

Asia/ Malaysia

A step forward

Women fishworkers find representation in PIFWA

By P Balan, Adviser to the Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA)

Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA) has moved a step forward by establishing a women's bureau in its committee. This will allow a woman representative to be present in organizational meetings where decisions on activities and directions of PIFWA are taken.

Previously, women participated alongside their husband and families in projects like mangrove replanting and workshops organized by the Association. Now, PIFWA's action to include a women's representative in its committee means that women will play a bigger role in future activities.

On 20 May 2002, a meeting between PIFWA and a group of women from the fishing community took place in Sungai Chenaam, Penang. These comprised fisherwomen and women involved in the fishing industry. In the meeting, the women welcomed the decision to have a women's representative and they elected one candidate for the post.

The meeting also discussed problems faced by women especially regarding micro credit: the problems faced in paying back loans especially when fish prices fluctuated or when weather conditions made it hazardous for small boats to venture out at sea, depriving them of their source of livelihood. PIFWA has promised to look into their problems.

In the meantime, PIFWA is also seeking partnerships among local and international organizations for projects for women in the fishing community. PIFWA welcomes suggestions and recommendations.

P Balan can be contacted at pifwa@hotmail.com