

## Fishery harbours

# The Kochi Declaration

**The Kochi Declaration on Fishery Harbours  
was adopted at a recent conference in India**

**W**e, the representatives of fishworker organizations, research institutions and universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions and governments, having met for two days at Kochi on 24-25 June 2004, under the auspices of Protsahan (a Trivandrum-based NGO), with the involvement of the National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai and the Harbour Engineering Department, Government of Kerala, to deliberate on the current status and future prospects of fishery harbours and fish landing centres in India, do hereby resolve as under:

*Aware* that harbours are complex facilities that act as vital interfaces between capture of fish and their utilization,

*Acknowledging* that harbours are often situated in some of the most ecologically fragile, densely populated coastal zones, which are, in turn, the final sinks of pollutants from upstream, land-based developmental activities,

*Cognizant* also of the provisions of both binding and non-binding international Agreements, Conventions, Guidelines and Recommendations on resource management, environment and biodiversity, and

*Recognizing* that harbours form the focal point in the application of food safety control and are important points in the application of occupational safety and health standards, and measures for personal/physical security needs, and therefore call for greater participation of relevant stakeholders in harbour governance,

We *Urge* for greater recognition by governments and all other stakeholders

of the paramount importance of the management and maintenance of harbours. The responsibility of keeping harbours clean should extend beyond harbour authorities to society at large, based on the 'polluter pays' principle.

We *Call* upon governments and all other stakeholders, particularly users of harbour facilities, to acknowledge the critical role of harbours as the focal point for both fishery resource management and regulatory interventions in fish marketing.

We *Urge* governments and all stakeholders to pay keen attention to quality assurance in the supply chain, and to ensure the adequate supply of clean and/or potable water, as necessary.

We *Stress* that governments and all other stakeholders should ensure better coordination between the various agencies that have to implement safety and health standards.

We *Affirm* the necessity to create and develop governance structures that integrate the interests of the State with those of all other stakeholders.

Alongside, we *Proclaim* the need for a qualitative improvement in the amenities and public comfort facilities for the day-to-day living needs of users, especially women and small traders, and that these facilities should also be properly maintained.

We *Call* for better organizational and legal arrangements to facilitate participation of all relevant stakeholders in harbour governance.

We *Reassert* the fundamental and inalienable role of government in crucial

areas of infrastructure provision and financial support for activities like dredging and major repair of harbours.

Finally, we *Call* for the adoption of more context-specific and dynamic approaches to developing and managing fishery harbours.

This declaration was adopted on 25 June 2004, at the conference on "Fishery Harbours: Current Status and Future Management Concerns", Kochi, Kerala, India