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News ID-IPR/WCD(OD/452/Dt.10.11.2020

Piloting inclusion of small fish in SNP for children (3 to 6 years), pregnant & nursing women and adolescent girls in Mayurbhanj district

Signing of MoU between WCD & MS Department and World Fish

Bhubaneswar, 10/11/2020

WCD & MS Department, Government of Odisha and WorldFish have signed an MoU in a virtual ceremony chaired by the DC-cum-ACS today for piloting of inclusion of fish and fish based products in Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) for children (3 to 6 years), pregnant & nursing women and adolescent girls in 50 Anganwadi Centres(AWCs) of Mayurbhanj district. It is a 5-year technical collaboration between the Department and World Fish.

Inspired by positive reports of CNNS, NITI Aayog; IFPRI; Jabs, Accountability Initiative on nutrition initiatives of the state resulting in marked improvement in nutrition outcomes and under the 5T strategy the Department is endeavouring to be counted amongst the top states in the country through sustained innovation in nutrition front. On the advise of the Technical Advisory Group, consisting experts from National Institute of Nutrition, CFTRI, ICMR-RMRC etc, it has been decided to include fish in SNP. Based on the outcome of the pilot the initiative will be scaled up.

The objective of the MoU is to scaling up the initiative; training & empowering Mission Shakti Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) involved in nutrition-sensitive fish production systems in Gram Panchayat tanks; fish processing & market linkage; dissemination of the benefits of fish-based nutrition through Social & Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) materials; leveraging nutrition protagonist Tiki Mausi and documenting & sharing learnings with stakeholders. WSHGs in the coastal fishing villages will also be trained for seeking business opportunities in solar dried fish and fish powder following food safety standards of FSSAI.

DC-cum-ACS, Sri Suresh Chandra Mohapatra while congratulating WCD & MS Department and WorldFish for the 5-year technical collaboration expressed that such innovation will go a long way in accelerating nutrition status in the state. He hoped that it will not only make best use of locally available fisheries resource but will also economically empower women in the long run.

Principal Secretary, WCD&MS Department explained that fish is rich in iron, zinc, calcium, Vitamin(A, B, D & E) and Omega-3 fatty acids and in SNP could be a game changer in times to come. Besides benefitting children (3 to 6 years), pregnant & nursing women and adolescent girls it will create business opportunities for Mission Shakti WSHGs.

Commissioner-cum-Director, Mission Shakti Smt. Sujata Karthikeyan dwelled on the participation of WSHGs in production of small fish and preparation of dry fish in convergence with F&ARD Department. It will ensure adequate nutrition and economic opportunities.

Dr Gareth Johnstone, Director General of WorldFish informed that technical experts from WorldFish would support WSHGs in preparation of fish powder using hygienically solar fish driers on a pilot basis over next 6 months. ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Cochin, an India research partner of WorldFish will supply the low cost poly house solar fish driers for this program.

Ramona El Hamzoui, Acting Mission Director, USAID, New Delhi lauded Government of Odisha for deciding to include locally available vast fisheries resource through empowerment of women among vulnerable communities.

Based on the lessons learnt, a techno-economic feasibility report on inclusion of fish in SNP across the state will be proposed by WorldFish for scaling up with increased participation of WSHGs and their linkage with the vast network of AWCs. Director, Social Welfare Dr. Arbind Agarwal and Dr. Arun Podiyar, Programme Manager, World Fish, Odisha signed the MoU.

During the event, Standard Operating Procedure(SOP) for inclusion of dried small fish in SNP and an animation video of nutrition protagonist Tiki Mausi disseminating the benefits of fish based nutrition were released. Director ICDS & Social Welfare delivered the vote of thanks.

The virtual event was also attended by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary Fisheries & ARD Department; Michael Phillips, Director of Fisheries Research; Shakuntala Thilstead, Program Leader, Nutrition & Value Chains; Mohan Chadag, Principal Scientist & India Program Lead; Lauren Pincus & Kendra Byrd Scientists, Nutrition & Value Chain and other Senior Officers of the Department.

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