



NPSSFW Calls Upon Small Scale Fish Workers Celebrate World Fisheries Day 2020 With Hope, Determination and Fervour

On 21st November 1997 representatives of small-scale, artisanal fishers and fish workers from 32 countries gathered together in New Delhi, India for the first time to form an international fishers' organization and committed themselves to work for global sustainable fishing policies, practices and social justice under the leadership of Fr. Thomas Kochery and Harekrishna Debnath, two legendary leaders of the small scale fishing communities. From then on 21st November is celebrated as World Fisheries Day.

Small scale fishers, fish farmers, fish vendors and ancillary fish workers all the world over commemorate World Fisheries Day by appreciating nature's bounty in providing them with the livelihood based on natural resources, by renewing their pledge to protect their livelihood and the natural resource base and by remembering their ancestors' efforts and valour to protect water, protect fish and protect fisher people. World Fisheries' Day is a celebration of traditional culture and living of the fisher folk to proclaim their unity in diversity.

A total of about 250 million people are employed in the fisheries sector, almost 50% of whom are women. Thus fisheries sector provides livelihood to around 820 million people of the world. The sector produces 179 million tonnes of fish. Fish consumption provides about 3.2 billion people with nearly 20 percent of their animal protein consumption.

But the huge importance of the sector regarding food security, nutritional status, economic growth and poverty alleviation has been overshadowed by the challenges faced by the fisheries sector in general and by the small scale fisheries sector in particular.

This year World Fisheries Day is going to be celebrated in an unprecedented situation of Covid-19 pandemic. Disruption of livelihood practices, breakdown of markets, displacement and eviction from habitats are stalking the fisher people. Normal ways and means of organisation and protest have become very difficult to pursue. The situation has become all the more serious with heightening of efforts by big business to protect their profit. The loot of natural fish resources by mechanised sector has increased; large scale and industrial farms are pushing out small scale fish farmers; malls and electronic trade are increasingly replacing small scale fish vendors. Escalation of encroachments and pollution in the name of development are driving the nails to the coffin of small scale fisheries. The government, due to its ties with and dependence on big business, is presiding over the destruction of natural resources and deterioration of workers' life and livelihood.

Yet small scale fishery is the only way to provide our planet with sustainable fish resources. The small scale fish workers are by far the largest primary non-consumptive stakeholders of our water bodies and their natural custodians. Good fish needs good water.

In this backdrop National Platform for Small Scale Fish Workers (NPSSFW) calls upon the fisher people to celebrate the World Fisheries Day 2020 with hope, determination and fervour.

**Small Scale Fish Workers Unite
Fight Encroachments on Our Land, Water and Fish Resources.
Oppose Pollution, Over and Destructive Fishing.**

SAVE WATER, SAVE FISH, SAVE FISHER PEOPLE