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Title: Need to set up an independent ministry to deal with fisheries in the country.

SHRIMATI J. HELEN DAVIDSON (KANYAKUMARI): India has vast potential for fisheries from both inland and marine resources. With a total fishermen population of about 20 million and rich marine and inland water resources, fisheries and aquaculture forms an important sector with regard to employment, livelihood and food security. Fish products also form a significant commodity for overseas trade. The fisheries sector in India contributes about 1.5 % of GDP and 4.7% of agricultural GDP amounting to more than Rs.30,000 crores per annum.

Given the magnitude of potential for fisheries, a separate independent Ministry for fisheries would be of greater importance in the following areas:-

- .1 Development of post-harvest infrastructure facilities and domestic marketing networks to augment the channels of marketing of fishery products to reach interior States of India. Fish being the cheapest and safest protein source it will help the poorest of the poor. It will also benefit the fishermen population in value realization.
2. To develop and implement plans those are aimed at augmenting fishery production by optimal utilization of vast resources available in India both in marine fisheries and inland fisheries sector.
3. To develop strategies that can utilize the unutilized waste lands with the potential for farming of fish and shell fish from marine, brackish and fresh water resources. Mapping of potential areas available for such purpose across India and develop them over a fixed time period.

Hence, I request the Government of India to form a separate Ministry of Fisheries so as to serve the 20 million fishermen in the country.