

Women of Waves (WoW) Rise Together by The World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP)



“Together, we rise. Together, we resist. Together, we shape the future”

March 20, 2025

The Women of Waves (WoW) Rise Together was held by The World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) on March 20th 2025 from 7h30 pm to 9h30 pm to celebrate International Women's day this month. This meeting gathered fisherwomen, activists, and allies from around the world to highlight the important role women play in dismantling capitalistic and patriarchal systems. The urgency to assert fisherwomen's identities and reclaim their rightful place in society was brought to the forefront. Stories of strength, solidarity and resistance were shared by more than 15 women.

The discussion's key points were:

- Fisherwomen's role in sustaining life and livelihoods
- Challenges of the 'Blue Economy' and resisting ocean privatization
- Reclaiming our waters: collective action for justice

Stories of Strength, Solidarity and Resistance

Nadine Orchid Nembhard (Co-Chair WFFP)



When women come together, we create spaces to flourish, and thrive – we must challenge stereotypes that persist in our communities. Women are often relegated to roles that don't reflect our capability, but if we work together, we can redefine what it is to be a woman in fisheries. We can be leaders in our community, organizations, and in WFFP. Diversity leads to better outcomes for everyone involved. We all need to commit to supporting our fellow women in this field and empower all women to pursue their dreams without doubting themselves.

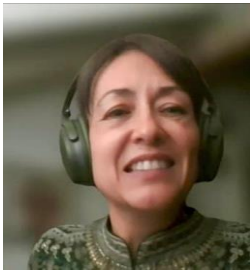
"When women support women, we not only change lives, we transform communities. Our future is bright and filled with women."

Christiana Saiti Louwa (Treasurer -WFFP)



Women continue to be marginalized and excluded. In my culture, women are deeply connected to the waters and land. The woman feels more for our children, community, family, and environment. It is the woman who gives the knowledge to the children in the form of oral stories or practical examples. It is through this knowledge that we impact what we have to our family, our community and the world.

Ana Maria Suarez Franco (FIAN International -Secretary General)



Women play a key role in liberating our coastal communities, thanks to the ecological knowledge passed down through generations. Many people do not recognize the role women play as leaders, caregivers of nature, and cultural preservers of social, economic, and environmental rights. Women have knowledge and wisdom of the ocean and the safeguarding of resources. They understand and respect the ocean and its rhythm, helping to defend it from threats of pollution and destruction through sustainable practices. Many fisherwomen remain excluded, but we are uniting forces. We have had some successes at the UN recognizing fisher peoples, and we hope to have many results in defense of fisherwomen in

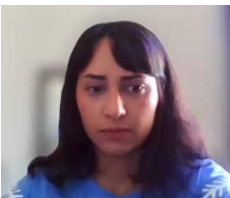
the future.

Necia Birlik (Turkey)



I have been a fisherwoman in Turkey for over 53 years following my family's legacy. I have experienced the climate crisis first hand with fewer fish being caught and prices for fishing resources rising each year. Many fisherpeople in my community have lost their livelihood. After my husband's passing, people told me to sell my fishing boat since there was no man to operate it. I told them that it was my boat, and I would not sell it until I die.

Marcela Dalete - Creator of the Poster [Brazil]



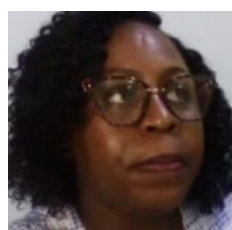
We need to look at who is responsible for the challenges women are facing today. Our focus should be giving power back to the community so they can face the big scale companies that invade our spaces. The consequences of ocean grabbing and extractivism strongly impact fisherwomen.

Subashiri Deepa (National Women Coordinator of NAFSO-Sri Lanka)



Women are the life given to humanity and we are proud of it. We must unite the voices of women in fishing communities. Nobody will provide for us unless we fight. We must stand strong to claim our spaces and to get recognition as partners in the development sector. We are not in competition with men, we are claiming our share in the welfare scheme as equal development partners.

Kayana (Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CNFO)- Saint Lucia)



We must recognize the contribution of women in the fishing sector, whether catching, extracting or in a supporting role. The supporting role is as important as the extracting role. We need to leave a footprint enviable for women after us, to sit in spaces that men sit in. Our message to other women who may face social or legal barriers is that it is possible. There is hope for you because in our region we have fought to work alongside men.

Masnua'h (Coordinator of the Indonesian Fisherwomen Sisterhood (Persaudaraan Perempuan Nelayan Indonesia – [PPNI]-Indonesia)- CC Member-WFFP)



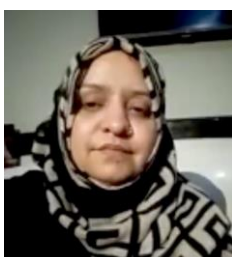
The climate crisis has amplified violence towards women. There has been an increase in child marriages and this crisis has made women poorer. Our goal is to encourage economic independence through organizing and education.

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk (Director of Sustainable Development Foundation-Thailand)



Women are resisting capitalistic and economic development. To make a change, we have to strengthen the women's movement, make ourselves more visible, and be part of the decision making.

Yasmeen Ali Sha (Senior Vice Chairperson of Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum & President of Noori Development Foundation Social Movement of Fisher Women and Peasant Women-Pakistan)



Between the illegal occupation of the coast and land resources, and the impacts of climate change, the culture of the fishing community has been destroyed and pushed further into poverty. Despite these challenges, women fisherfolk refuse to be silenced. Through the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, we are fighting for fair wages, social security, secure tenure rights, and environmental protection. We call upon governments, international organizations, and civil society to recognize women's contributions, ensure their rights, and protect their livelihoods.

Janet Cletus (Secretary of Thiruvananthapuram District & Senior Leader of Kerala State Independent Fishworkers Federation (KSMTF)-India)



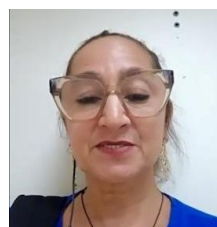
The central government of India has made a decision to mine sand from the ocean in India. Many types of fishes will be lost because of sand mining. The sand and the shore cannot be returned.

Aminata (Mali)



Women have no access to economic means or bank credit and cannot own land. They are the bottom of society despite being the majority. When a woman asks for a loan at a bank, the woman will pay more interest than the man even though women do an equal share of the work and should have the same rights as men. Currently, discussions are being held with the men in our fishing community to spread awareness of these issues.

Josana Pinto da Costa (Member of the National Coordination Committee of the Movement of Artisanal Fishermen and Fisherwomen-Brazil)



"If one woman suffers, we all suffer. If one woman has a victory, we celebrate the victory together. We bond in the nature of solidarity."

Marianeli Torres

There's a brutal process of invasion of the sea and marine spaces by extractive industries. All our people are vulnerable and the new world order is confronting us. We have to build from a different epistemology.

Lakshmi Kovvada (President of the Andhra Pradesh Traditional Fishworkers Union-India)



Our greatest threat includes industrial aquaculture through Andhra Pradesh's coast. All the coastal lands owned by the Forest Department are getting converted into tourism forest and projects. Our way of life is being destroyed. This is a time for us to fight not only at the state and international level, but at the global level too. There is a huge migration from our coastal place to other places. My only hope from my nation is to stand together to fight all the evil forces across the nations.

Faye Adolfus (Philippines)



Women face a double oppression: economic marginalization and gender inequality even as they encounter barriers, such as losing their homes and struggling to provide for their families. While men go out on the fishing boats for weeks or months, women are left behind to protest for their own survival and march for their families. We rely on women to organize these demonstrations.

Susan Herawati (Secretary General of KIARA-Indonesia)



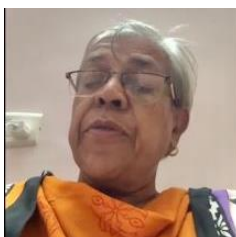
"We face an uneasy situation because of extractive and exploitative development. We need a movement to reclaim the waters and ocean".

CEDAW Presentation

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN in 1979 to eliminate discrimination against women. It obligates states to respect, protect, and fulfill women's rights. During this convention, the CEDAW Committee was established to monitor state compliance and interpret the convention overtime. This committee provides recommendations to states on how to improve women's rights by adapting the convention to changing realities and amplifying the voices of marginalized women and Grassroot groups.

In 2016, through sustained advocacy and engagement, rural women's groups successfully influenced the CEDAW Committee to adopt General Recommendation 34 on the Rights of Rural Women. This adoption allows rural women to hold their government accountable for upholding their rights including their access to participation, food, food sovereignty, land, seeds, and other essential resources.

Jesu Rethinam (Women Coordinator-WFFP)-Closing statements



Looking towards the future, the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) has many plans to expand the reach and impact of its movement. Each year, from the 5th of November to the 10th of December, WFFP members work tirelessly to plan their campaigns and advocacy work across the globe. Their goal is to develop themes that empower their groundwork and strengthen their campaign demands. These weeks are broken up into themes such as "Gender Rights & Violence against Women," "Asserting Fisher Identity," "Fisher Rights as Human Rights," and many more. After WFFP successfully crafts a Fisherpeople's Calendar in these five weeks, the movement will be strengthened locally, nationally, and internationally.