



Press Release, Dhaka, 8th Feb 2017.

**“Cooperative and Legal Agreements among the ministries would help to ensure fishers’ rights”
-Mr. Narayon Chandra Chanda, State Minister, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.**

Today a seminar held at CIRDA Auditorium on legal rights and livelihood development of coastal fishing community. As chief guest honorable State Minister expressed the above demand to be done. The seminar title was **“ Contribution of Fishing Community to National Economy should be recognized and addressed”**. COAST Trust CLS project organized the seminar. At the seminar Researcher Mr. Reshad Alam upholds a research paper on **“Legal Rights of Fishing Community and Development of Livelihood”**. From the research and from the speakers 4 key demands were identified and these are: i) Fishermen ID cards should be provided the real fishermen, ii) Government aid should be distributed during the time of fishing ban, iii) The aid money should be distributed through the bank accounts of respective fishermen and iv) There should a digital data base of real fishermen.

Among other Mr. Muhammed Mostafa Biswas MP and member of parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Livestock, Mr. Jerome Sayer, Team Leader, CLS, Mr. Md. Golzar Hosen, DD Department of Fisheries, Lt. Faruqul Islam, Staff Officer (Plans), Bangladesh Coast Guard, Dr. Anichur Raman, Researcher, Chandpur Hilsha Research Center, Dr. Nahiduzzaman, Project Manager, ECHOFISHBD, Mr. Nurul Islam, Secretary Bhola, District Fishermen Somity, Mr. Ershad Majhi, President of Bhola small scale Fishermen Shomity and different government officials and fishing community leaders from Bhola were present.

Honorable State Minister also added that to ensure rights of fishing community and to increase fish production there should be an agreement and rules combined with the ministries of Home, Shipping, Forest and Environment, Land, Fisheries and Livestock. He also agreed to take steps to provide fishermen aid money through SMS and to establish a digital data base. He also emphasized on the leadership of Department of Fishing for the broader coordination among the ministries. Coast Guard representative Lt. Faruqul Islam updates that they are going to deploy four new marine vessels in the coastal areas for the increase of security of the fishers. He also asks NGOs to come up with program of legal education for Coast Guard members.

Researcher Mr. Anisur Raman said that as the fishers voluntarily have been following the rules and that has supported to increase the production of hilsha. He also added that for the social research should be initiated for development of fishers. Mr. Nahiduzzaman from ECOFISHBD recommended to form a conservation fund of 3.5 crore for the betterment of fishermen. He also requested to government to formulate a legal framework by which a portion of national income from hilsa fishing will be spent for fishers.



Mr. Nurul Islam of Fisherfolk leader called to Bangladesh Bank to disburse the idle money to them as loan with easy process. He complained that local contractors have been distributing nets low quality with low cost which are not better for fishing.

Fisherfolk leader Mr. Irsad Pandit complained that through the government approval, the rich people are catching fish coming in the shore and as a result the small fishers are not getting fish.

In the seminar Mr. Mustafa Kamal Akanda, Assistant Director, COAST Trust gave welcome address to the audience and Mr. Shawkat Ali Tutul, Assistant Director, COAST Trust gave the vote of thanks.

Moderator Mr. Sanat Kumar Bhowmik told that through awareness development of the fisher folks, they can avail their rights.



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