

Organizing Fishing Communities

ESA Fish Workshop, Tanzania, 14 to
17 March 2006

Organization of Fishing Communities

- At various levels: at local, provincial, national and international levels
- Top down or bottom up structures
- Importance of enabling legislation
- Importance of training

Economic functions

- to supply inputs and to market output, to receive subsidies from the State; to organize cheaper credit, to generate savings
- **Principal vehicle:** Co-operatives: often membership-based; credit society, marketing society, etc (mainly benefiting owners and owner-operators)

Social Functions

- to improve education, social security, to cultivate temperance, to provide amenities in fishing settlements (better housing, toilets, etc) and to address other kinds of specific social issues
- **Principal vehicle:** Associations based on community/men/women/religion/caste/tribe /first nations; open membership

Political Functions

- To recognize the rights of fishers and fisheresses, processing workers, small traders, etc, to fight for rights, policy, legislation, and to fight against what they consider to be not in the best interest of the sub-sector.
- **Principal vehicle:** Trade unions often membership-based; could be that of owner-operators and workers, or workers alone either piggy-riding on existing structures or independent

India

- Associations
- Coops
- TUs at the national level and in several States (mainly uses agitation as a strategy)

Some of the Issues...

- **Issues at the national level:** mainly related to conservation and management of fisheries resources, allocation of fisheries resources, and protection of fishery habitats, for ban on bottom trawling, closed areas and closed seasons to protect the interests of traditional fishers and fisheresses; for protection of coastal habitats from pollution; for fisheries legislation for management of fishery resources; and against joint venture with foreign fishing companies in Indian waters

Some issues addressed at the State level

- Fishing rights in marine sanctuaries using selective, passive gear; pricing of OBMs, pricing of fuel; subsidies; fishermen welfare fund; social security for fishing communities; transport facilities for women fish vendors from wholesale to retail market; problems of migrant fishworkers in the processing sector; educational grant, etc.

Some issues at the local level

- Provision of drinking water supply, toilets in market places, for better education facilities, transparent auction systems at fish landing centres, etc.

- Thank you!