

In Memory of Harekrishna Debnath

PRESS RELEASE

The Chairperson of the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), Mr. Harekrishna Debnath, passed away in Kolkata at 11 am on 30 December 2009 at the age of 60.

Harekrishna has been a great supporter of traditional fishing communities in India and outside. He has worked dauntlessly over the past over two decades to organize fishing communities in India under the banner of the NFF, and to give them a voice to project their aspirations and sufferings to concerned governments. Most recently he led the Macchimar Adhikar Rashtriya Abhiyan in 2008, a two-month yatra that traversed the entire coast of India from Kutch to Kolkata, mobilizing support for better implementation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification and for scrapping the controversial draft Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) Notification. These efforts led to the withdrawal of the CMZ Notification, a major victory for fishing communities.

Harekrishna was a member of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB). He also contributed significantly to the struggles of fisherpeople worldwide, as the General Secretary of the World Forum of Fisherpeoples (WFFP).

The NFF has lost a great leader of the fishworker movement. Harekrishna has been a great inspiration and he will always be remembered by the fishing community of India. Every minute of his life was dedicated to the fishing community. His fight has fostered greater resolve among fishworkers to fulfill his dreams and to continue the struggle for social justice.

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