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## PRESS RELEASE

### ‘Conference of the Ocean People Conclude: C-OP political declaration challenging UN Ocean policies released’

#### *C-OP challenges the Blue Façade and Historical Injustices against corporatized UNOC22*

The **Conference of the Ocean People (C-OP)** organized for three days 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June reached its pinnacle on 30<sup>th</sup> June with a **Political Declaration from the Conference of the Ocean People**. The three-day event brought insights for, by and on the ocean people for the first time on a global platform. From meta themes like Capitalistic Apartheid, Façade of Blue Revolution, to on-ground testimonies of Ocean People asserting their Historical Customary Rights along with solidarity messages by Alliances and Movements from all over the world were discussed and brought in the global light to reaffirm and reclaim the rights of the ocean people.

The **Conference of the Ocean People** brought forward the expert presentations and depositions of ocean people from all over the world. Renowned Scholars like Vandana Shiva, Liam Campling and Makoma Lekalala, emphasized on the **history** of the ocean people. **Vandana Shiva** said. “We are witnessing a green revolution which continued the colonisation of the land, sea, and the lives of people. The idea that tech is productive and must replace people, is flawed”. She calls for a *Satyagraha* against the Blue Economy to defend "our lives, livelihoods, and commons". **Liam Campling** discussed the “Pelagic imperialism in the 21st century and how a majority of marine fisheries used to be European but are now in China. A switch from consumption to profit.” **Makoma Lekalala** highlighted that “Colonisers introduced consumerism and disturbed centuries of "our relationship with ancestors, with nature", development in the form of mining, and is a system that has made us poor”. **Women in oceanic communities**, their holistic image and struggles were discussed by **Purnima Meher** (NFF, India), "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", “Women are fishing in the coastal area but there is no data in government records hence they are invisible”. **Fatima Majid from** Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum added “Ocean Grabbing has been taking place in this manner. #CoalPowerPlants are built on our coastal land. Our right to livelihood, fresh air, ecosystems are being snatched away by the govt." Some of the **depositions** of the ocean people were also shared. **Jonathan Julius** from South Africa, "Fishing is a cultural fabric, apart from food and livelihood", "Fisher rights are human rights and we have policies that are not recognised by our government”. **Jason Jarvis**, said “Fishing isn't something we do, it is who we are”, **Alhaji Abdul-Alim bun Israel Ebum Allen** said "The local fishermen should be included in policymaking - most fishermen lose all their property in disputes.” **Susan Herawati** (KIARA) speaks for the justice for coastal communities. She mentions how big shrimp companies in Thailand perpetuate slavery. **Josana Pinto** added “I understand the pain of what is happening not just in Brazil but throughout the world." **Velia Lucidi** (Crocevia) said “that we need to provide space for global governance for fisheries.” **Kaygianna Charlery** added “With the pandemic, trade links closing up, taught us that every island and every continent has access to the ocean, which should be respected as a resource". **Gemal** spoke for indigenous people who "have been protecting the coastal island but the government only protects the big industries' interests.” **Canga**, said "We conserve and protect and manage these estuaries. With each leaf that falls from the mangroves, we do not have food for larvae, fish

and mammals, etc. It protects us from hurricanes. It is our house, ecosystem, our life." **Ezra Dwi** talked about "the shifting away from catch fisheries to aquaculture, which was taking away the historical rights of the fishing community" And **AK Jamaldeen** (NFTU) said "There has been an evacuation of the fishing community along with the promotion of tourism and pollution of the ocean.

The few other major elements of the conference were the release of the song "Let's stand up for the ocean" highlighting the struggle of the ocean people globally. It was translated in multiple local and global languages to reach out to the ocean people from every part of the world. People participated and shared their views from South Asia, Africa, South America, Caribbean Islands. Along with hundreds of people joining from the coastal states in India via community screenings at the ground, academicians and international media also joined in large numbers. Jesurathnam (NFF), a stalwart leader of the fishing community in India, present at Lisbon UNOC communicated that WTO and ENGOs gathered at UNOC22, to talk about the ocean governance with power imbalance and tokenism. This conference also alerted 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.

It was summarized as the historic process taken up to establish the historical traditional customary rights of the ocean people globally and openly challenges the UNOC through a political assertion, as custodians to reimagine a better future.

In Solidarity,

**National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)**

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*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](https://twitter.com/C_OP202)

**Blue Economy Tribunal Link**

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

**Link of the Video Released**

<https://youtu.be/1edX7SpFkQQ>