

Pedro, Tabasco, who participated in the International Conference in Rome, in 1984, and in Bangkok, in 1990, represents the fishworkers of Tabasco and has shown interest in maintaining fraternal contact with the

fishworker and support organizations of other countries which support the struggles of the fishworkers of Mexico. ■

PHILIPPINES: Visit of Chilean and Peruvian fishworkers

In June, 1992, a delegation of union leaders from Chilean and Peruvian fishworker organizations were invited by OXFAM-ENGLAND to participate in an interchange experience with fishworker organizations in the Philippines, specially those linked to NACFAR, NATIONAL COALITION FOR AQUATIC REFORM. The central focus of this interchange was to learn about environmental, technological and organizational conditions in that country and to learn the bases for presenting projects to the United Nations and other development agencies. The delegates visited numerous communities and visited organization leaders on more than 8 islands of that island country.

Oscar Vergara, of Arica, Chile, who was then a leader in CONAPACH, commented on that trip:

“Philippine fishworkers have family based organizations, do not participate in the government and do not obtain concrete results. They face serious difficulties. From the technical point of view, their vessels are very traditional with little navigational or catch capacity. The country is very poor in fishing resources. If someone catches 10 kilos, he is considered rich. It’s a night’s work, with 12 sets of nets, to catch 3 kilos. Fishworkers there say that the Japanese have depleted fish populations which, together with severe water contamination, has damaged fishing. The Government supports trolling enterprises. There is an extensive campaign under way to combat contamination, to defend against the cutting of the mangroves and the occupation of the coast by prawn farms. They want 7 kms of coast as an exclusive zone for artisan fishing.

‘I came back concerned because in Chile and Peru we may arrive at the same state if we do not protect our resources- We decided to maintain permanent contact with them so as

to help them in their struggle against contamination. From the technical point of view, we could help them in the ways of managing resources so as to improve their catches and living conditions. Philippine fish workers live as foreigners in their own country, on their own coasts, reduced to seeing resources carried off by other companies.” ■

