Press Release

“Draining the Ocean, Drowning the Ocean People”

Second day of the Conference of Ocean People (C-OP) to counter the UNOC 2022.

The Second day (28th June 2022) of the Conference of the Ocean People (C-OP) delved deeper on the issues of the Blue Economy, Corporatization of the Ocean and the state discourse on ocean policies globally. It also brought forward the ocean people stories of resistance and collective assertion of their historical rights against the UN ocean conference 2022 corporate agenda of exploration, expansion and exploitation. People joined the conference in large numbers from South America, Caribbean Region, African region and Asia Pacific Region. These people became part of the conference through translations in fourteen local and global languages, making it a historical event of uniting the ocean people globally. Around more than 2000 people joined the conference from different countries through community screenings, and participation. This conference has also been organised to alert the possibility of submergence of 50 major coastal cities, globally and six cities in India due to the rise in temperature of the ocean because of continued exploitation of our coastal areas.

The conference invited speakers from all over the world to resist against the global agenda of Blue Economy, Ocean grabbing, supported by the governments globally along with ocean people to assert their historical rights over the ocean ecology. South African activist and the director of the Johannesburg branch of Earthlife Africa, 2018 Goldman Environmental Prize winner Makoma Lekalakala talked about “the history of colonialism which introduced consumerism and disturbed centuries of "our relationship with ancestors, with nature", it has brought development in the form of mining, and is a system that has made us poor. The largest threat of all is climate change. Those responsible for our misery must be held accountable.” Professor of Political Economy at London's Queen Mary University Liam Campling, talked about the “Pelagic imperialism in the 21st century, and shift of the marine fishery from Europe to China making it an issue of big capital than the issue of a country. Countries like the US, China, and Japan look at the fishery as an industrial strategy for wider Blue Economy export.” Jesurethinam, of National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and a member of World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP), joined the conference from Lisbon and shared “WTO and ENGOs have gathered at UNOC22 to decide on the agenda of ocean governance. But “We are the ocean, and we are its people. But to them, the ocean is for profit.” Kaygianna Charlery from Saint Lucia's Goodwill Fishermen's Cooperative Society, says “A strategic dialogue is needed, with fisher people instead of technocrats, as knowledge, information, and best practices get missed. Fisher people are kept out of the discussion. They cannot speak the language of the people and don’t feel comfortable around the table.” Boyisile Mafilika representing the South African region spoke about the “government securing the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and denying fishers their livelihood by making it more difficult to access the sea.” Gemal from Aceh in Indonesia, spoke for indigenous
people who "have been protecting the coastal island but the government only protects the big industries' interests." **Purima Meher**, from National Fishworkers Forum, India (NFF) talked about the women in fisheries, “During the pandemic, fisheries' activities stopped. For survival, women were fishing around the coast but the govt stopped them, leaving them nothing. Women had to forcefully migrate." **Fathima Majid** from Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) added that "The government has been trying to encroach on our islands. They have tried this for three-time as they want to build world-class cities. This will disrupt our ecology and we have so far been able to resist it."

**The last day, Day 3 (30th June 2022) of the conference schedule is attached below.**

In Solidarity,

National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)
(nationalfishworkersforumindia@gmail.com)

*For more information and updates on the event, kindly follow us on.*

C-OP Instagram Link

https://www.instagram.com/conferenceofoceanpeople/

C-OP Twitter Link

https://twitter.com/C_OP202

Blue Economy Tribunal Link

http://blueeconomytribunal.org/c-op-home/

Link of the Video Released

https://youtu.be/1edX7SpFkQQ
VALENTINE SESSION
30th June 2022 - Day 3

- Representations of the Small-Scale Fisher Communities
- Representatives from South America and the Caribbean Region
  - Victor Torres, Trinidad
  - Adrian La Roche, Bahamas
- Representatives from Africa Region (FFA)
- Representatives from Asia and the Pacific Region
  - Ms. M. N. M. Millim, Trade Union of Workers in"Trade Union of Workers in Bengal, India"
  - Issam, ATM-Atakora, Indonesia
  - Pha Theunphax, Federation of Fisherfolk, Thailand

Closing Remarks
- Mrs. Salma Kandiyohi, General Secretary, WFP
- Mr. Jaffar Bokar, President, Nai Fasal