

- Women workers in fish processing plants are not well-organized and work under difficult conditions for low wages.
- Women face a lot of violence, both at the societal and domestic level.
- Culturally and socially there is resistance to women taking on non-traditional roles such as that of income-earners for the family, and they tend to face hostility.
- While there are women who are part of fisheries co-operatives in Mexico, they are rarely ‘genuine’. Co-operatives are seen as male bastions and it is, in practice, difficult for women to be members.
- Myths about the ‘bad luck’ women bring to fishing continue to persist and restrict women’s participation in fishing.

At present there is no national organization representing fishworkers in Mexico, which makes it difficult for women fishworkers to raise issues that concern them.

Ecuador

Women are active participants in fisheries in Ecuador. They are also enthusiastic members of the local co-operatives and hold high positions even at the national level. However, it is also true that women face obstacles in other ways. For example, there continues to be resistance from men to their participation in meetings.

4. Proposals

These proposals constitute the guidelines, for action to be implemented by organizations working to support communities and fishworker organizations, and the national or regional representatives.

These guidelines are geared towards achieving the following objectives: of increasing, as much as possible, the role of women in fisheries; working towards a better recognition of these roles; reinforcing the visibility and political power of artisanal fishing communities; and mapping out socially just and responsible strategies for fisheries development.

The proposals were classified under the following categories:

(a) Information and Analysis

- Work towards a detailed and systemized collation of data and analyses of fishing communities, with specific reference to gender relations. The data and analyses should be shared among communities and organizations;
- National co-ordinating committees should be formed to carry out the analyses. Those undertaking the assessment must work out a proposal to conduct this exercise in different regions with the objective of identifying:
 - i the status of women in fishing communities (coastal and riverine);
 - ii their activities, both in the public and private (domestic) sphere;
 - iii the impact of existing pressures on fishing communities, especially with relation to the life of women.

(b) Stimulation and Participation

- Facilitate greater participation of women in fisheries and fishing communities through a combination of action and event (gender related programmes). Provide a forum for women to meet and to explore avenues to ensure their participation. Such events must create openings for women in community organizations;

The sector is not covered by social security and, given that fishing is a high-risk occupation, this is a matter of concern, especially to women who lose their men at sea.

Seek a review of the legislation that defines a fishworker as only one who engages in fish capture activities.

- Organize discussions on the organization of fisheries and on promoting the participation of women;
- Encourage and ensure the participation of women, and give due consideration to the proposals and demands put forth by them, in national and international forums of fishworkers;
- Facilitate the creation of women's departments within organizations that represent various categories of fishworkers (fishworker *colônias*, *sindicatos*, associations, movement's etc.), to enable them to define and articulate their interests and needs.
- Encourage training programmes for communities, especially gender related ones;
- Take a leaf from the Chilean and Brazilian experience where generation of information has significantly aided the fishworker movement;
- Develop a gender focus within the sector;
- Collect and share information on fisheries and policies relating to fisheries.

(d) Sharing Experience

Such action should aim to:

- highlight the contribution of women in fisheries and within the community ;
- facilitate legal recognition of women workers in this sector;
- take measures against the exploitation of women in the workplace;
- ensure that the demands of women are taken into consideration while formulating public policies and employment programmes, charting out educational, training and health programmes, and disbursing credit ;
- contribute towards forging a more equal relationship between women and men in order that both have the means to enrich their personal, professional, familial and cultural spheres. Work towards putting an end to domestic violence.
- Facilitate the establishment of a permanent working group, which allows for a regular exchange of ideas and a means by which communities can learn from each others' experience;
- Make alliances with other sectors so that fisheries comes to be recognized as an important sector;
- Seek to exchange experiences in managing zones reserved for artisanal fisheries. Discuss the role of women in their management.
- Encourage interaction with other sectoral groups, such as farmers, labourers etc, so as to get the benefit of their experience in gender-related issues.
- Promote participation of women of fishing communities at international and national events and conferences;
- Encourage setting up of fora for dialogue and exchange between women along the coast and those in riverine areas.

(c) Education and Training

- Facilitate training programmes that enable fishing communities themselves to carry out surveys and document production in order that they permanently have at their disposal the means to aid and evaluate their work;

(e) Public Policies for Fisheries

- Seek a review of the legislation that defines a fishworker as only one who engages in fish capture activities. This definition does not allow for the range

of activities that complement the industry, and which are carried out through the year (fishing, agriculture, extraction, domestic work, tourism promotion etc);

- Seek better legislation from the point of view of gender;
- Ensure social security, unemployment and insurance benefits for women.
- Arrive at a common understanding and definition of the term ‘artisanal fisheries’, taking into consideration the

differences between and within countries and continents.

- Call for government recognition of women fishworkers, seaweed and shellfish collectors, vendors and traders, makers of fishing equipment, etc. and ensure this recognition impacts on the way public policies are formulated;

(f) Operational Recommendations

Organizations can elect their representatives to form a working group to consolidate the ‘Minimum Gender Programme’.