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Secretary to Government



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**D.O. letter No. 2233/FS6/2015, dated 10.2.2015**

Dear Ms. Suchitra Durai,

Sub: Talks - Fishermen level talks between India and  
Sri Lanka - Reg.

Ref: Your letter No.153/JS(SM&IOR)/2015, dated 19.1.2015.

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This has reference to your letter cited above.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had written to the Prime Minister of India on 20.9.2013 proposing fishermen level talks between fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. In continuation, the Fishermen level talks were held at Chennai and Colombo on 27.1.2014 and 12.5.2014 respectively.

In this connection, I am to inform you that the Government of Tamil Nadu proposes to hold the next round of fishermen level talks between India and Sri Lanka at Chennai at 9.30 AM on 5.3.2015 in the Conference Hall at the Office of the Commissioner of Fisheries, Teynampet, Chennai-6. The Agenda for the fishermen level talks is given below

- a) To reiterate the traditional fishing rights of Tamil Nadu's fishermen to fish in their traditional fishing waters of Palk Bay irrespective of any artificially drawn boundaries with mutual harmony on either side.
- b) To reiterate the commitment made in the previous discussion to thoroughly abjure from violent attacks on our fishermen on the high seas by the Sri Lankan Navy and to desist from unfriendly acts like abduction, detention, long periods of incarceration of our fishermen in Sri Lankan jails and prevent the seizure, confiscation of their boats / fishing equipment by the Sri Lankan authorities.
- c) To discuss ways and means to speedily and smoothly facilitate the repatriation of Indian fishermen and their boats abducted by the Sri Lankan Navy.

- d) To suggest suitable ways for fishing in the traditional waters of Palk Bay on convenient and agreeable terms for both sides.
- e) To exchange vital information such as distress incidents, environment friendly fishing operations and similar concepts by each side in order to ensure sustainable and viable exploitation of fish and fishery resources in the Palk Bay.
- f) The talks should be without prejudice to, and must not in any way, compromise the stand already taken by us in W.P. (Civil) No.561/2008, filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, regarding India's territorial sovereignty over Katchatheevu.
- g) The resolutions passed in the fishermen level talks will be subject to the clearance of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The delegation of 13 fishermen from Tamil Nadu which had participated in the fishermen level talks held at Chennai and Colombo on 27.1.2014 and 12.5.2014 respectively will be participating in the proposed fishermen level talks to be held at Chennai. I would be requesting the Government of Puducherry to send their fishermen nominees and their officials for the proposed talks. The participants will be treated as State Guest and accommodated in the State Guest House.

The Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, Secretary, AHD&F, Commissioner of Fisheries and Department officials will be participating as observers in the proposed talks.

I request you to obtain necessary clearance from the Government of India for conducting the proposed talks at Chennai on 5.3.2015 between the fishermen of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka at the earliest. I also request you that the list of participants from the Sri Lankan side may be communicated to us after due approval of the Government of India.

*With kind regards,*

Yours sincerely,



To

Ms. Suchitra Durai,  
Joint Secretary (SM & IOR),  
Ministry of External Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.