

FROM EUROPE/ France**Include us**

There must be parity in delegations to the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF)

by Dani lle le Sauce of the Association "Femmes du Littoral de Bretagne", France

At their meeting in San Francisco in October 1999, the Coordination Committee of the WFF, composed of representatives from fishworkers organizations (FWOs) from different continents, received several letters from women members of FWOs from different parts of the world.

This was an outcome of the initiative taken by the women's movement in Brittany. Through letters addressed to women members of FWOs in different countries, they worked to raise awareness about the vital importance of women's participation in the WFF decision-making processes, and, in particular, the importance of women's representation at the next General Body meeting of the WFF in October 2000, in Brittany, France. Women members of FWOs were asked to write to the Coordination Committee of the WFF to stress these issues.

The following are excerpts from the letter addressed to the WFF Coordination Committee, by the women's movement of France:

"The World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers is bringing together fishworkers communities from around the world in order to defend their rights, their culture and to highlight the importance of the seas as a source of life. The riches of the sea should be prioritized for the use of the coastal populations and should be exploited in ways which ensure that the rights of future generations are respected..."

One of the main objectives of the Forum is to recognize, protect and reinforce the role of women in the fisheries economy and to support communities who depend on fisheries for their livelihood.

During past years, women have revolutionized existing fishworkers' organizations. They have helped their communities to be more dynamic. The commitments, decisions and responsibilities taken by these women in

fisheries have to be recognized by the Coordination Committee of the Forum.

.....women's role can no longer be ignored. The question is then how best to ensure a representation of all these women whose interests are similar and converging? The answer can only come from a forum where fishworkers from the South and fishworkers from the North stand together, through a global approach which will ensure the future of our communities.

The presence of more women in the delegations participating in the October 2000 meeting will not be a way to feminize the WFF image, but will help to recognize the presence of a women's movement within a men's movement. That is the reason we ask for parity to be promoted in delegations that will represent their countries in the 2000 WFF meeting. We would also like to see two more women in the composition of the next Coordination Committee."

The women's movement in France has also decided to organize a workshop during the WFF meeting in October 2000, for women who will be present at this meeting.