



NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL SCALE FISHWORKERS (INLAND)

September 12, 2020

Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi,
Hon'ble Prime Minister,
India.

Sub: Request to Stop Oil & Gas Exploration in and around Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Sir,

The National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSFW) and the fishing communities of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI) have been shocked to know from a Press Release of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration that the Government of India has reduced 'No Go Zone' in the EEZ around Andaman & Nicobar to facilitate Oil and Gas Exploration in the area and has provided in principle approval for grant of Petroleum Exploration License to M/s. Oil India Limited in 2 Blocks in Andaman Basin.

There are 97 fisher people villages with a total population of 15,320 in the ANI. The proposed oil exploration will block the access of fishers to fishing areas. The disturbance, turbidity and pollution caused by drilling will massively reduce the fish stock and devastate the livelihood of more than 15 thousand fishers. With an annual harvestable potential of 1,48,000 tonnes the ANI marine fisheries provide us with a huge renewable asset that provides employment to more than 10,000 fishers with more or less equitable distribution of income. The environmental and social cost of hydrocarbon exploration in ANI is going to far outweigh its benefits.


It is also a matter of deep regret that the Government is taking decisions on areas and resources used by huge numbers of traditional primary stakeholders without even consulting them, let alone taking their informed consent. This is against the principle of public trust doctrine which is part of the law of the country.

In view of the above NPSSFW(I) seeks your kind intervention to ensure that –

- The in principle approval provided for grant of Petroleum Exploration License to M/s. Oil India Limited in 2 Blocks in Andaman Basin is cancelled.
- Ministry of Oil and Natural Gas starts consultations with the fishing communities of ANI and seek their informed consent before venturing on any oil exploration activity.

Yours faithfully,


Pradip Chatterjee
Convener
NPSSFW(I)


Dilip Roy
Associate Member,
National Council of NPSSFW(I)
[Andaman Nicobar Islands Representative]

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to the –

1. Hon'ble Minister, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India;
2. Chief Secretary, Andaman & Nicobar Administration;
3. Director of Fisheries, Andaman & Nicobar.