to end it only when the Indian Government addresses their long-standing charter of six demands (*see below for demands*). Bhopal survivors are garnering support world wide from students and social justice groups to support them in their efforts to hold multinational UCC/Dow.

Wilson is author of *Unreasonable Woman*, which details her 25 years of protesting environmental pollution from UCC to Dow Chemical corporations in Seadrift, Texas and Bhopal, India. Diane Wilson learned about Dow as she fished for shrimp in the Gulf of Texas, near the Seadrift Dow plant and other chemical plants such as Formosa Plastics. An EPA release inventory list showed that her county of Calhoun, Texas was number one in the nation for toxic disposal. Diane realized that the struggle for a healthy environment in Bhopal was the same as her own.

In February 2006 she completed 120 days in a Texas jail for hanging a "Justice for Bhopal" banner in 2002 off a tower at Dow Chemical's plant in Seadrift, Texas. In 2002, Diane went on a 28-day fast along with Bhopal survivors and managed to mobilize more than 1000 people to fast in solidarity. The Government of India was forced to begin to accede to the Bhopal demands.

“I can’t rest until these corporations are held accountable for what they’re doing here in the United States, and for what they did in Bhopal.” Diane Wilson.

Diane Wilson will be joined by four AID volunteers that are also carrying out their pledge to fast in solidarity with Bhopal. *“I fast in solidarity with the lost voices of Bhopal. Let this silent protest across the world reverberate the government into action!”* said Santhosh Padmanabhan (Engineer in Austin).

“Governing the largest democracy in the world for 21 years, the Indian Government has demonstrated an atrocious miscarriage of democratic principles in its actions in Bhopal and reactions to the Bhopalis’ struggles. I am appalled at the languid uncaring reaction of Dow and the Indian Government!” said Vinod Viswanath (Graduate Student, UT Austin). Both Santhosh and Vinod are on the first day of their two-day fast, second day overall.

The US support campaign, a project of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal-with many active chapters of Students for Bhopal (SFB) and AID include massive fax and email actions and vigils targeting the Indian embassies and government. Already more than 2200 faxes have been sent to the Indian Prime Minister.

Nearly over 300 hunger strikers have signed on via www.bhopal.net from India, UK, US, Singapore, Spain, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Singapore and Canada. In India, solidarity protests targeting the unyielding UPA Government were held this week in Tamilnadu, Trivandrum, Pune, Mumbai, Kolkata and Vizag.

Bhopal victims launched an indefinite fast in New Delhi on Tuesday April 11th, 2006.

They seek a meeting with the Prime Minister.

The Bhopalis are demanding:

- Clean water to replace the water supply in Bhopal contaminated by the UCC/Dow pesticide plant, which has been essentially abandoned since 1984.
- Thorough clean up of contamination.
- Government-coordinating agency with power and finances to implement medical and economic rehabilitation programs.
- Special prosecution team to pursue the criminal case against UCC/Dow and CEO Warren Anderson among others,
- Memorializing the disaster by including the Bhopal story in the educational curricula of grade schools and universities.

In addition the Bhopal campaign has demanded that because UCC is an absconder in the eyes of Indian courts, Dow and UCC should be barred from introducing into India any processes, technologies or products developed by or owned by UCC.

For more details go to www.ICJB.org

###

ATTENTION JOURNALISTS: For additional information on US based support groups please contact **Aquene Freechild (SFB) at 617 378.2579, aquene@gmail.com** and **Nirveek Bhattacharjee (AID) 410 627.7679, nirveek@bme.jhu.edu.**