

SAMUDRA

for PONDY

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

TODAY

- Introduction to Workshop
- Workshop Objectives and Milestones
- SSF Guidelines: Opportunities and Constraints
- Group Discussions on Transformative Agenda
- Plenary Discussion

Marginalia

Le Pondy (www.lepondy.com/contact.html), the hotel you're staying in, is a 165-km, 3-hour drive from Chennai airport, en route to Cuddalore. It has a swimming pool (open from 7 am to 8 pm), a health club and spa and an ayurvedic centre. Uninterrupted Wi Fi Internet access will be available in the Conference Hall and in individual rooms.

Le Pondy has a gate to the beach which remains open till 7 pm but swimming in the sea is not allowed as it's unsafe—even for strong swimmers. The continental shelf off this coast drops very abruptly and the area is known for strong

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Vanakkam ! Bon Jour !

Both mean “Welcome !”—the first in Tamil, the language spoken in the south Indian State of Tamil Nadu, which lies adjacent to the Union Territory of Puducherry (the new name for Pondicherry), and the second, of course, in French which was once the lingua franca of this erstwhile colony of France.

Welcome, then, to Pondy ! And welcome to the ICSF workshop *Towards Socially Just and Sustainable Fisheries which focuses on the implementation of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation* (“SSF Guidelines”).

FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI)—the world's inter-governmental forum for fisheries and aquaculture issues—endorsed the SSF Guidelines at its 31st Session in Rome in June 2014. That endorsement is a singular recognition of the work done around the world by several individuals

and groups, particularly civil society organizations (CSOs), to valorize small-scale fisheries and fishing communities since the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The SSF Guidelines were negotiated in a Technical Consultation at the FAO Headquarters in Rome in May 2013 and in a resumed session in February 2014. Attending those meetings were not only governments, but also inter-governmental and international non-governmental organizations, and 59 representatives of CSOs.

The genesis of the SSF Guidelines can be traced to the ICSF Workshop, *Asserting Rights, Defining Responsibilities*, held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in May 2007. It was then observed that “responsible fisheries can be assured only if the human rights of fishing communities, including the right to decent work and labour standards and human development, are secure”.

The FAO Bangkok Conference on Small-scale Fisheries in October 2008 (the “4SSF Conference”), which followed the Siem Reap Workshop, gave a major thrust to linking responsible fisheries with the social development of fishing communities—perhaps for the first time in the history of FAO.

On the heels of the Bangkok 4SSF Conference, FAO Members expressed the need for an international instrument on small-scale fisheries at the 28th Session of COFI in March 2009. However, COFI Members could not agree on what form such an instrument should take.

A consensus was reached at the 29th Session of COFI in January-February

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undertows. Besides, there are no lifeguards, so do be extra cautious.

During your stay, ICSF will take care of your food, board and lodging for the duration of the Workshop. All other expenses, including telephone, laundry and additional refreshment bills, will be the personal responsibility of the participant.

Hang on to all original bills/receipts for expenses/ticket stubs to submit along with your claim forms.



Pondy

Puducherry or Pondicherry, if you wish, with its leafy French-style avenues and even the smell of croissants to remind you of the quaint colonial ambience of yore, is among south India's top travel destinations. It offers a heady combination of cosmopolitanism, French colonial heritage, vibrant Tamil culture, a spiritual aura—and clean beaches.

Max July temperature: between 36-38 degree Celsius; min: between 26 -28 degree Celsius.

English is widely spoken, and Tamil is the official local language. You can even get by with a smattering of French!

For more, check out www.lonelyplanet.com/india/tamil-nadu/puducherry-pondicherry

Literally millions of people eke out a living from the sea, risking life and limb in frail craft to reap a meagre harvest. Countries can now allocate their fish resources in support of these small-scale fisheries and encourage fishermen and their families to stay in the rural areas.

—Dr. Edouard Saouma,
ex-Director-General, FAO

Guest Column

Waiting for Chandrika

John Kurien

I still recall vividly the day Chandrika Sharma came to see me in 1993 to inquire if the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) at Trivandrum in Kerala, India, was an appropriate place for her to do an M.Phil. degree. She had completed her studies in social work, had worked as an activist in north India and so was unsure if a research and academic institution would be the right place for her. Two years later, she completed her M.Phil. For me, it was a special honour to be the guide to such a diligent, sincere and committed student who I had no doubts would turn out to be a special asset for ICSF. She joined up with Sebastian Mathew in ICSF in 1995. The rest is history.

Over the last two decades, we maintained our special relationship. Whenever she phoned me, the conversation always started like this: "John, is this a good time to talk?" What followed would be long discussions on matters of ICSF work, organization and other more light-hearted matters. Over the years, I came to have great regard for Chandrika's ability to 'carry everybody together without discrimination or favour'. She cared for the fishers just as much as she listened to the views of the policymakers and was perfectly at ease with both. She had a charming way of articulating her differences of opinion without denying the right of others to express their views. Her academic bent of mind never trumped her belief in the need to support the live struggles of fishworkers around the world. Her pet theme was the need for viewing the fishing communities' rights to land and sea as mutually inseparable.

Chandrika's greatest contribution to the cause of the small-scale fishing communities of the world was the way she so diligently and unobtrusively ensured that the SSF Guidelines were discussed and debated globally before they came up for discussion at COFI. I doubt if any other FAO/UN document has been so meticulously scrutinized in such a truly participatory manner by fishing communities and all the other interested parties and supporters. That the SSF Guidelines have been dedicated to Chandrika is a lasting tribute to the passion and steadfast conviction of purpose with which she took on any assignment.

Chandrika was a great multi-tasker. She had a mischievous sense of humour and a disarmingly hearty laugh. Chandrika had a huge store of energy for hard work. But after it all was over, there would always be enthusiasm left in great measure to dance off her worries and tensions.

Most of us who know Chandrika find it hard to accept that she could have suddenly left our presence to some unknown destination. On my cell phone I still carry an SMS message from her dated a few days before she left. It reads: "Will call later. Line not clear".

Dear Chandrika, I am still waiting! We are all waiting!

Vanakkam !

2011, which approved the development of a new international instrument on small-scale fisheries in the form of voluntary international guidelines.

Later, the 30th Session of COFI in July 2011 expressed support for convening an inter-governmental technical consultation in May 2013.

As a follow-up to that decision, CSOs, for the first time in the history of their association with any FAO negotiation process related to fisheries instruments, organized over 20 national and two regional meetings between September 2011 and November 2012 in Africa, Asia and Central America. Based on the summary of the recommendations at these meetings, a synthesis document was submitted to FAO in December 2012. That document was a key instrument in providing substantive feedback to the FAO Zero Draft on SSF Guidelines.

The significance of the SSF Guidelines, particularly to CSOs, was highlighted in a letter of 15 April 2014 to Mr. Graziano da Silva, Director-General, FAO, sent on behalf of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

It noted: “The importance of the FAO SSF Guidelines is that they are comprehensive and deal, in one instrument, with all significant aspects of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities within a human-rights perspective.

Their widespread implementation would support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of responsible small-scale fisheries and fishing communities in

the context of eradicating hunger and poverty.”

The letter went on to say how these guidelines could address the social, economic and cultural needs of small-scale fishing communities and help them engage in meaningful dialogue with the State as well as competing sectors to secure their access to living and livelihood space.

CSOs have played an unprecedented role in the genesis, development and adoption of the SSF Guidelines, especially in order to strengthen and restore the balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

We hope this Pondicherry Workshop will go a long way in ensuring the implementation of the principles and recommendations of the SSF Guidelines, especially by promoting a human-rights-based approach. 

RightSpeak

“The importance of the FAO SSF Guidelines is that they are comprehensive and deal, in one instrument, with all significant aspects of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities within a human-rights perspective. Their widespread implementation would support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of responsible small-scale fisheries and fishing communities in the context of eradicating hunger and poverty.”

—from the letter of WFFP, WFF, IPC and ICSF to the FAO Director-General



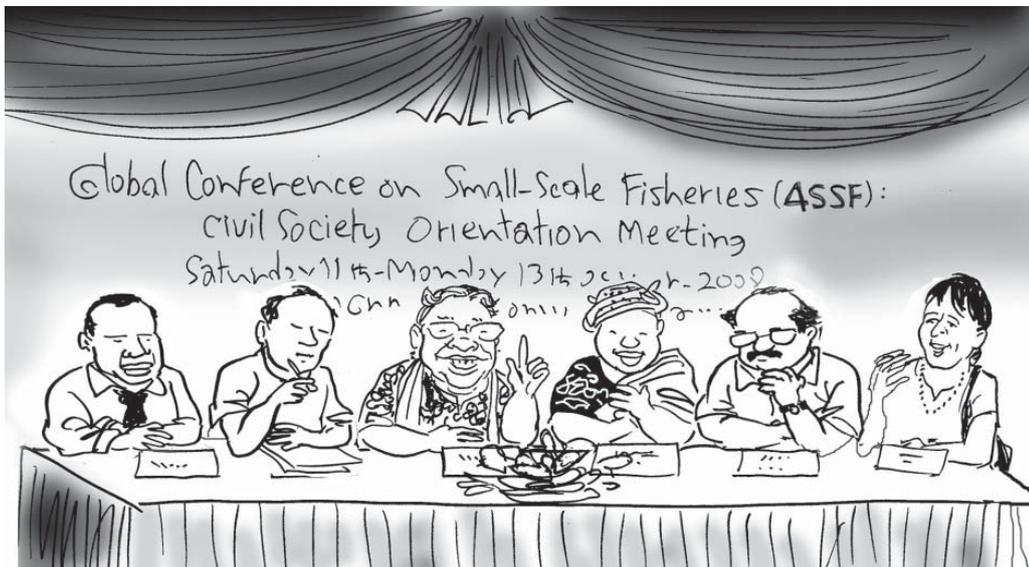
“... responsible fisheries can be assured only if human rights of fishing communities, including the right to decent work and labour standards and human development, are secure.”

— Vivienne Solis

Who’s attending

Among the organizations and groups represented at the Workshop are

- KNTI – Indonesia
- CAOPA – West Africa
- CPP – Brazil
- CONAPACH – Chile
- NFF – India
- MMKS – India
- Dakshin Foundation – India
- SNEHA – India
- PONDYCAN – India
- DMF – India
- Union of Frysian Inland Fishers – Netherlands
- WFFP
- WFF
- IPC



Workshop Overview

SSF Guidelines

Around two-thirds of the world's total fish production destined for direct human consumption comes from the small-scale and artisanal fisheries sector, which accommodates over 90 per cent of those who make their living from fisheries. For every ten fishers and fishworkers, more than nine originate from small-scale fisheries. Women comprise at least half the workforce in small-scale fisheries, contributing vitally to sustaining fisheries-based livelihoods.

Despite the important contributions made by small-scale fisheries to poverty eradication and food security, small-scale fishers and fishworkers continue to be marginalized at different levels. It is to reverse this tendency that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation (SSF Guidelines). These Guidelines hope to reverse this marginalization and to valorise the contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and nutrition, to poverty eradication and equitable development and sustainable utilization of fisheries resources.

Why this Workshop?

The SSF Guidelines have been developed through a consultative and participatory process that dates to 2010, and directly involves representatives of governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) who have been active both in proposals and in formulation.

Drawing on its position as an international NGO in status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC),

the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the FAO, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) has been in the forefront of providing leadership to the CSO community in all major consultations leading to the development of these Guidelines. In this, it has been ably supported by its partners, the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

Most of those invited to this Workshop have, in one way or another, contributed to the process leading to the adoption of the Guidelines. They have been particularly helpful in obtaining feedback from active fishworker groups, including women's groups and indigenous peoples' groups. By gathering at Pondicherry, they hope to carry forward the process by discussing how to now implement the SSF Guidelines, as agreed by FAO Member States.

What the Workshop hopes to achieve

- Allow participants to exchange views and experiences on how the SSF Guidelines can benefit small-scale fishing communities worldwide, and help them identify constraints and opportunities for their adoption.
- Identify and prioritise elements of the SSF Guidelines for implementation, and propose relevant strategies and approaches to implementation for effectiveness at different levels, keeping in mind the diversity of small-scale fisheries.
- Discuss how different organizations, at national, regional and

international levels, can discharge their roles and responsibilities towards implementation of the Guidelines.

- Develop a monitoring plan for the implementation initiatives of the Guidelines to examine if they adopt a human-rights-based and gender-responsive approach.
- Allow participants to interact with members of traditional fishing communities through field trips to Nagapattinam and Pondicherry.

Who are participating?

Around 70 participants from 20 countries representing Africa, Asia, the Americas (North, Central and South), the Caribbean and Europe are participating in the Workshop. They include ICSF Members and representatives of CSOs, governments, FAO and academia who have been engaging with the development of the SSF Guidelines or are interested in the implementation process.

What can be expected of the Workshop

Hopefully, the Workshop will provide clarity on various aspects of the SSF Guidelines, and help participants develop a common perspective that can be the basis of a shared plan of action that small-scale fishery communities can use for the implementation of the Guidelines. It will also unearth the different challenges that are likely to surface during implementation. The Workshop is also expected to establish a monitoring mechanism for all significant implementation initiatives of the Guidelines from a CSO perspective to ensure they comply with a human-rights-based and gender-transformative approach to fisheries. 

Gender and the SSF Guidelines

The Guidelines recognize the importance of adhering to human-rights standards and gender equality as fundamental to development. The Guidelines have several references that address women in small-scale fisheries and communities, and the promotion of equal rights and opportunities in small-scale fisheries development. They do so

- by referring to all actors and all activities in small-scale fisheries—pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest, both commercial and subsistence;
- by emphasizing the community and intersectoral dimensions of small-scale fisheries and the interdependency of activities in the community; and
- by talking of “both men and women” or “including women”, with specific attention on marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The Guidelines also have a special chapter on Gender Equality. The text of this chapter has references to strategies such as gender mainstreaming and establishing policies and legislation to challenge discrimination against women and realize gender equality in small-scale fisheries development. From a gender perspective, the following parts of the text are particularly important:

- “States should endeavour to secure women’s equal participation in decisionmaking for policies directed towards small-scale fisheries.”
- “States should adopt specific measures to address discrimination against women, while creating spaces for civil society organizations, in particular for women fishworkers and their organizations, to participate in the monitoring of their implementation.”

The chapter also includes references for women’s equal access to extension services and technical access, including legal support and the development of “better technologies of importance appropriate to women in small-scale fisheries.”

Despite this focus, the references to women are generally found rather scattered in the text and are not very explicit. While the specific chapter on Gender Equality can be seen as a major strength, it can also be seen as a weakness. From a gender perspective, the Guidelines would have been much stronger if gender had been integrated as a cross-cutting issue. Not only would this have led to more systematic and explicit references to key issues of importance to women in small-scale fisheries and communities, but it would also explain where and how these differ from those pertaining to men. 



Keeping Quiet

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,
let’s not speak in any language;
let’s stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be
confused
with total inactivity.
Life is what it is about;
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with
death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Now I’ll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

— Pablo Neruda

(from *Extranagaria*,
translated by Alastair Reid)

Field Trips

Pondicherry: Coastal Commons and Fish Marketing

The Union Territory of Puducherry comprises four regions, namely, Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam, with a total coastline of 45 km, and 1,000 sq km of continental shelf that is rich in marine fisheries potential. It has a fisher population of 95,467, of which 29,383 are actively engaged in fishing. The fisher population is spread over 27 marine fishing villages and 23 inland fishing village/hamlets.

Though Puducherry is well-known for its beaches, in recent decades, human-induced erosion of the coast has increasingly become a problem due to poorly planned and executed development projects along the coast. The erosion has badly affected fishing communities who have used the beach for various activities like drying fish and repairing nets, and also as a space for community activities and berthing boats.

The field trip to Puducherry will allow participants to interact with members of PondyCAN (Pondicherry—Citizens' Action Network) who have been working since 2007 on the impact of development projects on the east coast of India, especially in Tamil Nadu and, more specifically, Puducherry. Participants will get a chance to see the impact of one such development project—a harbour built in the 1980s which has deprived Puducherry town of its beach. Participants will also visit recently renovated fish markets.

Nagapattinam: Traditional Governance Systems

Nagapattinam has a coastline of 187.9 km across the Coromandel coast and Palk Bay. The district has nearly 20,800 traditional fishermen families, in 57 fishing villages. There are 22,229 active fishermen fishing full-time. Women are involved in marketing fish, repairing nets, curing and processing fish; they also work as daily wage labourers at landing sites. There are nearly 6,300 women involved in marketing of fish, making Nagapattinam the district with the largest number of women involved in marketing in Tamil Nadu. The district has over 900 trawlers, 4,000 motorized fishing vessels, and 1,146 non-motorized fishing craft.

The fishing community in this coastal district belong to the *Pattinavar* caste though they go by several names in different areas. While the community's oral history claims various origins, there is little in terms of historical accounts. The earliest accounts date to about 600 years ago. The fishing villages are typically from the same caste and related through kinship groupings, making for a strong sense of community.

The fishing communities in Nagapattinam, like many others on this coast, have internal governance structures that have been used to resolve fishing and non-fishing conflicts. These structures not only mediate on fishing-related matters, but also on social and religious issues. An important traditional governance structure is the *ooru panchayat*—a village governing body. The basic role of the *ooru panchayat* is to maintain *grama kattupadu*, that is, the peace and order in the village. The *ooru panchayat* also mediates on a variety of issues with other villages, *panchayats* and government bodies.

The field trip to the coastal district of Nagapattinam will let participants interact with members of the *ooru panchayat* and also with the staff of the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS). They will also meet with Social Need Education and Human Awareness (SNEHA), a local organization that has been working with fisherwomen in the area since 1984. Participants will also visit the local fishing harbour.

Helpline

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“

*Stop fixing women,
start fixing the context*

”

—Cornelie Quist on gender

TOMORROW

Field trips to study good practices in fisheries governance and management, disaster risk mitigation and post-harvest fish trade in and around Pondicherry and Nagapattinam.

SAMUDRA for Pondy is a special publication brought out by the SAMUDRA Team for ICSF's workshop *Towards Socially Just and Sustainable Fisheries: On Implementing the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation*, Puducherry, India, 21 to 24 July 2014

www.igssf.icsf.net

SAMUDRA

for
PONDY

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

TODAY

- Opening Session: Fishing Communities and Implementation of the Guidelines: Issues Arising from Local, National and Regional Contexts
- Group discussions and presentations
- Group feedback at plenary

The Road to Pondy

Before participants settled down to tackle the nitty-gritty of the workshop agenda, a morning session was devoted to Chandrika during which several people shared their memories of working and being with her, recalling her humaneness, her convictions and her commitment to principles and values. She will continue to live on in our hearts and minds, through her abiding work and her unalloyed contribution to the development of the SSF Guidelines.

After lunch, participants got down to the serious business of Day 1 of the workshop. After a round of self-introductions, Vivienne Solis Rivera and Juan Carlos Cardenas provided an introduction to the workshop, which was also dedicated to Chandrika.

While introducing the Guidelines, Nalini Nayak and Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk also provided an overview of the objectives of the workshop. This was

followed by a presentation by Brian O’Riordan, titled “The Road to Pondicherry”, which listed the milestones achieved by civil society organizations in getting the Guidelines adopted and how now to go about setting the stage for implementation.

Brian pointed out three distinct phases in the journey of the Guidelines: the Bangkok Process, leading to the 4SSF Conference in 2008; the Consultation Process between 2009 and 2012 that helped develop the Guidelines, and the Guidelines process itself, leading to their adoption at COFI 31 in June 2014.

In her presentation on developing a transformative agenda to tackle the opportunities and constraints of the Guidelines in addressing social inequality, Cornelia Quist provided a gender analysis of the issues. Nowhere in the document, not even in the chapter on Gender Equality, she pointed out, are gender

issues in small-scale fisheries spelled out nor how they affect the unequal social (power) relations between men and women that hamper the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries and the well-being of communities.

Day 1 ended with Group Discussions where participants broke up into four groups to brainstorm on how the Guidelines can be implemented to realize the twin goals of human rights and social justice.



Marginalia

Among the milestones on achieving the Guidelines are the Siem Reap workshop in Cambodia in May 2007, which brought together 51 participants from 10 South and Southeast Asian countries; the ESA Workshop in Zanzibar in June 2008 which gathered 45 participants from seven countries from East and South Africa (ESA); the Punta de Tralca in Chile in August 2008 where 80 participants from a dozen countries met; and the WFP Consultation which produced a Position Statement that set out the organization’s position on the issues under discussion at the 4SSF Conference, namely, Access, Post-Harvest, and

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Rights, to which was added Food Sovereignty.

The CSO Platform was established in August 2011 by WFF, WFFP, ICSF and IPC to engage in the Consultation Process. It represents organizations of small-scale fisherworkers and supporters, mainly from the Global South, and comprise fishing community leaders, activists, supporters, NGO representatives and researchers.



CSO Consultations

Between 2011 and 2012: Central America (Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras); South America (Brazil); Africa (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa); South Asia (Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar); and Southeast Asia (Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia).



COFI 31 adopts Guidelines

116 Members (out of a total of 143) approved the adoption of the first international instrument dedicated to small-scale fisheries. COFI honoured Chandrika Sharma for her invaluable contribution to small-scale fisheries and dedicated the Guidelines to her. COFI highlighted the critical role of small scale fisheries in contributing to livelihoods and to food and nutritional security in many countries.



Guest Column

A Deeply Caring Soul

Rolf Willmann

Deeply caring for people”—that is how I would choose to sum up Chandrika’s essential character. In her life, she embodied the principles of the SSF Guidelines that she helped shape and which the international community has so rightly dedicated to her. Human dignity and rights, respect of cultures, non-discrimination, gender equality and equity, justice and fair treatment of all peoples, consultation and participation—these are the principles that spring to mind when one thinks of Chandrika’s work and personal interactions. Her passion to bring about a more humane world was inspirational and energizing to many, including myself; it helped me continue with my assignments in FAO even as I faced the bureaucratic hurdles of organizing meetings, mobilizing funds, getting projects approved—and even participating in ICSF workshops.

In her plenary presentation to the Bangkok Global Conference on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in 2008, Chandrika stated that adopting a human-rights approach for improving the life and livelihoods of fishing communities—and indeed all marginalized groups—was not really a matter of choice but an obligation. In a series of presentations and articles, some of which she co-authored with Jackie Sunde, an ICSF Member, Chandrika firmly established the rationale for, and the ingredients of, a human-rights approach in fisheries, on which others, including myself, have drawn upon for presentations and publications. The groundwork for first introducing this approach in fisheries and getting it widely accepted in the international community was laid by participants from civil society organizations (CSOs) and academia, and some State actors, in various meetings organized by both CSOs (ICSF, in particular) and FAO during the last decade or so. That brought about a paradigm shift in the international discourse on rights in fisheries which, until the mid-2000s, narrowly focused on fishing rights—primarily individualized rights.

When FAO’s Committee on Fisheries (COFI) decided in 2011 to develop an international instrument on small-scale fisheries, Chandrika strongly argued that its development should be combined with elements of its implementation, considering that it would take several years for it to be adopted by COFI. This implied an engagement in a wide-ranging process of consultation. Within the normative work of FAO, that set a new record—over 4,000 primary stakeholders were consulted, which is a singular achievement that could not have happened without the hard work of many in the CSO community, not least, Chandrika herself. However, despite these small steps of progress, two major challenges remain in the implementation of the SSF Guidelines, namely, awareness raising and empowerment of SSF stakeholders. In hoping for success, we ought to

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A Deeply Caring Soul

remain inspired and guided by Chandrika's qualities of leadership, perseverance, strategic thinking, practical action and realistic optimism in the face of seemingly daunting challenges.

Working with Chandrika has always been an immensely encouraging and pleasant experience. Catching up with her, Sebastian, Jackie, John, Brian and others after a long and tiresome week of meetings—over the camaraderie provided by the latest vintage of my home-made wine—was invariably great fun, good enough to even get over the disappointment of COFI's dilly-dallying with the development of an international instrument for small-scale fisheries.

Needless to say, I – and all of us—sorely miss Chandrika.

The Siem Reap Statement

We, 51 participants representing small-scale and artisanal fishing communities, fishworker organizations, non-governmental organizations, researchers and activists from ten South and Southeast Asian countries, having gathered at the workshop on Asserting Rights, Defining Responsibilities: Perspectives from Small-scale Fishing Communities on Coastal and Fisheries Management in Asia, from 3 to 5 May 2007 at Siem Reap, Cambodia,

Representing a diversity of geographical, social, linguistic, cultural and economic backgrounds, but yet being bonded by a commonality of interests and concerns,

Being aware of our duty towards present and future generations, and our accountability,

And believing that natural resources of bays, seas, rivers and inland water bodies are the common heritage of all and that they should not be privatized for the benefit of the few,

Further believing that these resources should be equitably and responsibly shared for sustaining life and livelihood and towards the greater benefit of all small-scale and artisanal fishing communities,

And realizing that responsible fisheries can be assured only if human rights of fishing communities, including the right to decent work and labour standards, and human development, are secure,

Stress that just, participatory, self-reliant and sustainable development of coastal and inland fisheries is of vital importance to us.

In view of the above, we draw attention to the following issues:

Fisheries Conservation and Management

The protection of the inland, marine and coastal environments and the sustainable management of fisheries resources, are paramount concerns for small-scale and artisanal fishworkers and fishing communities in Asia. Many communities in the region have been implementing measures to restore, rebuild and protect coastal and wetland ecosystems, drawing on traditional ecological knowledge systems and deep cultural and religious values, reiterating the right of traditional and community-

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I Reel a Little Revolution Off

I reel a little revolution
off

I reel a lovely little
revolution off

I am no longer of land

I am water again

I carry foaming
chalices on my head

I carry shooting
shadows in my head

A mermaid rests on
my back

On my back rests the
wind

The wind and the
mermaid sing

The foaming chalices
ripple

The shooting shadows
fall

I reel a lovely little
rustling revolution off
And ripple I fall in I
sing.

—Lucebert

(poet-painter from
Amsterdam,
Netherlands, 1924.

Translated
by James S Holmes)

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based organizations to conserve and co-manage coastal and inland fishery resources, and to benefit from them.

Fisheries conservation and management measures exist that are appropriate to the multi-gear, multi-species fisheries of the region. There is thus no need for the blind adaptation of fisheries management models from the temperate marine ecosystems, which stress individual rights and do not fit the collective and cultural ethos of Asian countries.

Preferential Access of Small-scale and Artisanal Fishers

Guaranteeing preferential access rights of traditional inland fishing communities to water bodies is an important requirement for protecting their life and livelihood.

It is important to create an enabling environment for small-scale and artisanal fishers to access fishery resources within waters under national jurisdiction. Such a policy of preferential access would be consistent with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Fishery resources beyond territorial waters provide an opportunity for expansion and diversification of small-scale and artisanal fisheries. Fishing vessels that are larger in size should be considered for waters under national jurisdiction only after progressively exhausting the possibility of employing smaller fishing units, in conjunction with the use of selective fishing gear and practices.

Trans-border Movement of Small-scale and Artisanal Fishers

Unauthorized trans-border movement of small-scale fishing vessels and the subsequent

detention of fishers is an issue of concern for several Asian countries. The human rights of fishworkers, and the speedy release and repatriation of arrested fishers on compassionate grounds, should be guaranteed. States, particularly archipelagic States, should recognize the traditional fishing rights of fishers from immediately adjacent neighbouring States in certain areas falling within their national waters and should set up appropriate bilateral arrangements for recognizing these rights.

Women in Fisheries

Women play important, though largely invisible, roles in fisheries and in sustaining fishing communities. Coastal and fisheries management policies must protect and ensure women's rights to fishery resources, to their legitimate spaces in the fisheries sector, to coastal lands inhabited and used by them, and to decision-making processes affecting their lives and livelihoods. It is important that States extend support to women's work in fisheries, including through provision of credit and appropriate infrastructure for fish processing and marketing. Gathering gender-disaggregated data on employment in fisheries is essential for policy formulation.

Asserting Rights, Defining Responsibilities

While the above assertions pertain to our perceptions of rights, we are fully mindful of the responsibilities, obligations and duties that we collectively have towards nurturing the fishery resources and related habitats. These responsibilities, obligations and duties are necessarily oriented toward our collaborative relationship with our communities, the nation State and the international community.

—Excerpts from *The Siem Reap Statement*, 5 May 2007.

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“ *Small-scale fishing people need all the friends they can muster to work collectively on all fronts in the long march to securing their rights.* ”

—from *SAMUDRA Report*
No. 51, November 2008

TOMORROW

- Groups Reporting in Plenary, Panel Discussion: Role of CSOs
- Final discussion in plenary: Summary of Plan of Action/ Implementation Agenda and Closure

SAMUDRA for Pondy is a special publication brought out by the SAMUDRA Team for ICSF's workshop *Towards Socially Just and Sustainable Fisheries: On Implementing the EAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation*, Puducherry, India, 21 to 24 July 2014

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SAMUDRA

for PONDY

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS

TODAY

- Group Discussions
- Reporting in Plenary
- Panel Discussion :
Role of CSOs
- Final Plenary
and Summary of
Plan of Action/
Implementation
Agenda
- Closure

Marginalia

Field Notes

Katia Frangoudes reports on the field trip to Pondicherry:

A group of 22 people left the hotel at 5.45 a.m. to visit the Pondy commercial harbour. Midway, Filio of PondyCAN (Pondicherry Citizens' Action Network) caught up with us on his motorbike to guide us. The coast was already alive with activity with people practising yoga and boats setting off for fishing trips.

From Filio's account, we realized the extent of the different disastrous impacts on the area: environmental, social and economic. A few years ago, the Indian

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Nandri ! Au revoir!

Thanks ! Goodbye !
And hope to see you again soon !

Now that the ICSF Pondy Workshop is drawing to a close, feelings remain mixed as participants mull over the four days that they spent in this little south Indian town, cloistered in meetings and endless discussions, bolstered by field trips to coastal villages and fishing communities. Overall, a sense of accomplishment prevails as participants—around 70 from 20 countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe—realize that they have made significant progress in striving for socially just and sustainable fisheries through the FAO instrument of Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty.

Yet, there is also the strong feeling that much more remains to be done, and perhaps Pondicherry marks a significant signpost in the bumpy road that now lies ahead. The implementation of the

Guidelines, in the coming years, will be the litmus test for CSOs, governments, FAO and SSF supporters as they craft strategies and tools to implement the Guidelines' objectives and recommendations. They will also have to analyze and disseminate understanding of the various and multifaceted challenges that could prove to be roadblocks on the journey ahead.

The challenge will be to now devise mechanisms for South-South and North-South co-operation, develop institutional capacities, share knowledge and exchange experiences that will assist in developing small-scale fisheries policies. Also, in monitoring the implementation of the Guidelines, parties will have to be especially careful to employ gender-responsive and human-rights-based approaches.

Thus, as we leave Pondicherry, filled with memories and resolutions, we must remember to re-dedicate ourselves to the formidable tasks that lie

ahead. We have come far on the road to Pondicherry—but the road doesn't end here. We owe it to the small-scale fishing communities of the world (marine, inland and indigenous) and to SSF in general to renew our commitment to time-bound targets for the implementation of the SSF Guidelines through a shared common cross-sectoral plan of action that is not just inspired but is practical and accomplishable, and will be backed by a watertight monitoring mechanism. Concomitantly, we also need to develop new legislation through effective consultation with, and participation of, small-scale fishing communities.

This is not just farewell, nor is it the last hurrah.

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government funded the building of heavy infrastructure like airports and harbours to promote a modern and competitive industrial sector. The Pondicherry government decided to build a harbour to attract commercial boats and create new employment opportunities for the local population. But not a single boat has reached the harbour which never became functional. The harbour is seen as the main cause of coastal erosion and the destruction of the once well-known Pondicherry beach, which, in turn, has robbed 100,000 fishers of a livelihood. In the absence of beach-based and attendant fisheries activities, families in the fishing community are deprived of incomes.

We then left the harbour to see for ourselves how erosion has affected a local fishing community in another part of the town. We noticed that despite the creation of artificial beaches, there was no easy access to the sea. The limited space available is not enough for fishing activities. Fishers now have to access the commercial harbour via the river.

After a brief visit to a fish market, we gathered at a hotel to listen to presentations about the work of PondyCAN and to share ideas about mapping of coastal communities, geographic information system (GIS), coastal erosion, and educational programmes on the environment, designed for children and young students. After lunch, we split into two groups, one headed back to the hotel and the other choosing to remain to explore Pondy city.

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Guest Column

Chandrika and the Spirit of *Ubuntu*

Jackie Sunde

U*ubuntu* is an ancient African term, particularly well-known in South Africa, which, although not easily translated into English, refers to one overriding principle—"We are who we are because of who we all are". The word asserts the belief that we become people through other people and our identity as individuals is indivisible from that of the collective. "*Ubuntu ngumuntu ngabuntu*" means "a human being is a human being because of other human beings". An age-old African philosophical ethic, uBuntu was made famous by Nelson Mandela when he said, "Freedom is indivisible. The chains on any one of my people are the chains on all of them, the chains on my people are the chains on me".

Mandela went on to add: "I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity".

Whenever I think of this indivisibility of human rights, I am reminded of Chandrika who constantly urged the world's fishers to not only unite and fight for their basic rights, but also for their human rights.

That takes me back to 2002 when the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in South Africa. Over 150 fishers from around the world came together at a special Fishers' Forum that was held parallel to the WSSD to highlight their demands for sustainable development under the banner "Our Oceans, Our Land and Our Forests". Chandrika attended the Fisher's Forum on behalf of ICSF. That was when I and some other South African fishers met her for the first time. Chandrika urged the South African fishers to come together, organize themselves and join the international fishworker movement that was fighting for fishers' rights. Importantly, she highlighted the links between fishers' social rights and their fishing rights. She introduced ICSF to South Africa, and expressed ICSF's support for the fishers' struggle in South Africa.

Over the 12 years of my growing relationship with Chandrika and ICSF, I have felt especially privileged to learn and understand what human rights and collective struggle mean. Chandrika captured the essential spirit of uBuntu by highlighting the links between fishers' rights to go to sea and their right to feed their children, to have decent conditions of work and to be treated with dignity. She also captured the substance of uBuntu in her appeal to fishers to be organized and work collectively towards realizing their rights.

Ubuntu is not just a principle or a value that indicates how people's lives are inseparable; it also conveys the message that we only become human through

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Chandrika

our interactions with others. An individual gains her identity through her interactions with others. It is this continuous interaction with others that constitutes a community and defines our humanness. Our humanness is shaped in our interactions with one another.

In her person, Chandrika embodied this collective understanding of humanity. She was an extraordinary individual, in her own right, but her individuality shone in community. It was in her work towards community that she expressed her humanity.

It is appropriate then that this indivisibility of our individual identity from our collective identity has been brought into the spotlight with the adoption of the SSF Guidelines. In a sense, this Pondy Workshop is a tribute to Chandrika who recognized that we can only realize our own freedom from poverty, food insecurity and oppression if we understand the connections between our own individual struggles and identities and those of others.

The title of the Pondy Workshop, “*Towards Socially Just and Sustainable Fisheries: On Implementing the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*”, reminds us of the commitment that Chandrika exhorted us to live up to, both in our individual actions and in our collective work.

It would be a fitting tribute to Chandrika if we can develop a common vision and a collective path for ensuring that the SSF Guidelines are implemented in a way that will confirm our shared humanity, eliminate inequalities and secure social justice for all. 



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Au revoir

We will surely meet again in different forums and varied settings – but the underlying motivation will remain the furthering of the livelihood and human-rights interests of small-scale fishing communities around the world. Pondicherry marks the point of departure for the SSF Guidelines to become the instrument that will help reverse the marginalization of small-scale fishing communities and valorise their contribution to food security and nutrition, to poverty eradication and equitable development, and sustainable utilization of fisheries resources.



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Field Notes

Editrudith Lukanga of WWF-Tanzania reports on the field trip to Nagapattinam:

I was very impressed by the positive attitude of the members of the traditional fishing community governance body (the *ooru panchayat*), members of the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) and Social Need Education and Human Awareness (SNEHA), an organization that works among the local women. Through our interactions with them, we learned a lot about fisheries-related governance systems.

At the fish market in Nagapattinam, I witnessed

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Organizational Profile

Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organizations (CNFO)

As a network of national fisherfolk organizations, CNFO brings together 17 member States of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), namely, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Begun in 2007 with a co-ordinating unit, CNFO, which is currently affiliated with the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), enjoys the support of organizations and fisherfolk leaders from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and draws on technical inputs from a fisheries extension officer from St. Lucia.

CNFO's mission is to improve the quality of life of the fisherfolk of the region and help build a sustainable and profitable fishing industry through networking, representation and capacity building

CNFO hopes to be able to develop primary national and regional fisherfolk organizations with knowledgeable members who will collaborate to sustain fishing industries that are mainly owned and governed by fisherfolk themselves, who can then enjoy a good quality of life achieved through the ecosystem-based management of fisheries resources.

As observers, CNFO has been active within CRFM and has conducted capacity-building initiatives for fisherfolk leaders in areas like business management, leadership development, policy advocacy, and the ecosystem approach to fisheries and climate change.

In carrying out its mission, CNFO also collaborates with many different partners, including, amongst others, the University of the West Indies Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), CRFM, and national fisheries administrations in the Caribbean.

CNFO has participated in the development of the draft Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy and the SSF Guidelines, as well as in the sensitization of fishers on the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). 

FYI

Venezuela: Octopus Facts

According to Professor Walter Gonzalez, Margarita Island, otherwise known as Isla Margarita, produces most of Venezuela's octopus catch. Octopus is a highly prized seafood in Venezuela, preferably fresh, and with an important export market in Spain. In 2012, around 300 tonnes of octopus were caught by 567 licensed fishermen. Although catches fluctuate widely, both annually and seasonally, experts at INSOPESCA say that

this does not indicate that stocks are in danger. Octopus have ways to avoid capture, and due to their early maturation and high juvenile survival, can quickly recover if overfished. Fishermen commercialize two out of seven octopus species found in Venezuela, using baited pots or hand-held jigs. Regulated with a six-month closed season, octopus is a strategic resource of socioeconomic importance, enabling fishermen to diversify their options. 

Fisher Profile

Henry García

Henry García, a 54-year-old fisherman from San Juanillo, Guanacaste, in the North Pacific coast of Costa Rica, is the father of two boys and two girls, and grandfather to Genesis (5), Andreina (3 months) and John (6). Henry, as he is known to everyone in his hometown, faced a lot of restrictions in trying to educate his kids alongside his wife Carmen, who works in the San Juanillo School in Guanacaste.

Henry, who has been fishing for over 20 years, is a founding member of the Small-scale Fishers' Association of San Juanillo. He has been the association's treasurer for 10 years and, since 1998, its vice-president.

Those who know him call him a natural born leader, and a fighter for collective benefits and the larger good, especially for his hometown. Before the fishers' association was established in the late 1980s, as the elected president of the San Juanillo Development Association, Henry led several struggles to deliver potable water for his community, get land titles legalized, and ensure free access to the beach which was being overrun by tourists and visitors.

In recent years, Henry has campaigned against the establishment of a big marina which would have restricted the local fishing community's access to the sea. Henry has also encouraged responsible SSF fishing and promoted local marketing of fish. He has now embarked on a strong effort to recruit young people into the fishers' association in order to promote new leadership and fresh participation. 

Chandrika: A Personal Tribute

K S Narendran

Chandrika was multi-faceted. It is probably true of any human being we care to know deeply and intimately. What was typically her was simplicity and the understated manner with which she carried on.

She was the daughter of a Navy Commander, the sister of a ship's captain and a friend of fisherfolk. It is cruel irony that we search for her in the deep waters.

She adored her daughter, loved her brothers, and dearly cared for her mother. Her father remained her fond favourite. The last few weeks have revealed the respect that she earned from her friends and colleagues around the world, and the impact she had made on their lives through being who she was, and the work that she was committed to.

She was compassionate and generous, without a trace of pettiness. She had an infectious zest for life. She was friendly and fun-loving. She loved being with nature and had a way with plants. She was fanatical about health and fitness, and fastidious about cleanness and hygiene. She was a strong votary of things “organic”, and was deeply suspicious of GM foods. She was dogged and persevering with things she put her mind to.

She accepted that the world was not perfect but believed that collectively we could make it be a better place. She had a refined social conscience. A critical question for her with respect to pursuits was about their social relevance. She favoured the local, the indigenous, the artisanal, and the handcrafted. Her sympathies lay with the disadvantaged, dispossessed, and underprivileged, and she was well aware of the structural inequities that continued to condemn them to privation. She often was distressed by what she saw as greed and the sometimes rapacious ways of corporations. For her, well-being was more valuable than wealth.

Her politics was informed by her values of equity, fairness, diversity and non-violence, and the premise of “live and let live”. Her concerns spanned environmental issues, resource access, gender, human rights and freedoms, and the livelihoods of traditional communities threatened by commerce and State action. She supported activism but was herself rarely a visible activist. She was not given to sloganeering or posturing, and instead preferred goal-directed action. She was happiest when working at the grass-root levels. Over time, she came to value institutions and their mechanisms as a platform to dialogue, negotiate, converge, and usher change. Her work at ICSF in support of fishworkers was significant in this context.

Chandrika was ever ready for an argument and to assert a point of view. She rejected all aggression and violence as she believed they cannot be the basis for building a durable settlement of an issue at any level. Her way was one of

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Field Notes

firsthand the important and significant role women play in post-harvest fish trade. I thought to myself: “What would it be like if there were no engagement of women at that stage?” The work of SNEHA made me appreciate even more the power of women in bringing about positive changes in the lives of people. The SNEHA women are already putting into practice the key principles of the SSF Guidelines. They employ a human-rights approach and thereby enhance capacities of women by enabling them to understand their rights over coastal resources, but, more importantly, by spreading awareness among fisherwomen about their rights as women workers in participating in local governance mechanisms.

The key message I took away from the Nagapattinam field trip was that there is no magic wand that can help us implement the SSF Guidelines. Only capacity building of the various actors at different levels, while simultaneously embracing the key governance and human-rights approach, will help us reach our destination.



In spite of the high level of vulnerability, the small-scale fisheries sector also shows notable dynamism and coping capacity.

—Ichiro Nomura, FAO

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Chandrika: A Personal Tribute

dialogue, staying engaged, finding common ground or finding an acceptable basis for accommodation.

She was not religious. To her, good deeds mattered, not what faith one professed, or the promise of a heaven in the afterlife. Good deeds, from her perspective, were those that aligned with nature, were equitable, sustainable, and offered all the possibility of charting their own destiny.

In many ways, we mirrored each other; in some we complemented, and in a few we were counterpoints. I was more laidback, preferring commentary, while she laid store in action. I preferred being the silent observer, she the engaged participant. I was the consumerist, she the contented one. I was the more reactive and aggressive, and she was the wise one. I put to words what we discussed and agreed, and waited for the “opportune” moment to act, while she followed it through to fruition. While I struggled with the world “as is”, she was the pragmatist who never let her dreams and idealism come in the way of what needed to be done in the present.

We used to joke that we could converse with each other even if one wasn't present, so intimately did we know each other. One now faces the prospect of being left to do just that. 

Organizational Profile

Frysian Inland Fishers Union (Friese Bond van Binnenvissers)

Formed in 1891 by 16 local fisher groups, the Frysian Inland Fishers Union (www.combinatievanberoepsvisser.nl) aims principally to protect the interests of its members through advocacy and negotiation with the national and provincial governments and the water management board. Currently, the union, which is affiliated to the National Association of Netherlands Inland Fishers, has 14 enterprises as members.

Among the other focus areas of the union are: distribution of fishing rights; responsible and participative fishery management; social and cultural valorization; market chain and quality control; entrepreneurial development (capacity building); and lobbying with the Provincial Council and the Provincial Water Management Board.

The union rents fishing rights from the provincial government and distributes them among its members. If a fisher retires leaving behind no offspring as successor, then the union decides how to allocate the newly available fishing rights.

The union has also entered into dialogue with critical consumers like the Slow Food and Youth Food movements. It also engages with recreational fishers on their role in responsible resource management. By interacting with scientists, the union spreads awareness of the value of fishers' traditional knowledge which can be used in developing fishery management models. 

FYI

Rights of Passage

Freerk Visserman from the Netherlands told us that inland fishing is a family business, where the fishing rights are rented by the Union from the Provincial Government. Rights are distributed to Union members and can be inherited by the son or daughter when a fisher retires. If the fisher has no son or daughter, then rights revert to the Union for redistribution. In Chile, CONAPACH are discussing with the government how fishers can benefit from some kind of pension in their sunset years. They propose a scheme through which the State buys the fishing rights when a fisher retires, and then allocates them to a young fisherman. This protects rights from being bought up by speculators, and assures the continuation of small-scale fishing. In France, we are told, the State has decided to reserve a proportion of the fishing quotas for young fishers entering the fishery. Seems only fair from the point of view of intergenerational equity.



FYI

In his report to the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food called for “providing exclusive rights for small-scale fishers in coastal areas or on lakes, as has been done in Cambodia in Tonle Sap lake”.



Historic Day for Small-scale Fisheries

Brian O’Riordan

Workers in the small-scale fisheries sector throughout the value chain around the world have cause to celebrate. At a meeting of the 31st Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 31) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Rome on 10 June, 116 members (of a total of 143) approved the adoption of the first-ever international instrument dedicated to small-scale fisheries.

For over six years, a platform of civil society organizations (CSOs) has been actively engaged with FAO and its member States to develop this instrument. These organizations include the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC) and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

Together, the two World Forums represent around 70 community-based organizations of small-scale fishers from Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Approximately 90 per cent of the 140 mn people engaged in fisheries globally work in the small-scale fisheries sector, predominantly in the Global South. These small-scale fisherpeople catch half of the world’s total catches by volume, and provide over 60 per cent of the fish destined for direct human consumption.

For each fisherperson in the small-scale sector, at least four other people are engaged in related land-based activities, such as preparing equipment, and processing and marketing fish. In total, more than half a billion people are estimated to depend on fisheries for their livelihoods.

As a family-based activity, fishing makes a direct contribution to household food security with women playing a particularly important role, linking land-based and sea-going activities, providing the main link with the market and wider economy,

and putting food on the table in the household. An international instrument could help to ensure that this sector is given the security and recognition it deserves.

The instrument takes the form of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation (SSF Guidelines). The chair of COFI dedicated the instrument to Chandrika Sharma in recognition of her tireless work, leadership and immense contribution to developing the instrument.

Chandrika, then ICSF’s Executive Secretary, disappeared on 8 March 2014 aboard the Malaysian Airlines flight MH370.

Coincidentally, 8 March was also International’s Women’s Day. Through her work, Chandrika championed the cause of women workers, their rights to equal opportunities, decent work and access to resources, and their right not to be discriminated against and to engage as equals in the decision-taking processes that affect them.

Gender equality and equity are guiding principles of the SSF Guidelines, which lend visibility and recognition to the rights of women and to the important role they play throughout the fisheries value chain.

Without women’s engagement, fisheries would not be viable. Putting the SSF Guidelines into practice will help defend their space and enable women to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods.

Sid Ahmed Abeid, President of the National Artisanal Fishermen’s Federation of Mauritania (FNP), called it an “historic day for artisanal fisheries” and added “We have fought hard for this for many years. Today marks an important landmark victory.”

For the organizations who have engaged with developing the

instrument, the victory has a bitter-sweet taste. The loss of Chandrika Sharma has been a tragic blow; however, her name and contribution will live on in the new instrument.

The new instrument is global in scope, and applies to small-scale fisheries in all contexts, but with a specific focus on the needs of small-scale fishing communities in developing countries.

Some COFI members questioned whether or not the instrument applied to high-tech modern small-scale fisheries in the industrialized world. But as the majority of small-scale fisheries are located in the developing world, the importance of such a distinction seemed questionable.

“We all belong to the same family, and are fighting for the same rights,” said Naseegh Jaffer of WFFP. “Whether in the North or South, small-scale fisheries are the largest and most sustainable segment of the world’s fishery sector. The Guidelines apply to us all.”

Editrudith Lukanga of WFF explained that the Guidelines were comprehensive and, in one single instrument, dealt with all significant aspects of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities within a human-rights perspective.

“These Guidelines will support the visibility, recognition and enhancement of small-scale fisheries and fishing communities in the context of eradicating hunger and poverty. The Guidelines will contribute significantly to effectively addressing the numerous challenges and constraints facing small-scale fishing communities around the world.”

While this is an important victory to celebrate, there are significant challenges ahead for small-scale fisheries organizations, Member States and FAO to ensure the full implementation of this new instrument.

Source: Inshore Ireland, June/July 2014

The Gift that Inspires Forever

Nalini Nayak

None of us could hide our utter sense of loss at the absence of Chandrika as we came together for this meeting at Pondicherry. While we were all certain that acknowledging this absence was the first priority on our agenda, we were also rather uncomfortable, even nervous, about how we were going to do it in the presence of Naren, Amma and Meghna. What I think caused us more stress was the fact that though she is missing, for some there is looming hope that we will find her, while for others there is a certitude that we will not. How do we express this difference while at the same time respecting the feelings of both perspectives? Also, we come from diverse cultures that handle such situations in different ways, sharing our grief and sense of loss in dissimilar fashion, some with a religious spirituality and others without.

In the event, what emerged at the commemoration meet was totally relaxed and came from the heart. For many of us, it was the first time we were sharing our feelings in the group—some choking, some silent, some through writing, some with a poem. We wanted the family to know how important Chandrika was for us—a side of her that they obviously could not have known earlier. But as I listened, the even larger person that she is was sketched—a physically diminutive woman with enormous power of conviction and strength, a human being so multifaceted, so humane and so capable of really hard work but who always remained smiling and never lost the ability to laugh and dance.

Chandrika's clarity of thought and ultra-sensitive understanding of the human dimension led her to battle for the human-rights approach to small-scale fisheries, linking the local to the global, truly living the "personal is political" slogan, and gently steering through contradictions without compromise, holding her ground in the midst of adversity and not cowing down before the powerful voices of men, conscious of the space for each to grow and contribute in an atmosphere of total democracy. As Cornelie summed up, she is a gift to humankind, and particularly to us in ICSF and the fishing community.

When Amma told me earlier on that we must not cry as Chandrika could certainly return, she also added that she was such a good person that if she has flown away then we should not hold her back. She has gone to the Divine. For us Indian believers, this is a reality—she has flown away against our power to hold her back, to resist. She is in the eternal space to which we also belong but in a more corporal manner and in this way she continues to be with us and inspire us. But most of all she challenges us to continue to practise what Rene Pierre called "the Chandrika method"—not easy but something to aspire to.

What a privilege it has been to have known Chandrika, to have worked with her, to have learned from her and to have shared a room with her on so many trips where we soul-chatted late into the night. Thank you again, Chandrika. 🐟

Comment

A human-rights approach towards sustainable fisheries will sufficiently emphasize the social dimension of sustainable fisheries. It will promote the contribution of marine living resources to eliminate malnutrition. It will recognize the importance of sustainable small-scale and artisanal fisheries, and protect the rights of subsistence, small-scale and artisanal men and women fishers and fishworkers to a secure and just livelihood, and ensure preferential access to their traditional fishing grounds and resources.

—from *SAMUDRA Report*
No. 61, March 2012

“

...it is high time to recall that there is an alternative, and that it is staring us in the face: the small-scale fisheries. They survived, albeit with difficulties, while industrial fisheries grew in the absence of checks or balances.

”

— Daniel Pauly in
*World Small-scale Fisheries:
Contemporary Visions*

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