

Rural communities in a global marketplace—Can fisheries be a part of community sustainability?



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Role of fisheries in sustaining communities



- ★ Millions of people depend on fisheries, and an estimated 90 per cent of the 38 million people recorded as fishers and fish farmers are small-scale.
- ★ An additional more than 100 million people are estimated to be employed in other fisheries-associated occupations.
- ★ Figures are likely to be underestimates

Role of fisheries in sustaining communities



- ★ Small-scale fisheries provide an important source of livelihood, particularly for communities in rural areas, with few other sources of employment
- ★ Small-scale fisheries are drivers of rural economies, as seen in the recent tsunami (multiplier effected not well recognized)
- ★ Fisheries form the culture and identity of communities

International legal instruments and communities



- ★ **UNCLOS**: Asks States to take into account relevant environmental and economic factors, including the economic needs of coastal fishing communities and the special requirements of developing States, while taking measures to conserve and manage the living resources of the exclusive economic zone (Article 61).

International legal instruments and communities



- ★ **Agenda 21** emphasizes that States must take into account traditional knowledge and interests of local communities, small-scale artisanal fisheries and indigenous people in development and management programmes.
- ★ **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)** asks States to protect the rights of fishers and fishworkers, particularly those engaged in subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fisheries, to a secure and just livelihood, as well as preferential access, where appropriate, to traditional fishing grounds and resources in the waters under their national jurisdiction (Article 6.18).

Issues of concern



If fisheries are to continue to sustain communities, certain issues need to be addressed—issues that are undermining

- ★ access to resources**
- ★ returns to labour, or**
- ★ the resource base on which communities depend for their livelihoods**

Issues of concern



- ★ Top-down management measures, taken from an economic efficiency/ production perspective, that disregard community/ social/ cultural aspects.
Example: some types of ITQ systems that lead to divisions and conflicts within communities
- ★ Ineffective enforcement of management measures, such as no-trawling zones, bans on destructive gear etc.
- ★ Industrial fishing boats, including distant water fishing boats, that compete directly with small-scale fishers over resources, grounds or markets

Issues of concern



- ★ Gender-blind policy and management initiatives, that disregard women's roles in the fisheries and in fishing communities, with major economic and social impacts for communities
- ★ Difficulties faced by small-scale fishers, traders and processors from fishing communities in accessing local, regional and global markets (certification, quality standards...)
- ★ Increasing competition over coastal resources and spaces (from oil industry, tourism, port development...), that cause communities to lose access to fishing grounds/ lands

Issues of concern



- ★ Conservation initiatives conceptualized and implemented in non-participatory ways, that displace and otherwise impact on fishing communities
- ★ Increasing pollution of coastal areas, affecting quality of life of communities and fisheries resources
- ★ Certain types of commercial aquaculture that negatively affect fishing communities (affecting resources, pushing down prices)

What needs to be done



- ★ Promote the small-scale model of fisheries development and progressively redistribute fishing space and resources to the small-scale fisheries subsector (owner operators and workers from fishing communities)
- ★ Put in place management systems and approaches that recognize the rights of small-scale fishing communities to resources and to manage them, and to be part of decision making processes

What needs to be done



- ★ Promote community-based systems of management and discourage measures such as ITQs, that have the potential of leading to inequity and greater conflict of interests within communities
- ★ Link rights to resources to responsibility for their sustainable management, and towards this, invest in capacity building of fishing communities and their organizations.

What needs to be done



- ★ Support and strengthen women's roles in the fisheries and in decision making processes
- ★ Put in place effective enforcement systems—lack of enforcement creates *de facto* open access conditions, a race for fish won by those with greater access to capital and technology

What needs to be done



- ★ Consider allocating rights to harvest commercially important spp (eg shrimp, lobster) in territorial waters exclusively to small-scale fishers using selective gear.
- ★ Consider MPAs only if proposed through participatory processes, and after ensuring that access to resources and livelihoods of the small-scale sector using selective gear are not compromised

What needs to be done



- ★ Ensure that coastal aquaculture develops in a manner complementary to fisheries, and does not negatively affect the resource base, the returns to those in capture fisheries, or the access of small-scale fishing communities to resources
- ★ Ensure that the livelihoods of those dependent on small-scale fisheries are not compromised by other users of coastal resources
- ★ Take effective steps to control pollution of coastal areas (promote the ecosystem approach to mgmt)

Role of communities



- ★ Communities need to strengthen their own organizations, to protect their interests.
- ★ Appropriate models of organization need to be explored, taking account of limitations of current models. Need for broad-based community organizations, of both men and women.
- ★ The growing differentiation within communities is a challenge that will need to be addressed, if the role of fisheries in sustaining community livelihoods and culture has to be maintained.

THANK YOU