

Fish Worker Organisations

By

Brian O’Riordan

1. Chile.

Of the 54,751 fishermen registered in the Artisanal Fishing register (RPA), around 42,091 belong to some kind of organisation, i.e. 77% of registered fishermen are unionised. This is far higher than the national average for workers, which is around 15%, and it highlights one of the main strengths of the artisanal sector.

Artisanal fishing organisations fall into three main categories, including 505 *Sindicatos* (Unions), 28 Cooperatives, and 119 *Gremial* associations. In parallel commercial societies have been set up as a response to small enterprise promotion and to the other demands of government programmes in the productive sectors. Currently 40% of the caletas are administered by artisanal fishermen’s organisations, and can take advantage of the system of “caleta and maritime concessions”.

In the caletas, these concessions may only be granted to legally constituted fishermen’s organisations, and require that their administrative plans for the port and related caleta infrastructures be officially approved (by the Directorate of Public Works). These plans must be accompanied by details of their planned for improving the ports and supporting artisanal fishing. The maritime concessions include granting user rights on the beaches, the seabed, areas of water and rock, as well as in

rivers and lakes navigable by vessels of more than 100 tonnes. Maritime concessions may be sizeable, and may be granted to both individuals and formally constituted organisations.

Share system fundamental to way fishermen and fishing communities organize. From hook baiters (encarnbadoras) to sea going fishermen.

CONAPACH – National Confederation of Chilean Artisanal Fishermen

Organized at village/caleta level into associations/unions

Grouped at Regional Level into Federations

Grouped at National Level into the “Confederation”

Organizational form is along trade union lines, based on the “mutual societies” in the saltpeter industry. The massacre Santa Mariade Iquique (in 1907 where 3000 striking mine workers and their families were massacred), provided the seeds of organisation.

Today, CONAPACH has around 50,000 members.

It is entirely supported by donations from NGOs.

It works on several issues:

- allocation of access rights;
- literacy, street theatre and fishermen training;
- fish auction and first point of sale;
- agitation, lobbying and communication;

2. Senegal

There are various national level fishworker's organisations in Senegal:

- the Collectif National des Pêcheurs du Sénégal (CNPS – National Collective of Senegalese Artisanal Fishermen), established in 1987, as an independent body to represent the interests of artisanal fishermen, mainly owner-operators.
- the National Fédération of the Fishing GI Es (Independent Economic Groupings – Fenagie Pêche) created in 1990,
- the National Federation of (men) Fishmongers' GI Es (FENAMS), created in 1990,
- the National Union of l'Union of Fishmonger (men and women) GI Es (UNAGIEM),
- the National Federation of Women Fish Processors and Small (women) Fishmongers (FENATRAMS).

Two main kinds of organisations:

- Government stimulated – the GI Es, through which the Government provides credit and other services.
- Interprofessional (fishers, traders etc) organisations of fishworkers, set up to:
 - o run the fish landing sites, as part of the the national policy of decentralisation/devolution;
 - o engage in policy dialogue through local and national fisheries councils.

National level organisations that group beach committees in different areas:

FENEGIE Peche – apex body of the GIEs, established in 1990

The CNPS (national collective of Senegalese artisanal fishermen), autonomous body set up in 1987 to protest about Government policies (motorisation, fisheries agreements etc), now largely defunct. Regional differences cause of much friction, weak leadership, frustrated younger members.

CONIPAS – National Inter-Professional Council of the Senegalese Artisanal Fishing Sector. Set up in 2003, following national level consultations, and in response to the demands of the sector. National level, Government supported, grouping of artisanal fishermen (CNPS and FENEGIE), fish traders, and women fishmongers, and fish processors

3. France

Local, Regional and National Fisheries Committees. In the late 1920s and early 1930s specialist committees were established in a number of resource sectors – herring, cod, tuna, seaweed etc. In the late 1930s these were institutionalised by Government decree, through the establishment of a central national level Fisheries Committee, with the responsibility to coordinate the various activities of the committees, and to promote fisheries products.

Today the structure is of local level Sea Fisheries Committees at each port. As well as being public bodies, these organisations represent the interests of the (mainly owner-operator) fishermen

and fish farmers. They also bring together fish traders and fishermen in the running of the local auctions and fish quays.

In France there are also unions (Syndicats) of boat owners, and fishermen (fishers and officers).