

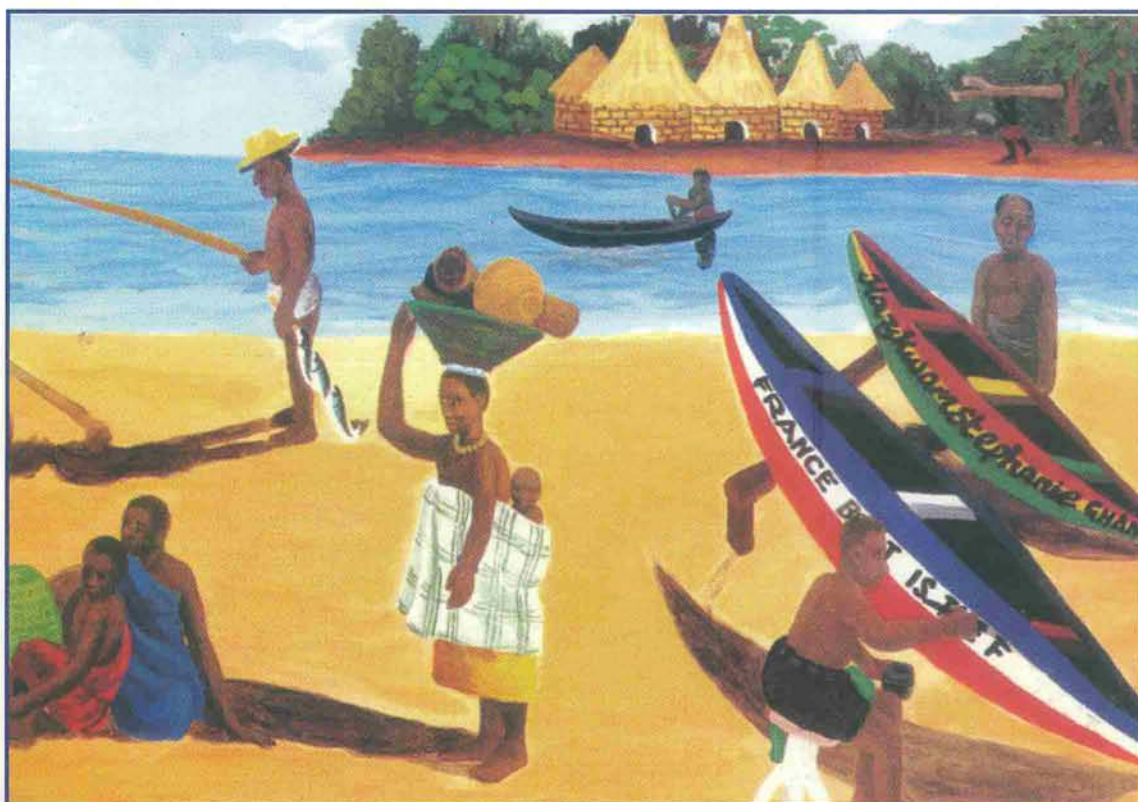
No. 24

December 1999

SAMUDRA

REPORT

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIVE IN SUPPORT OF FISHWORKERS



THE ORISSA CYCLONE
SOUTH AFRICAN FISHERIES
TRADITIONAL RIGHTS IN CANADA
QUOTAS IN NORWAY
ARTISANAL FISHERIES OF CAMEROON
WEBSITES ON FISHERIES
FISHERIES IN CHINA
NEWS ROUND-UP

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Sloganeering in Seattle

"Hey Hey! Ho Ho! WTO's got to go!" Thus shouted thousands at Seattle where, early this month, trade ministers met at the Third WTO Ministerial Conference to launch new negotiations to further liberalize international trade. The Conference seems to have come unstuck mainly due to disagreements between the developed and developing countries, aided by protests from NGOs, trade unions and farmers' groups.

Hundreds of proposals were mooted, including a few on fisheries subsidies and market access. Northern countries like Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and the US, and Southern ones like the Philippines and Peru, wanted to eliminate all subsidies that contribute to overcapacity. They argue that these distort trade and prevent the sustainable utilization of fish stocks.

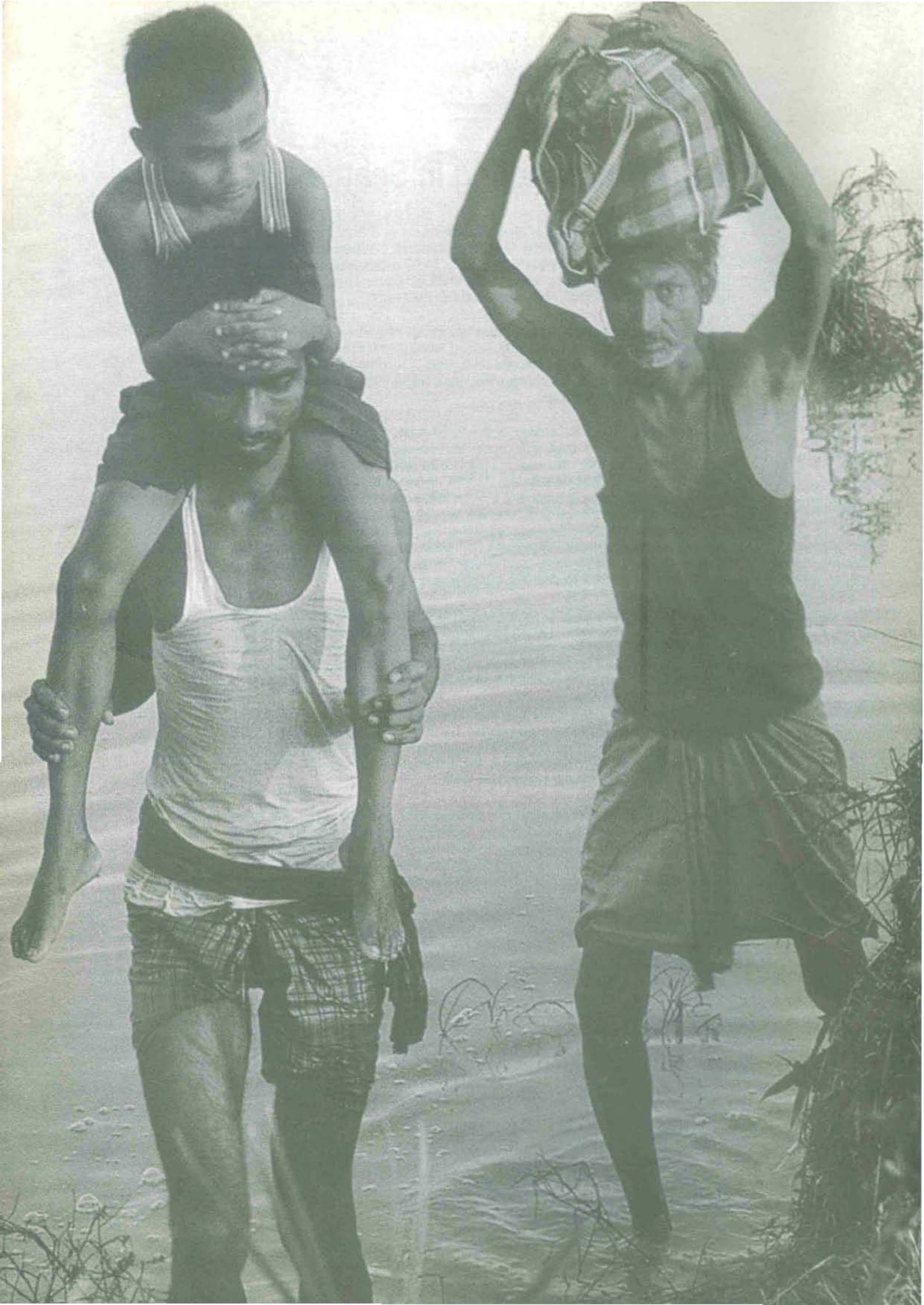
Japan, however, urged for a larger mandate on trade, namely, effective fisheries management, control of flags of convenience, and identifying all factors, including trade-distorting subsidies, that lead to irresponsible fishing practices. It called for a negotiating group for fishery products at the WTO. As the world's largest importer of fish and fish products, Japan defends tariff and non-tariff measures, mainly in the interests of conservation and management, whereas Norway, the largest exporter, hopes to eliminate non-tariff barriers. Although developing countries account for over 40 per cent of the global export market in fish products, few had any proposals for the WTO on market access. This is particularly ironic since, in recent times, several discriminatory tariff and non-tariff measures have blocked their market access.

Few realize that export earnings are a vital part of the incomes of fishing communities in the South. Very often, fish is the only commodity that fishers produce, and the income from selling fish is vital to meet their nutritional and other basic needs. If those who marched in Seattle get their way with labour standards and child labour issues, it will be difficult for many developing countries to export fish.

Export species often fetch a higher price than those sold domestically. This forces traders to compete for supplies for the export market. The fishers thus bag a better price and a better income, despite middlemen. Even in countries of Africa and Asia, where fish is the most important source of animal protein, the domestic demand is largely for smaller pelagics, which have less of a market in the North.

Perhaps the most significant human rights achievement is the removal of poverty, which is crucially contingent upon a decent income. Removing discriminatory tariff and non-tariff barriers could promote greater access to Northern markets, while simultaneously helping build up labour-intensive fish processing facilities at home. That, among other things, could help alleviate poverty in many developing countries.

As for 'child labour', in cultures where a parent trains his/her child in a familiar, traditional profession, the term itself is a misnomer. Child labour is not synonymous with abuse. In many developing countries, opportunities for formal training are limited or unaffordable, and children are often informally trained. In artisanal fisheries, many children work with their parents or relatives. Unless they start early enough, they may never overcome seasickness—an important occupational consideration for a potential, full-time fisher. A culturally sensitive approach to labour standards and child labour issues is needed to improve human rights. Otherwise, any expression of 'concern' would be seen, more or less correctly, as a protectionist bogey to have one's cake and eat it as well, while simultaneously depriving a less privileged person of her humble gruel.



Of men and cyclones

The ‘super-cyclone’ that hit the coastal Indian State of Orissa has left in its wake untold miseries — and lessons

The dead were the luckiest of all. This is the recurrent feeling one gets as one walks past the huddled figures of men, women and children who survived the ‘Mother of All Cyclones’, as one commentator labelled it. Most dead bodies were ‘disposed of’, yet you could sense their presence, in the constant refrain from the survivors: “Why did we survive?” They do not mourn the dead, they mourn the living.

That was the most traumatic effect of the ‘super-cyclone’ that hit the coast of Orissa, India on 29 October: not the loss of livelihoods, food, shelter, clothing or even close relations — it was the loss of the will to live, perhaps a cumulative effect of all the other losses.

The official statistics provide reassuringly low figures and it is difficult to find two sources agreeing on any number, even after allowing for wide margins. Under the circumstances, suffice to say that Orissa, ‘the domicile of gods’, as a tourist brochure puts it, found itself turned into a purgatory when actually dealing with gods.

The eight coastal districts which have been affected by the cyclone were the most productive by any standard, and are rightly regarded as the ‘rice bowl of Orissa’. The super-cyclone has turned everyone’s attention away from another cyclone that had preceded it a couple of weeks ago. It did enough damage of its own to seriously affect dozens of villages in Ganjam district.

In fact, the counting of the dead from the previous cyclone had not yet been completed before the second one struck. The first cyclone took a toll of 1,000 human lives and 50,000 livestock, besides washing away an entire crop of paddy and

other crops. Between them, the two cyclones have laid waste the entire coast of Orissa.

From a fisheries perspective, the Bay of Bengal off the Northern Orissa coast is the most productive on the east coast of India. A wide variety of traditional fishing crafts and an eclectic mixture of fishing communities characterized the marine and estuarine fisheries in Orissa. Bengali fishermen dominated the northern parts of the coastline, migrant-settlers from Bangladesh fished the waters to the north of Paradeep, fishers from Andhra Pradesh dominated the Paradeep-Puri belt, and Telugu-speaking Orissa fisherfolk accounted for the southern parts. The Oriya people were not much interested in eating sea fish (“Too salty!” they would explain), were not seafaring people either, and until recently, were not bothered if people from other regions pitched tents en masse right in the middle of towns like Puri, Paradeep and Astaranga. The Mahanadi’s deltaic region was lush with green vegetation, some of the most beautiful mangrove forests, mostly untouched by human activity, and numerous creeks lined by magnificent trees on both sides, which carried fishermen from villages like Jambo and Kharinasi all the way to the river mouth. Now, not a single tree remains, nor, for that matter, do large sections of the villages themselves. Mountains of mud have covered the villages and the neighbouring agricultural fields.

Bustling town

Before the cyclone, Paradeep was a bustling, — and not a very exciting — industrial town, with a PPL (Paradeep Phosphates Ltd.) and a PPT (Paradeep Port Trust) (pronounced ppi-ppi-yell and ppi-ppi-ttee locally) which accounted for most of the employment in the area.

Paradeep is also the biggest fishing port in Orissa. Along with Chandipur-on-Sea in Balasore district, it is the base for all mechanized boats in Orissa (and often an emergency base for trawlers from Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere, in times of cyclones).

Besides, a large number of fishermen from Andhra Pradesh migrate to Paradeep or Puri annually in September and stay there fishing until January. These fishermen often take their families along with them, and live in makeshift tents on the beaches, and are accepted as a part of the milieu.

Singiri Narayana, who was from Subbampeta, near Kakinada, was one such fisherman who got caught in the cyclone with his family. He went to Orissa in September and the fishing was not good for the next two months. He owned an FRP (fibre-reinforced plastic) boat, on which there was an outstanding loan of over Rs.100,000. The traders in Paradeep advance huge amounts of money to the fishermen in return for their catches, and Narayana had obtained Rs. 50,000 from a trader. The fishing operations were just sufficient to buy fuel for the next trip and to pay wages to the crew, and Narayana had begun to despair about repayments.

On Thursday, 28 October, the fishermen could sense that a cyclone was brewing, and berthed their boats in the new fishing harbour, which, though constructed nearly five years ago, became functional only this year. Cyclones, one must remember, are a part and parcel of life in this part of the world, and are often no more than a nuisance. Normally, three or four cyclones hit the Orissa coast in a year. The real big ones often manage to go past Orissa and hit Bangladesh. Narayana had been caught in a few cyclones while fishing at sea, and though scary, they were not something that he dreaded. He made suitable arrangements to anchor the boat safely in the harbour and returned to Sandakhud, the fishing village of Paradeep, where he lived in a rented house with his wife and four children.

“Even if there had been a warning on the radio, it would not have been much help because it would be in Oriya,” he says. There was a cyclone warning out anyway.

The official cyclone warning wing did notice a storm brewing and sent out a warning notice to all districts. It is said that the devices for measuring the wind speed malfunctioned, which resulted in the department not being able to assess the intensity of the cyclone. Whatever happened, it was treated as just another cyclone. The district administrations had been alerted as a matter of course, and they apparently did whatever they were expected to do. That the cyclone ultimately destroyed Bhubaneswar, which was a full 60 km away from the sea, indicates that it would have been practically impossible to have evacuated the entire population. And the fisherfolk themselves were quite clear that they would not have been evacuated because cyclones were a ‘common occurrence’, and they stood to lose more by going away than by staying on. The disaster was almost inevitable.

Kodanda, a boy of 15, was one of the crew members who remained behind on his boat to keep watch. The fishing boat is the most important possession of a fisherman, and under no circumstances would he sleep undisturbed without knowing his boat was safe. As Kasulu, another migrant fisherman from Uppada, put it, “Our most important concern during the cyclone was the boats and how they fared.” The first thing the fishermen attempted to do immediately after the cyclone subsided was to rush to the fishing harbour.

By the morning of Friday, 29 October, the winds and the rain started — and continued for the next 48 hours without slowing down once. The house tops were the first to go, and houses started crumbling before the very eyes of the people. Large trees were uprooted and carried away. The gales were so forceful that a crew member on Narayana’s boat still nurses the wounds he received when he was carried away by the gales and flung on to the bushes nearby. Things started getting worse by the afternoon. The waves were breaking almost on top of the houses — and, within a few hours, not much of the village remained.

Worst effects

Meanwhile, Kodanda was experiencing the worst effects of the cyclone: the boat repeatedly rose high up into the air and

fell back with a crash. It was obvious that it would not survive any more impacts and would destroy whoever was on it.

Kodanda prepared to jump into the water to reach the shore. Ramana, who was keeping vigil on the next boat, jumped into the water and was immediately hurled against the rocks and crushed to death. Kodanda was luckier, and he reached the shore with much difficulty. From the harbour, it was about 5 km to the town, and walking on all fours, it took him about 12 hours to reach the town.

Narayana and family, whose house was destroyed after the first few hours of the cyclone, moved into the nearby temple, which provided sanctuary to hundreds of people. There was not enough space to sit, and everyone was forced to stand for the entire duration they spent in the temple. The kids started crying from hunger. Intense cold added to the general misery.

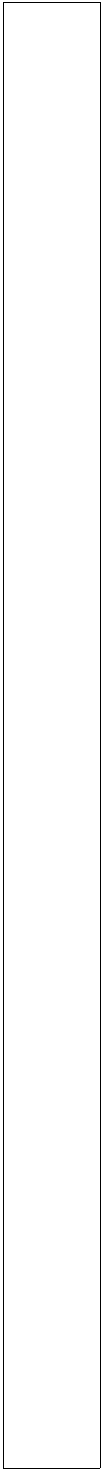
Meanwhile, water started streaming up, digging channels by the sheer force of its velocity, and pincer-like, encircled the village and destroyed the smaller hamlets on either side of it. Not only have these hamlets vanished altogether, most of the inhabitants too were carried away. “We could see people being washed away, and apart from shouting, there was nothing we could do,” Narayana recounts. Sandakhud was lucky as it was located on

an elevated spot (a fact that you would not have noticed at other times), and remained standing like an island, while, all around, the cyclone wreaked its destruction.

Bishnu Pattnaik, an elderly entrepreneur whose small but efficient Oriental Dry Fish Industries was not only a profitable venture, but one which provided inspiration for many other such units to come up in Orissa and elsewhere, had entered into an agreement with an NGO in Cuttack to conduct training for fisherwomen on improved processing methods. He had refurbished the production unit at Sandakhud at a cost of Rs. 50,000 and was returning to Cuttack, when he got stuck in the cyclone, and barely survived the fury of the storm. Now, an empty patch of land remains where Oriental Dry Fish Industries used to be, because it was located right on the beach and must have been the first to go in the tidal wave.

Pangs of hunger

When the cyclone finally relented around the afternoon of Sunday, hunger continued to be the biggest problem: none of the fisherfolk — including the children — had eaten for three days, and there was nothing to eat. People were seen rummaging through what were once their homes to find anything to eat. They found powdered maize in one of the godowns, intended for export from Paradeep Port,





and grabbed whatever they could to eat. In two days, the army rescue boats appeared on the scene, and started relief operations.

Many other villages, in the neighbouring districts were not so lucky. It would be a week or more before any help reached people in Astaranga or Kakatpur blocks of Puri district and doubtless many other districts. Food supplies were airdropped for nearly a month before land routes could be established to several villages. It will be quite a while before electricity is restored in many areas.

The impact of the cyclone was quite widespread — starting just north of Puri, it extended up to the northern reaches of Balasore district, about 200 km of coastline. And it travelled inland up to Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Baripada, which were quite some distance from the sea. The wind velocities were estimated to have been in excess of 350 km/hour. In all, the cyclone affected eight coastal districts very badly. Erasama block in Jagatsinghpur district, Mahakalpara block in Kendrapara, and Astaranga in Puri are the worst affected.

There were more horrors. And more death (official death toll: 10,000): dead bodies floating by in the creeks, bloated bodies flowing down the Mahanadi river and its various tributaries — a commonplace

incident at Nayagarh fish landing centre, which was itself totally devastated. Four dead bodies lay in Paradeep fishing harbour for three days before somebody noticed them and had them cremated. Hundreds of thousands of dead cattle lay everywhere (official toll: over 400,000). For a few weeks after the cyclone, the dead bodies from everywhere were brought to a central place, piled up, doused in petrol, and funeral pyres lit.

Hundreds fishing boats were lost or damaged, often beyond repair. To Narayana's dismay, he found no traces of his boat. His relatives in Andhra Pradesh managed to reach him after a week, and they helped him get back to Andhra Pradesh — completely washed-out, literally as well as figuratively.

Back in Orissa, people continue to hesitatingly explore their villages, which have turned into mounds of mud. They still huddle together as much as they can, and venture out only in groups. And they tread very carefully indeed: the villages they were born and lived in all their lives do not now exist as they knew them. And there is the constant fear of finding something new, like a dead body: bloated, blackened, and partially eaten — hardly human, or perhaps too human.

Dirty water
Nobody could bring themselves to drink the river water because of the bodies.

Cholera had broken out in many villages in Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts. To add to the troubles, winter had set in with a vengeance.

Many people were left with nothing more than the clothes they wore at the time of the cyclone — some lacked even that. Many villages are still inaccessible. Sahana in Astaranga block was reached more than a week after the cyclone. Not a single house remained standing in the village. Some villages in Mahakalpara block no longer exist. What could have happened to the people there is anybody's guess.

Chandrabhaga, near Konark, has another tale to tell: the fishing community consists almost entirely of migrants from Andhra Pradesh, who have lived here for a long time, but they do not have any land rights. The local government wants to develop the beach here into a tourist spot, and have repeatedly evicted the community from their homes and destroyed the dwellings. A couple of years ago, the villagers were given some land to build on and the village shifted its location only recently. The cyclone came just as things were settling into a routine, sweeping away all the houses, and the fishers are again homeless.

The famous beach near Konark, once lined by tall casuarina plantations, is totally denuded of all vegetation, and the Konark lighthouse, which was normally hidden behind thick groves of casuarina, stands naked in the middle of a desert.

The spontaneous gestures of goodwill and co-operation that poured forth from different corners of the country were of great help. Many international and national organizations quickly reached the State and started rehabilitation programmes. Many NGOs banded together and formed task forces to co-ordinate relief efforts. Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Khurda, Balasore and Bhadrak railway stations were besieged by huge bundles of clothes, food and other essential items. And assistance came from the fisherfolk in other States also. NGO workers in Andhra Pradesh reported that even poor households contributed something. Clothes, rice and cooking utensils were donated by many poor

households in the villages. The response from the urban elite was more informed and, hence, more muted.

The administrative machinery is said to have failed, but it was clear that neither the government nor the fishers fully comprehended the magnitude of the impending cyclone. The State's disaster relief wing and the district administrations were prepared to deal with the situation basing their calculations on past experiences. But this cyclone was not like any of the previous ones (the last cyclone of similar intensity can be traced back to 1942, and resulted in the Great Orissa Famine in 1944). Its impact was so vast and the destruction it wrought so complete that everybody was totally taken aback, and it took some time to get their bearings right.

Unfortunately, the people who made up the 'machinery' were themselves affected by the cyclone—rarely did one come across government employees who did not have their families, relations and/or friends caught in the cyclone. Given a similar situation, the consequences would not have been much different in any other State. At the best of times, the inaccessibility of the fishing villages in Orissa is legendary. The basic facilities that the government has at any level are far from adequate to cope with a disaster this huge. The total disruption of roads and communication systems—continuing to this day in many affected areas—made it even more difficult to access many areas. Under these circumstances, discussions with local people indicate, the administration did reasonably well. As for politicians, I should quote a senior leader: "The state elections should be held as scheduled, because there is no provision in the Constitution (of India) to postpone them because of a natural disaster. The people of Orissa want elections right away."

Opposite effect

The moral high ground appropriated by all and sundry at the expense of the 'government machinery' has achieved the exact opposite of what it was intended to do: it helped engender apathy among those who are really concerned and wanted to do something, and the fisherfolk are worse off for it. Stories about



looting of relief materials also helped assuage troubled consciences, as some people decided that there was no point in helping looters.

Reports indicate that the actual looting was no more than a fraction of the assistance received. Maiti, a fisherman-turned-‘looter’ from Nayagarh, was quite honest: “My kids were starving and so was I. In my position, you would have done the same.”

However, things improved quite fast, and the more urgent needs of the people began to be met satisfactorily. Cold and lack of suitable clothing continue to remain problems, but there are indications that most of the people would receive assistance one way or the other.

A few weeks after the cyclone, when those of the boats that were still operational attempted to go fishing, the government declared a ban on all fish sales in the State. The ban, which is in force at the time of writing this article, has crippled the fishing communities yet again. With everything they owned gone with the wind, and their only source of livelihood banned, they are reduced to depending on the generosity of the external agencies for survival. Even if the ban were to be lifted, thousands of fisherfolk would still have to rebuild their livelihoods, and that would take a long time and a lot of money.

Life is resilient, if nothing else. And the fisherman is the best symbol of that. Even as these lines are being written, word has come from Orissa—from Paradeep, to be exact—that fishing operations have started once again, and very good catches were reportedly landing. The Uppada fishermen have got down to business: dozens of boats are being readied for the long journey ahead. They intend to take additional rations, just in case. The fish caught will generally be sold out of the State, so the ban will not affect them. No, they will not take their families this time.

And so it goes on. Life.

This report is by Venkatesh Salagrama of Integrated Coastal Management, an independent NGO based in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, India

A new apartheid?

The transformation process in South Africa’s fisheries is a tale of chaos and corruption

Cape Town, South Africa: the small knot of men hanging around the dock gates hardly attracts a second glance. To the casual observer they are just like any other group of chancers trying their luck for work in the port. However, this group is not just any old flotsam of washed up job hunters. They are members of the Cape Town Harbour Fishermen Co-operative, part of a new quota owning elite in South Africa. They are some of the new quota owners, so-called ‘new entrants’ to the fishery, and the intended beneficiaries of the transformation processes set in motion in the fishing sector just prior to 1994.

Since 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, the South African government has been attempting a major restructuring, or transformation of its fishing industry. However, there are three major constraints to achieving transformation.

First, the ‘Sunset Clause’ in the new constitution requires that no official in the apartheid administration is removed from office for at least five years. Thus there is tremendous administrative inertia to change the status quo. Second, the constitution obliges the government to negotiate transformation with the existing stakeholders. This means that any redistribution of wealth and power must be negotiated with the large fishing companies, and, more importantly, with the financial institutions that are the major shareholders in these industries. The government’s ability to deliver transformation is therefore severely restricted by these two aspects of the constitution

In the third place, to a significant number of people, transformation means restitution. In the 1960s, under the Group

Areas Act, large segments of the population were shifted out of their coastal homes to townships several miles in-land. Their movement back to the coast to pursue their former livelihoods was restricted by their geographical isolation, and also by the Pass Laws. They, therefore, expect the restitution of their rights to earn their livelihoods from fishing. Any compromise deal falls short of their expectations.

The Cape Town dock workers are one such group. But these men have neither vessels nor equipment, and have been denied access permits from the Department of Sea Fisheries. They, therefore, have no means to convert their quotas directly into livelihoods. In any case, the token quotas provided to them would not go far amongst the 450 registered members. Most of them live in townships some distance from the coast, and their sole source of meagre income is from uncertain casual work as crew members aboard the longliners and trawlers based in Cape Town Docks. They can not even afford the bus and train fares to come to work each day, let alone the costs of investing in, or running, a small fishing business – a basic requirement of the quota application.

Quotas have become the main tool for transformation in the fishing sector. They are the means through which South Africa’s fishery wealth is to be redistributed. By making quotas transferable, the system aims for a wider group of new stakeholders to cash in on South Africa’s marine wealth.

Unmanageable

However, the system is clearly unmanageable. There are many more applications than available quota, and there is insufficient capacity in the

Department of Marine and Coastal Management to process the thousands of complex application forms.

The quota system is also based on an unrealistic model of the South African fishing sector. First of all, it requires all applicants to establish a commercial company, complete with a business and marketing plan—quotas will thus only be awarded to certain types of corporate structures. Secondly, the geographical, social and economic isolation of fishing communities has resulted in low levels of literacy and education.

Most new quota applicants, therefore, have to seek help to fill in the forms, and this has often led to their applications getting hijacked. In many instances the quota awarded has been of a token amount, and recipients have been advised to sell to larger business interests. This has fuelled the market for paper quotas, and resulted in the access rights merely passing back into the hands of big business.

Ministers' wives, politicians, business leaders and other people of influence have all received handouts of quota ahead of genuine fishermen. The corruption was initiated under the auspices of the Quota Board prior to 1994, and continued by the Fisheries Transformation Council set up by the new Marine Living Resources Act. This has severely discredited the transformation process.

Over the last year, court cases have been filed against the government by former quota holders for illegal and unconstitutional quota allocations. As a result, a significant part of the South African fishing sector has ground to a halt. For example, legal wrangling in 1998 prevented the Minister from allocating new quotas for hake and anchovy for fear of court action from disgruntled former quota holders. It was only a compromise deal with the industry that allowed 40 per cent of the hake quotas to be allocated and fished in 1998/99. Some new entrants had to wait until 17 December, when 75 quotas for 4,000 tonnes of hake were finally allocated. This gave them only around five weeks before the last day of the season. As these quotas were distributed in

quantities of 50 and 100 tonnes, most were quickly sold and passed back into the hands of the large companies.

The 1999 fishing season has also been severely disrupted by court cases. In one such landmark case, in May 1999, it was ruled that the allocation of crayfish quotas for the 1998/99 season (November to July) made by the minister was irregular. This meant that no crayfish quotas could be allocated to small fishermen, but that the lion's share had to be allocated only to the previous recipients. Deputy Minister Mokaba criticized the ruling, pointing out that: we remain with unreconstructed courts they did not look at the intention of the law the interpretation of the court did not take into account the spirit of the new legislation.

The issue of access is fundamental to the transformation process, but there is a wide divergence of view on who should have access. In most fishing communities, it is felt that priority access should be given to those who get their hands wet. They need direct access to the resources in order to earn their livelihoods. For social reformers, access means opening up the fisheries sector to non-white - mainly 'black' - interest groups. For them 'black empowerment' is the main objective. For others, access means having a share of the marine wealth in a form they can use or convert into cash.

The new Marine Living Resources Act is not a very successful attempt to reach a compromise on these divergent views. The Act only recognizes three kinds of fishermen: subsistence fishers, recreational fishers and commercial fishers. Essentially, subsistence and recreational fishers are 'second-class fishers', whose activities and movement in the sector are highly restricted. The Act seriously omits to mention the artisanal fishing sector, or how fisheries can be incorporated into, and contribute to, the development of the wider coastal area.

Wider issues

The issue of quotas goes beyond access rights. According to a senior Fisheries Department Official, quotas are now used to meet three key objectives of South Africa's Marine Living Resources Act: redistributing resource access rights so as



to redress social imbalances in the fisheries sector; ensuring the sustainability of the resource base; and maintaining stability in the industry.

The story of the Cape Town harbour fishermen illustrates how the quota system is, at best, not working, and, at worst, is being used to benefit a few at the expense of the many. Gerry Phakoe, a spokesman for the Cape Town Workers, says angrily, “My father lived Simonstown and was a fisherman. That was until we were forced to move to the townships. We were called bergies (vagrants), and were exploited by the boatowning fishing companies. We have seen our brothers drowned at sea, and die in misery and poverty. However, in 1993, we realized that we had certain rights, and that we could claim these from Sea Fisheries (now the Department of Marine and Coastal Management).”

According to Gerry, in 1993, 355 Cape Town Docks fishworkers got together, and, in 1994, they were allocated 63 tonnes of hake quota. This was increased to 951 tonnes, after protests. However, they were denied access permits, and were advised by a senior fisheries official to sell their quota to a company nominated by him. They also sought legal advice, and were advised to set up a ‘Community Trust’ to invest their quota money in local community services. However, the lawyer they hired, together with the department

official, drew up a flawed document, and, as a result, only a part of the quota money was released - Rand 500,000 (about US\$ 8,500). Each fishworker received Rand 400, and the rest of the money was misappropriated. Frustrated and angry, they attacked the lawyer and broke into the Sea Fisheries offices.

In the court case that followed, their claims against the lawyer and Sea Fisheries officials were over-ruled. A subsequent court ruling declared that quotas could not be allocated to Community Trusts as these were not properly constituted companies. In the course of events, they met up with Andrew Johnston, a lobster fisherman, who was trying to unite all small-scale and ‘informal’ (unrecognized) fishers under one banner. His vision was to establish a fisherman’s co-operative that would act on behalf of its members to acquire and distribute the quota, and process and market the fish catch. He travelled all over the country, and persuaded 17 organizations to join him. These were then registered as co-operatives with the Registrar of Co-operatives.

New company

With legal advice, they set up the South African Commercial Fishermen’s Corporation Pty Ltd (SACFC), which applied for quota on behalf of the now 25 members (including the Cape Town Harbour Fishermen Co-operative Ltd).

<div>South Africa</div>	
	<div> <p>What the co-operative members did not bank on was the legal and official interpretation of the General and Transformation Criteria for quota applications: that quotas would only be awarded to companies with ‘Closed Corporation’ or ‘Pty’ structures. Their lawyer therefore appointed himself as Chief Executive Officer, established a holding company which now owns SACFC, and took control of the business. The company has an authorized share capital of 10,000 shares of Rand 1.00 each, which is distributed amongst the member organizations according to the size of their membership.</p> <p>According to Matthys Mocke, Chief Executive Officer, in its first year of operation (1998/99), SACFC was allocated quotas for hake (800 tonnes), crayfish (130 + 59 tonnes), and abalone (20 tonnes). It was also allocated 40 squid permits. A business arrangement has been struck with one of the large fishing companies, OCEANA. This has “assisted with cash flow problems”, and allowed SACFC to use one of its processing factories.</p> <p>Yet, shareholders are up in arms. They fear that this is just another ruse to deprive them of their access rights. They have seen quotas hijacked in the past by clever lawyers, school teachers, civil servants and businessmen. In Hawston, for instance, the quota awarded to the Fishers Co-operative was sold off by the person who applied on its behalf. In Saldanha Bay, Denburg Fisheries Pty Ltd, formed by the local fishermen to apply for quota, has also had its quota hijacked.</p> <p>The quota allocation system does not take account of the immediate and ongoing needs of the fishworkers and their dependents: fishermen need access to the sea, and regular food and income from fishing activities. The system now in place can, at best, only meet their immediate and short-term needs, if they sell off their quota.</p> <p>Despite over five years of democratic government and transformation, the pre-1994 status quo prevails in South Africa. Around 70-80 per cent of the ownership of the access rights remains concentrated in the hands of the five largest players. Racial apartheid has been replaced by economic and social apartheid, with coastal communities and local economies still effectively excluded from the fishery.</p> <div> <p>This article is by Brian O’Riordan, a Member of ICSF</p> </div> </div>

Flipped on its head?

A recent Canadian Supreme Court ruling on the traditional fishing rights of the M'ikmaq threatens relations with commercial fishermen

The native peoples of Canada represent approximately five per cent of the country's population. They live along the three ocean coasts of the country as well as inland, and have been on the continent for thousands of years. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the then British colonial power entered into various treaties with them, sometimes for purposes of peace and friendship, and sometimes to guarantee territory and trade.

One such treaty was agreed to in 1760 between the British Governor Lawrence and the M'ikmaq peoples who fished and hunted in the regions of Eastern Canada bordering the Atlantic. The treaty itself generally fell into disuse but was used in defence of a M'ikmaq fisherman, Donald Marshall Jr., who was charged with fishing in a closed area, using unregulated gear.

The case found its way through Canada's judicial system right up to the Supreme Court. On 17 September 1999, the Supreme Court acquitted Marshall on the basis that the treaty gave him a right to fish and trade such fish in order to earn a moderate livelihood for himself and his family. The court decision made it explicit that the treaty right could be regulated and subject to catch limits that provided for a moderate livelihood.

However, some M'ikmaq people believed they now had a recognized right to fish when and where they so chose, and began placing lobster traps into areas where the lobster season was closed.

As the M'ikmaq built up their fishing presence in closed lobster areas, commercial fishermen who rely on the same lobster area for their livelihood grew increasingly angry as the Government

Department of Fisheries made no attempts to restrain the out-of-season fishing.

The situation exploded on 3 October when fishermen in the Miramichi Bay off the coast of New Brunswick sent out 100 boats that proceeded to haul up native lobster traps, removed the meshing, returned the lobsters to the water and sank the disabled traps.

Native persons responded by taking over the government wharf at Burnt Church on the Miramichi, burning two fishermen's trucks and bringing in what they refer to as their 'warrior society'. Native and non-native people were driven into direct and violent conflict with one another, and similar situations threatened to break out in other coastal areas.

The Marshall Case was now preoccupying the media and the political leaders of the country. The decision of the Supreme Court judges was questioned widely, and two of the seven judges also dissented. The Premier of Newfoundland, Brian Tobin, blasted the judges for not understanding the nature of the fishery and for not providing a period of time for the implications of the decision to be properly managed and implemented. The entire commercial fishing sector in Eastern Canada was protesting, calling for a moratorium and political intervention. They felt the fishery as they knew it was being undermined.

Restrictive regime

The reader not familiar with Canada must remember that there are 50,000 fishermen in Atlantic Canada fishing under a very restrictive fisheries management regime. The lobster fishery is particularly sensitive because the species is widely dispersed in inshore waters along a very large

Canada

coastline. It is a fishery broken down by zones (lobster is a sedentary species seldom moving beyond 25 km of its habitat), and each of the 44 zones has a specified season that is rigidly enforced.

Licences are limited, and their total number frozen. This limited entry has led, over time, to licences acquiring a value and being considered as quasi-property. If you had invested \$100,000 in a lobster licence, you might get a little anxious if you saw a few native fishermen fishing out of season, apparently authorized by the Supreme Court to do so, and catching with each trap ten times as many lobsters as the commercial fishermen catch in season.

The M'ikmaq people, for their part, have historically been marginalized into a reserve system (although they also have full rights as Canadian citizens), where rates of unemployment are astronomical, levels of education low, and standards of living below the poverty line. They believe their fishing rights have been denied them under the modern fisheries management regime.

In total numbers, the M'ikmaq pose no serious threat to commercial fishermen, except in localized areas where there are significant numbers of natives adjacent to the lobster grounds that are fully subscribed to.

However, if their treaty right is a 'blank cheque' to fish whenever, wherever and however, then the commercial fishery, as we know it, has been flipped on its head. But the Supreme Court has made it clear that it is not a 'blank cheque', but a limited right to a moderate livelihood and, indeed, it is a 'communal' right and not an individual right as such.

The obligation is on the M'ikmaq as a people to exercise the right in accordance with regulations. The Government of Canada has appointed a Chief Negotiator who has until 15 April, 2000 to arrive at interim fishing plans that accommodate the new treaty rights. Until such fishing plans are tied down, inshore fishermen remain extremely anxious and the social climate in fishing areas where natives and non-natives live in the same broader communities remains tense.

The Maritime Fishermen's Union has been at the centre of the controversy since our inshore fishermen are based in all of the areas where there are significant numbers of coastal M'ikmaq bands.

The MFU recognizes the Supreme Court decision has been a breakthrough for the M'ikmaq. We believe their new rights can be accommodated within the present fisheries management system. The accommodation can be done by means of a voluntary licence retirement programme.

We believe strongly that the accommodation should not be on the backs of fishermen but should be shouldered by the society as a whole through their government.

As we write, it seems the Federal Cabinet will recognize this principle and allocate the appropriate monies to make the adjustments. In the meantime, we want to find ways of making the peace between commercial fishermen and first-nation peoples.

This article is by Michael Belliveau, a Member of ICSF and Executive Secretary, MFU

Breton fisheries

No more bounty

The artisanal offshore fishing fleet of Brittany is now in jeopardy, but can still be saved

One interesting aspect of Breton fisheries has been the development of an artisanal offshore fleet based on trawling. Artisanal refers to the independent, owner-on-board, single-vessel enterprise. This sector expanded after the World War II to reach a peak in the 1980s. In the early 1990s, a crisis which had been brewing since the previous decade, suddenly broke out violently, and deeply undermined that attractive model. In the face of the new challenges thrown up — mostly dwindling resources and appropriation of traditional markets/niches and also fishing grounds by capitalistic concerns — stakeholders must now review its functioning, if the artisanal model is to last.

During the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Breton fisheries were basically seasonal operations, targeting sardines and tuna. A host of owner-operated boats was responsible for the production that went mostly for processing. Plant owners were, by and large, the people in command. During the early part of the 19th century, the dominance of these people was progressively challenged by a number of factors — resource crisis, relocation of plants, and new demands by consumers. Before the World War II, some industrialists had already started redeploying their assets and investing in large trawlers to produce fresh fish. Lorient fishing harbour, built in 1927, was at the forefront of that evolution. When the war broke out, things came to a standstill.

At the end of the conflict, a number of entrepreneurs started anew with industrial trawlers harvesting fresh fish. Over the years, many canneries closed down and those which survived now

worked all year round. There were fewer outlets for the artisans who were also in the process of changing from sailing to mechanized operations. The order of the day was trawling and fresh fish, and the extended continental shelf easily provided new grounds.

During the war, which lasted five years, fish stocks were plenty enough to cater for new tastes. Demand was high on markets where, for a long time, food supplies had been rather modest. This kept prices going up steadily. Later on, fish prices would again remain bullish, thanks to rising purchasing power. Indeed, until the end of the 1980s, the price curve stayed above the rate of inflation. These favorable conditions made it easier for the pêcheurs artisans previously engaged in seasonal activities to turn to year-round trawling and fresh-fish production.

Some would take up several métiers (type of boat+fishing methods+fish targeted), particularly when there was renewed interest in albacore tuna fishing with drift-nets in the late 1980s. In spite of prevailing inflationary trends, artisanal fishermen could not have made it alone to offshore fishing, had it not been for the co-operative movement (in management, credit, insurance and marketing) which brought extra dynamism among them and propelled them into the high seas.

Renewed access

The industrial sector too was able to move further afield as the establishment of a common fishery zone within the European Economic Community (EEC) superseded the EEZs and offered renewed access to British waters. In Brittany, the artisanal sector and its institutions had some political leverage which could affect decisions at the national level. Large subsidies were made available for young

potential patrons (owners-operators) to step in and start business or for established skippers to modernize the fleet.

With only 10 per cent of the initial capital to be put up personally, a young qualified person could thus skipper a state-of-the-art fishing unit. The artisanal offshore fleet reached an apex during the 1980s. Its deep imprint is more visible in the fishing harbours of Southern Brittany. Le Guilvinec quartier maritime (administrative district) is the showcase of this model, which presents a well balanced array of métiers and segments of fleet, from the small inshore boat to the 20-24 m high sea unit. The pêcheurs artisans were proving their ability to operate right across the continental shelf.

But there is a dark side to the rosy story as well. The limits of the model started showing up when prices and landings took a downward trend. In 1993-1994, there were two violent outbursts of protests on the part of fishermen. The first hint of things to come appeared as early as 1985. Within the artisanal sector, the problem was, for quite some time, less apparent because new fishing practices (twin-trawling) and new technologies (electronics on board) helped keep catches at former levels — at a cost, though.

From 1985 to 1990, prices went up, and that compensated for the decline of catches and rising operating costs (despite fairly low fuel prices). But when fish prices plummeted, the stark realities of

overinvestment appeared glaringly. Many boatowners were no longer able to meet their loan instalments or pay the crew. Le Guilvinec district was the worst off. Out of a total of 338 persons who applied to the authorities for debt rescheduling/relief, 130 were from that area. And the crisis affected offshore boats as well as small coastal units.

One should not put the blame for overinvestment on the artisanal fishermen alone. Some of the policies implemented by the EEC were, to a large extent, also responsible. Indeed, from 1970 to 1995, captures by French boats in the Northeast Atlantic dropped from 505,800 tonnes to 297,300 tonnes.

During the same period, Irish fisheries, with substantial aid from the EEC, were able to jump from 75, 000 tonnes to 377, 000 tonnes. In addition, Spanish, Dutch and Belgian boats would also congregate there. Surely, the Breton pêcheurs artisans were not the only ones around unleashing their fishing capacities. They paid dearly, though, for the bountiful days of the 1980s.

The majority survived the deep crisis and a good number of the boats with seemingly intractable problems were taken over by a co-operative society (Océane).

Critical times
But these critical times had also allowed industrial fishing companies (owning from 5 to 20 boats) to lay their hands on some of the larger (16-24 m) artisanal

Total fish captures (tonnes)

	1970	1980	1997
France	78 827	52 025	57 126
Ireland	28 897	20 010	70291
uk (England & Wales)	759	2 708	44 621
uk (Scotland)	0	311	11 208
Total	108 480	74 746	183 246
Total (all countries)	223 325	146 219	331 014

Source : ICES

boats. This trend is accelerating, so much so that the artisanal offshore fleet is now in danger.

The market for seafood products is thriving and the traders, distributors and industrialists who are still in business are increasingly eyeing fresh fish. A young potential patron has to acquire the necessary fishing capacity from within a limited quota. He must, therefore, find a second-hand boat, whose owner is about to retire, for instance, before ever thinking of buying a new one. On the second-hand market, prices have rocketed and only the better-off companies can afford such investments and corner whatever fishing capacity that comes for sale. As they acquire boats that fall within the technical criteria (up to 25 m) of artisanal units, they may even qualify for subsidies meant to support that sector.

What can a young patron do, even with the help of co-operative structures, when he is facing competition from retailing giants like Intermarché, whose turnover is 230 billion FF, or even from Furic, an industrial fishing company with a turnover of 600 million FF. Since access to fishing capacity has become so highly competitive, there is a rampant privatization of access to the resource, in spite of proclamations to the contrary in the Loi d'orientation sur la pêche maritime et les cultures marines

(Framework law on fisheries and aquaculture) passed by the French Parliament in November 1997.

The artisanal sector has, in the past, demonstrated its ability to operate throughout the continental shelf. The industrial sector, with a clearly different status, has also suffered from the crisis. The two were undergoing a restructuring process along separate lines. They had their own financial/banking systems and their own pool of fishing capacity. Today, though, the industrial sector has massively surged into the artisanal offshore segment—and this is sending shock waves right down to the smallest coastal unit. Industrialists are now gazing at the nephrops (*langoustine*) and sardine coastal fisheries.

The attractive model that had been painstakingly established by the *patrons-pêcheurs* is now threatened by the mighty push of capitalistic concerns. The only way out, if indeed there is a will to salvage what is left of the artisanal sector, is to set up a licensing system for close-to-shore fisheries, with one-owner/operator-one boat rule. This is a political choice. Politicians, who dispense aid and subsidies, could surely take that course, if only they wish to !

Sound management

Preservation of the artisanal sector also depends on sound management of

resource and proper use of gear and technologies. Managing fishing grounds targeted by a variety of boats coming from a variety of member States is no easy task.

The *pêcheurs artisans* of Brittany could at least demonstrate their will and capacity to manage the areas where they are the sole operators, the nephrops stocks of the Bay of Biscay being a case in point. The resource and the grounds are well defined.

Until now, whenever they experienced a drop in the yield, they would intensify the fishing effort. Attempts have been made to limit by-catches and these will have to be carried out more forcefully. *Langoustine* production has decreased by half, but with responsible management measures it could be back to better levels. Aid and subsidies schemes should now integrate these objectives.

In the past, subsidies towards capital investments have heavily encouraged overinvestment and have gone far beyond the original aim, which was helping young skippers to get into business on their own. Subsidies should also be made conditional on improvement of fishing practices, for instance. This, in the long term, could create favourable conditions for a more stable future.

Companies and investors are keen to bank on artisanal boats. This is ample proof that there is still a future for that sector, and one must now look for the ways and means to preserve it, to adapt and reform it in order to steer clear of the unsound developments that went with years of prosperity.

The *pêcheurs artisans* of Brittany have been able to operate right across the width of the continental shelf. Their experience may prove valuable to coastal fishermen worldwide who want to expand their fishing grounds.

Let us hope that a sufficient number of men and women, fishermen and politicians, gather to meet the challenges of the day so that the criteria of responsible fishery are implemented by coastal and offshore artisanal units alike.

This article is by Alain Le Sann, a Member of ICSF, and Secretary of the Collectif Pêche et Développement

The paradoxes of quotas

Norway's experience with fisheries quotas reveals the problems peculiar to household economies

Designing proper procedures for regulating the relationship between fish resources and fishers is a major problem for sustainable management and development. Norway introduced individual and maximum quotas following a crisis in the cod fisheries in 1990. For equity reasons, quotas were distributed on the perceived neutral basis of vessel length. However, the fishing pattern of small-scale fishers shows no clear relation between vessel length and annual catches. Small-scale fisher adaptations to this new regime provide an interesting exposure of how quotas work in a household economy.

For centuries, cod (*Gadus morhua*) has been the mainstay for coastal fishers in North Norwegian waters. Vast amounts of North Atlantic cod come from the Barents Sea to the coast of Norway twice a year. The spawning cod give rise to a winter fishery, and the feeding cod give rise to a spring fishery. In addition, coastal cod are present all year around. Both spring and winter fisheries of cod provide small-scale fishers with good income opportunities. The ecological conditions are reflected in the structure of the fishing industry. In 1996, a total of 6,800 boats participated in the cod fishery. Of these, as many as 5,600 vessels, or 82 per cent, were small-scale enterprises, that is less than 13 m in length. Their catches amounted to 20 per cent of the total Norwegian take of cod.

Fishery biologists have regularly measured the size of the cod stock since the mid-1970s. Each year, a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is set on the basis of their advice. Cod is managed bilaterally, and the TAC is shared between Norway and Russia. The mean annual catch has been around 430, 000 tonnes for the last 15 years, but around the turn of the

last decade, Norway and Russia faced what appeared to be a crisis in the Barents sea cod stocks. The TAC for 1990 was as low as 160, 000 tonnes of cod. At that time, only trawlers had fixed vessel quotas. Individual maximum vessel quotas, as well as public licences to fish, regulated catch and access of coastal vessels above 13 m in length. Small-scale fishers did not need licences. The maximum vessel quota was also too high to represent a limitation on small-scale catches. They ranged between 250 and 400 tonnes, and this was more than even the most industrious fishers caught. In effect, the small-scale fishery was an open fishery.

Following the fishery crisis, a new and more detailed system for distributing the low quota was required. Within the existing system of maximum vessel quotas as large as 400 tonnes, the larger coastal vessels could take the whole quota within the first months of the year. Fishing authorities decided to share the low quota as best possible, and criteria for distribution were developed. It was decided that small-scale fishers, given their dependency of cod, should be given preferential treatment. More restrictions were put on fishers, with opportunities to switch to species other than cod. Furthermore, the distribution was based on merit. A minimum catch for 1987-1989 was set, and fishers who fulfilled the demands for minimum previous catches for their vessel length-group got fixed vessel quotas. Other fishers were allowed maximum vessel quotas. Both quotas were made dependent on boat size.

Types of rights

In effect, the new regulations implied the establishment of different formal types of fishing rights. Fishers who were allocated individual fixed vessel quotas were labeled Group I; the maximum vessel

quota holders were labeled Group II. Very soon, however, these groups were said to have ‘full’ and ‘reduced’ rights, respectively. Group I had guaranteed rights to a fixed quota. Group II, besides having far lower quotas than Group I, had to fish them on a competitive basis; fishing was stopped when the group’s TAC was caught. Thus, only those who were first on the scene could fish their maximum quotas.

The effects of these regulations were profound, particularly for small-scale fishers. Fishers were rewarded for their previous fishing effort. Had they caught a certain amount of fish, they were allowed a future ‘full rights’ position in the industry. Had they fished too little, they were granted only a ‘reduced’ rights position. Small-scale fishers in the latter category saw their contribution to the depletion of cod stocks as minimal, and argued this was unfair. On the other hand, fishing authorities saw their small catches as evidence they were not as cod-dependent as the other fishers. However, fishing small quantities is an inherent and important trait of the small-scale fishing household economy.

Looking at small-scale fishers’ practices in the open fishery of the 1980s, one finds that fishers used their vessels differently. In one and the same village, fishers equipped with the same type of boat and gear, would spend different amount of

work on board their vessels. Some caught large quantities and some only a few tonnes of fish during the year. In fact, the majority of small-scale fishers caught low quantities. In 1984, for example, about 200 fishers with vessels in the size of 9-11 m caught more than 50 tonnes of cod, 900 fishers caught less than 10 tonnes, and around 800 fishers caught between 10 and 50 tonnes of fish.

The different catches can be ascribed to different needs. A debt- and career-dependent fishing pattern characterized small-scale fishing in the 1980s. As newcomers, fishers worked hard to secure their debts, but as debts declined, they reduced their effort. Investments over time in better and more efficient technology were not always used to increase catches. The fishers could use their investments to enjoy the benefits of a long career in fishing a better and comfortable workplace instead of catching more and more fish. As such, one can say that, although being formally open to all in the 1980s, the fishery was restricted by informal regulations. The household’s needs was a base for decisions on how much to fish. The new regime changed this situation.

Statistics compared

If we compare catch statistics for 1994, when the regulations had worked for four years, with the figures of the non-regulated situation of the 1980s,

interesting shifts in harvest patterns appear. The overall reduction in the Norwegian small-scale fleet was 20 per cent from 1984 to 1994.

As the table shows, there were 1,703 fewer fishers in the industry in 1994. It also shows that there were 115 fewer fishers catching more than 50 tonnes of cod and as many as 2,226 fewer fishers catching less than 10 tonnes. For a net reduction of ‘only’ 1,703, some fishers must have increased their effort. Table I shows that there were 638 more fishers fishing between 10 and 50 tonnes of fish in 1994, as compared to 1984. Paradoxically, the new regime, instituted in the context of a severe fish crisis, did not provide incentives for reduced fishing effort, and safeguarding of cod stocks. Instead, regulations were rewarding increased fishing effort and larger catches.

In terms of workload, fishers now spend more time on board their vessels. Public fishery statistics show that the effort of full-time fishers has increased from 175 fishing days a year in 1984 to 217 in 1994, roughly a 25 per cent increase. Prior to the new regulations, some fished for cod only in the winter, others only in the spring. With the regulations, most fishers now participate in both seasons, as well as fish cod out of season, in the autumn.

The increased work effort also stems from an increased mobility. In most places, local fish resources can not sustain the increased demand for fish. Moving to other places to locate fish takes time. Fishing where one’s knowledge is poorly developed also increases the workload. Fishing throughout the year and in new places also increases capital costs. Using

the vessels an extra day at home is costly; using them away from home costs even more.

Since size of the quota is attached to vessel length, there is also an incentive to buy bigger boats. Bigger boats allow fishers to be more mobile and to use more efficient gear. Thus, investment patterns are in the process of changing. Formerly, fishers tried to keep debts low. Low debts allowed for flexibility and security in years where natural availability of cod was scarce. Low debts still serve this function, but it has become more difficult to keep them low.

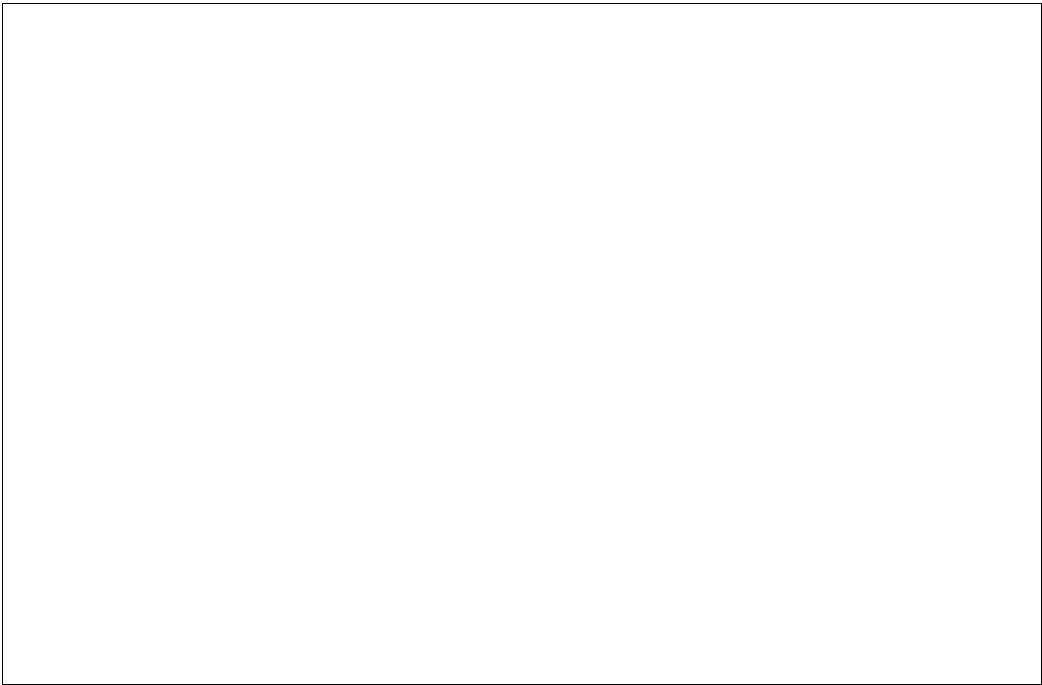
The price of entry also includes buying a quota. Quotas are legally not transferable per se, but attached to boats. To attain rights for the ‘full’ rights positions, one must buy a boat with a quota. A finite number of vessels with these rights exists and the prices of boats have increased to reflect an informal market for quotas.

Fishing authorities now have a stronger tool for controlling and distributing fishing opportunities than in the 1980s. Formal limits to expansion in the small-scale fleet have been established. Controlling expansion is regarded as crucial for successful fisheries management.

A success?
As such, the new regime is a success. But its success has a flip side. The new formal regulations have penetrated a system of production where the needs of the individual fisher and his or her household were crucial for fishing effort. Furthermore, the formal regulations seem to undermine the informal management

Changes in the fishing patterns of Norwegian small-scale fishers (1984-1994)

No. of vessels fishing	1984	1994	Change (No)	Change (%)
- less than 10 tons of cod	6 215	3 989	-2 226	-36
- between 10 and 50 tons of cod	1 659	2 297	+638	+38
- more than 50 tons of cod	359	244	-115	-32
Total	8 233	6 530	-1 703	-21



among fishers. The new regulations provide incentives for expansive strategies, whereas the former inherent restrictions are discontinued. One can no longer enjoy the benefits of a long career and perhaps enjoy family life while a neighbor fisher is at sea. It could mean becoming disqualified for fishing the following year.

Fishers' increased endeavors to fish their quota represent an increased pressure on the cod resource. This increased pressure is to be controlled by the new regulations. But there are loopholes in the formal control system, and clear incentives to use them. Changed harvest patterns may also have ramifications for stock composition.

From fishing heavily in the winter, fishing pressure is now shifting toward other times of the year. The impacts on stock composition might be positive or negative the point is that we do not know how changed fishing patterns are affecting the cod stock. Neither do we know how they are affecting species other than cod.

Restrictions in the cod fishery led to a shift towards fishing other species. With low cod quotas, many of those who experienced cuts turned to other resources to obtain sufficient incomes. Fishers also came to see this as a warranty for eventual future rights potentials. Fishers had learned a lesson and fear the same

regulations may be introduced for other species.

In conclusion, the effect of the new regulations is a transformation of small-scale fisheries. Small-scale fishing is an occupation for people in rural communities, where alternative job opportunities are scarce. The stated goals of Norwegian fishery policy are occupation and settlement in remote regions, as well as economic efficiency and sustainability of resources. From the viewpoints of these goals, the results of the new regulations are highly debatable.

Postscript: Shortly after 1990, cod stocks were seen as recovering, allowing for quotas corresponding to those before 1990. The last years' positive prognoses are now being reversed, however. Fishery biologists have again found the spawning stock to be below critical levels, and a large quota cut is expected to follow for the year 2000. Apparently, controlling the small-scale fishers has not been effective in controlling the cod stocks

This article is by Anita Maurstad, Associate Professor at the Norwegian College of Fishery Science, Troms, Norway

Oil exploration

For a few oil dollars more

The current plans of oil multinationals could drastically alter the livelihoods of the artisanal fishers of Cameroon

Oil exploration, production and transport are major activities in Cameroon and its neighbouring coastal West African States (Nigeria, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea). For over two years, a consortium, comprising the oil multinationals Elf, Shell and Exxon, has been developing the largest construction project in sub-Saharan Africa. It not only involves developing oilfields in Chad, but also constructing a 600-mile pipeline from these oilfields to Cameroon's Atlantic Coast. The project also intends to establish an export terminal in Kribi, a village situated in one of the most productive and dynamic artisanal fishing areas in Cameroon (the Campo-Kribi area). The US\$ 2.5 billion project is seeking a World Bank loan of US\$ 115 million.

The transport of oil from the offshore terminal at Kribi will be done by tankers of 80,000 to 300,000 tonnes. Such tankers have been responsible for the many oil spills recorded in the Gulf of Guinea. In particular, in 1979, the tanker Petro Bousca grounded near Kribi, spilled 800 cu m of oil. The present project, therefore, poses a serious risk of oil spillage. Such oil spills directly threaten the livelihoods of the 3000 fishermen and their families living in the Campo-Kribi area.

The Cameroon coast is situated in the Gulf of Guinea, and is located at a point of convergence of two major currents from the West and the Benguela current from the South. These currents are capable of both bringing in and spreading pollutants far and wide along the coastline. The Cameroon coastline is positioned in the Gulf of Guinea as a cul-de-sac, which represents special problems for dispersing and getting rid of oil spills. The 350-km coastline has important concentrations of mangrove forests, fish nurseries and

fishing villages, all of which are highly susceptible to the dangers from oil spills.

Cameroon derives its name from the abundance of shrimp in its coastal waters (camaron and camarao are, respectively, the Spanish and Portuguese names for shrimp). The rich resources of fish and crustaceans have always played an important role, particularly in providing the basis of coastal livelihoods and meeting local consumption needs. Available data shows that for the last ten years, fish has provided more than 40 per cent of the Cameroonians' protein requirements. As a result of the rising population and declining local production, the increasing demands for fish have to be met mainly by increased imports (60,000 tonnes in 1986).

In 1996, marine fish caught locally amounted to 64,000 tonnes, half of which was caught by small-scale fishermen. Despite the lack of reliable data on the artisanal fisheries sector, it is estimated that there could be around 20,000 small-scale fishermen, using some 5,000 pirogues.

The main species caught are the *bonga* (ethmalosas), *sardinellas* and croakers. Shrimp is also caught by small-scale fishermen, mainly for local consumption. Artisanal fishing is mainly performed in the 2-mile coastal zone, as well as in mangrove areas and estuaries. There are some 50 to 60 shrimp trawlers.

Anecdotal evidence

As in other West African coastal States, there is anecdotal evidence to show that conflicts exist between the shrimp trawlers and artisanal fishermen, but no official information is available on the subject. Neither is there any information on the activities of foreign fleets fishing in

Cameroonian waters. This would seem to imply a lack of consideration by the Cameroonian government for its fishing sector, particularly the artisanal sector.

In the fishing area of Campo- Kribi, designated for the location of the offshore oil terminal, there are about 3,000 small-scale fishermen, operating 500 pirogues. The different fishing community groups include the Mvae, the Batanga, Mabi and Yassa people. All these groups critically depend on fishing for their livelihood. Other coastal communities from Benin to Nigeria are also heavily dependent on both subsistence and commercial fishing.

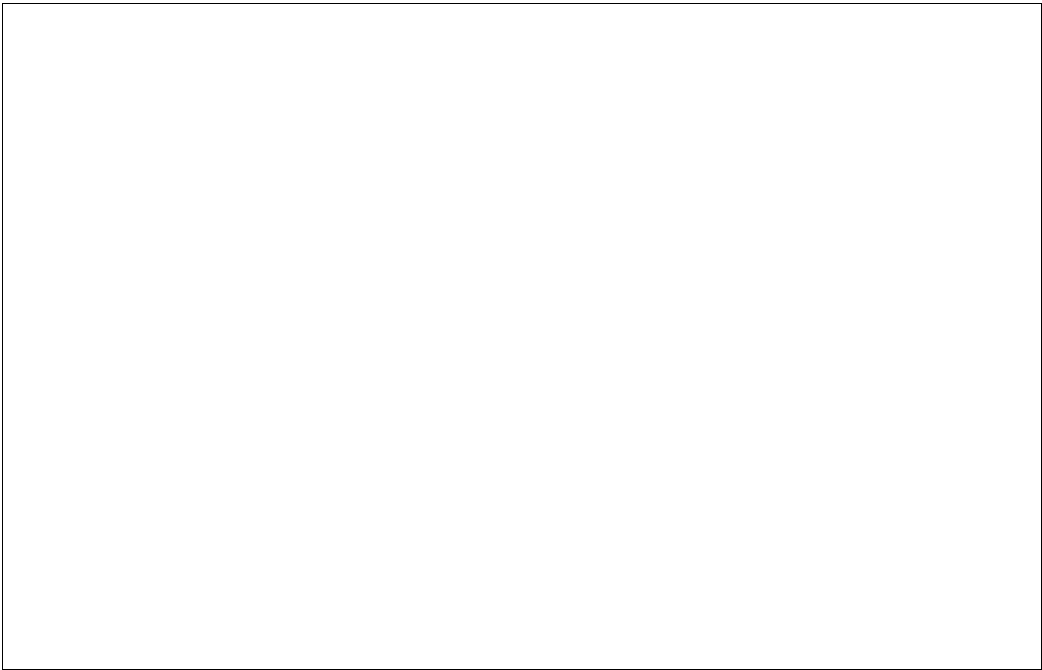
Fishing techniques include the use of nets, traps (nasses), and beach seines (locally called tirez-tirez or 'pull pull'). Most of the pirogues belong to non-fishermen—people from the administration or from the private sector—who see this as an opportunity for good business. Also, most of the fishing gear is imported, and to be fully equipped, a boatowner must invest the equivalent of around 40, 000 French Francs (around US\$ 6,000) for a pirogue with outboard engine, fishing gear, etc. This is a considerable constraint to fishermen becoming boatowners.

For fishing operations, pirogues generally go to sea for two nights and one day, with three fishermen on board. Half of the

income from the fish goes to the boatowner, the rest being shared among the fishermen. The fish is landed in one of the 38 landing points of the Campo-Kribi area, where women take the leading role in the post-harvest processes. Grouped in GIC (Groupe d'Initiative Commune), women engage in fish processing (salting, drying, smoking) of species like bongas (ethmalose) and sardinellas, locally called bilolo.

Fish smoking has an important impact on mangrove wood. In Cameroon, it is estimated that the open fires from burning mangrove wood for fish smoking is responsible for over 75 per cent of the total mangrove loss. Some attempts have been made to introduce more wood-efficient burning techniques (new designs of fish smokehouses, Chorkor ovens, etc), but only one group of women has taken up these techniques.

Several campaigns
Several groups have been campaigning in Cameroon against the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline. Their efforts have been supported by hundreds of development and environmental organizations from all over the world. In their campaign against the pipeline, these groups, like DEC (Défense de l'Environnement Camerounais) have been in contact with the fishermen from the Campo-Kribi area. The main concerns of the fishermen interviewed are the diminishing



resources, the lack of information on fisheries regulations, pollution and the destruction of the coastal zones through the oil industry and exploitation of iron mines.

3

In November 1999, following continual pressures from these Cameroonian groups and the support given internationally, Shell and Elf (Exxon is the third partner) officially pulled out of the project. But, in view of the past tactics of these oil multinationals in the area (Nigeria in particular), there is little doubt about the dangers to be faced in the future. Given the pressures on indebted countries' governments to earn foreign exchange, there are bound to be other attempts to trade the livelihoods of small producers and small fishing communities for a few oil dollars more.

This article has been compiled from several sources, based on information received from Bela Nga Joseph of DEC (Défense de l'Environnement Camerounais), a Camaroonian NGO working on sustainable development issues

The smoke lingers on

A grateful grandson recollects the special skills of a grand old fish processor in Ghana

The mid-1960s and early 1970s seem to be fading away fast, especially if one recollects experiences and the oral history of that period. It is against this background that this article is being written to highlight memories of fish processing in my childhood. Much reference will be made to my grandmother as she was the one I stayed with and from whom I learnt much of the processing techniques.

The period under consideration (1963-1973) saw the beginning of the destruction of the Keta township in Ghana, as a result of the construction of the Tema harbour. Keta used to be the hub of all fishing and fishing-related activities in the south-eastern part of Ghana. Its market was so popular that traders from Togo, Benin and Nigeria patronized it constantly until the sea flooded the road leading to it. One can not talk about fishing in Ghana without mentioning this town.

What is left of it today is a thin stretch of land between the sea and the lagoon, believed to be the largest in West Africa. Behind this lagoon is situated Agbozume, where my grandmother was born and had practiced her vocation. It will be misleading to say that Agbozume was a fishing village. The lagoon, the sea, the coconut plantations and nature's woodlands provided a rich economic diversity to this village.

Fish processing was a major economic activity of the women of the village at the time. During lean seasons, oil and cake processed from coconut (for animal feed), and mat weaving were the vocations of the women. Most of the fishmongers of this village carried fuel wood to the beaches to smoke the fish. Others with low capitals exchanged wood for fish that they

normally sent back for processing. Logoshie, my grandma, as her peers called her, rose up as a vendor of her mother's fish products to become a processor/wholesaler. A mother of seven, she managed to combine her household and social obligations to run this business until she died at the age of 78.

Fish smoking and fermentation were her specialty. These two traditional processing technologies were very important as involve only minor economic losses and maximizes the use of the resource. Very fresh fish was smoked and those that could not be smoked quickly were either dried or fermented. Smoked-fish buyers will first taste the product before purchasing, so it was in the interest of processors to use quality fresh fish.

Grandma had several fish-smoking points in almost all the fish-landing villages in the Keta district. She hired people to help when there was a bumper harvest; otherwise, the main tasks were performed by my mother and her sister. The fresh fish was purchased from fishermen who had family links with her. This relationship was important, as sometimes their fishing trips were sponsored by her. She also collected the fish and made payment after sales, especially during major seasons. The main species she processed were sardinella and anchovy.

Great skills

The fish was first washed in fresh water and laid out on coconut palms to remove some of its liquid content, after which it was smoked. Great skill was needed in smoking, since the liquid level in the fish before smoking, could determine the taste, while the different types of wood used for smoking imparted different tastes. For instance, the use of sugar cane



for smoking led to a very well finished end product.

The round traditional oven was the order of the day. Grandma smoked between 100 and 400 basins a week, depending on the season. Unless there was a glut, Grandma never sold her products on the beach, but would send them home for a second smoking. If the product could not be sold, periodic smoking was done to keep insects away.

Fermentation was done with bigger fishes, vava being the first choice, as it was an important flavouring ingredient for the Ewes in Ghana, Togo and Benin. Grandma had a unique way of fermenting her product. The fish was kept in a salt solution for three days and then sun-dried for two or three days. She then wrapped the fish in brown paper and buried it in the sand. The top of the sand was covered with thatch to prevent rain water from seeping down. This product was kept this way until the market recovered .

The chunk of Gandma’s products were sold by her daughters—my mum sold the smoked fish, while my aunt handled the fermented product. My mum traveled from Dakpa, a village close to the Ghana-Togo border, where she lived and sold the wares. Denu and Dzodze markets were important for my aunt, as these places were patronized by traders from Togo and Benin. During lean seasons,

Grandma also sold some of the products to customers who came directly to the village to buy.

I found myself in this village at the early age of eight, as a result of the loss of my father. My mother could not cope with the economic consequences, as she was then weaning her third boy. So I was posted to join two other cousins living with Grandma at the village.

Social and economic responsibilities were organized along gender and age lines in all households. By the rules, as a growing boy, I was not expected to take part in many home chores, including fish smoking. Fortunately or unfortunately, my two cousins were much younger than I, so I virtually became solely responsible for all chores. One of them was to take care of the processed fish in Grandma’s storage room. This involved stacking the fish into the smokers and heating them up from time to time. It was a painful task at the time, as I had little time to play with my peers.

Displeasure
Additionally, I had to vend some of the fish, if grandma needed money or realized that a portion was going bad. The sale was done in the village, to my displeasure, as my peers gave me all kinds of names and laughed at me — vending was, and remains, a female’s job, irrespective of age. However, I got a satisfying thrill by

stealing some fish and sharing it with friends at school. This was done to spite those who called me to order during vending.

Although Grandma was illiterate and therefore organized her business empirically, she was very successful in making the venture grow. She had plenty of financial management skills and generally earned a lot to cover her fixed and variable costs. I never saw her broke. The walls of her storage room were the basis of her bookkeeping. A particular symbol stood for a customer and she could tell how much each one owed her by counting the strokes on the wall.

Before her death, Grandma managed to change her traditional mud house into a structure of sandcrete blocks. With that, the seasonal renovation of our thatch roof became a thing of the past. Unfortunately, it was a piece of the iron sheet used in the roofing that saw her untimely death. The piece was left in the sand by the artisans and she got pricked by it. The village fetish priest tried out certain sacrifices to save her, but the tetanus got her in the end.

Today, I have realized that Grandma's success story was a result of the fish species she utilized, the quality of processing, her perfect control of fresh-fish supplies, her access to markets and the technologies she applied.

In those days, entertainment was a family affair, with the impartation of knowledge through oral history topping the list. After the evening meals, we, the grandchildren, would gather around Grandma for her stories. That was how I learnt a lot about the fishery. Unfortunately, she is not alive or I would have loved to pose her some questions now. Among them would have been how she got her capital and the seasonal variations of her activities.

Although Grandma is gone, the 'smoke' lingers on as, in my work with TESCO, I try to improve the oven she used and introduced me to.

This piece is by David Eli, who works with Technical Services for Community Development (TESCO), Accra, Ghana

First person

3

Tuna fishing

A flag-waving squabble

Some quarters believe that action is needed to eliminate 'Flag of Convenience' tuna fishing vessels

Representatives of 128 Japanese tuna fishing boat companies have launched a campaign to end unregulated fishing for tuna in the oceans of the world. Under the acronym ATTACK (All Japan Tuna Boatowners Tactical Unit), the group is demanding that its government and trading companies ban imports of tuna from unregulated pirate tuna vessels.

Tuna, one of the world's most prized food fish, is currently being fished at, or over, the limits of sustainable use in most of the world's waters. To prevent overfishing, most tuna fishing nations have established regional tuna conservation organizations such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and have adopted regulations to prevent overfishing. At a global level, rules for sustainable tuna fishing practices were adopted through the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN Agreement on Straddling Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

Early this year, Japan took the lead in reducing tuna fishing effort by scrapping 20 per cent of its tuna fishing fleet, in response to the adoption by the 23rd FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome in February 1999, of a Plan of Action for the management of fishing capacity. (Article 39 of the Plan states that States should take immediate steps to address the management of fishing capacity for international fisheries requiring urgent attention, with priority being given to those harvesting transboundary, straddling, highly migratory and high-seas stocks which are significantly overfished. Article 40 (3) further states that the required reduction would vary

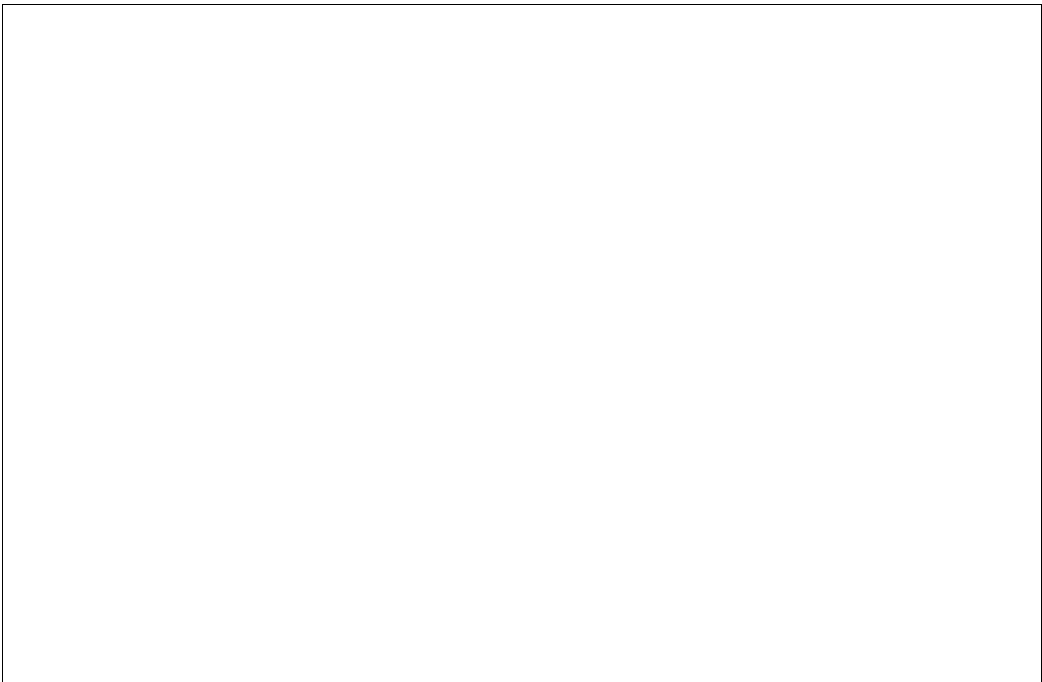
from fishery to fishery; e.g. a 20-30 per cent reduction was mentioned for large-scale tuna longline fleets. Taiwan and the Republic of Korea also pledged to reduce their tuna fishing capacity over the next few years.

But some tuna fishing boatowners, unwilling to submit to regulations, fled their national jurisdictions and re-registered their vessels in countries that allowed them to operate like pirates, preying freely on tuna stocks, without regard to catch quotas or conservation measures agreed upon by members of regional or international conservation organizations. These pirate vessels, operating under 'flag of convenience' (FOC), now number around 240, and 80 per cent are Taiwanese-owned.

As Japan is the major market for high-quality sashimi grade tuna, ATTACK urged the Japanese government to deny Japanese markets to tuna caught by pirate vessels. In fact, almost all of tuna caught by FOC tuna fishing vessels are exported to Japan, currently around 47,000 tonnes a year, and almost 25 per cent of frozen tuna requirements are imported. Almost twice as many FOC tuna fishing vessels as the number of scrapped Japanese tuna fishing vessels are continuing their fishing even today.

Initiative needed

ATTACK insists that the pain and sacrifice that our fishermen and families as well as those related to the tuna fishing business have suffered from scrapping 132 tuna longline fishing vessels would be nullified if FOC vessels continue their pirate fishing. The group believes that Japan should take the initiative to eliminate FOC tuna vessels, and ban the trade of any tuna caught by FOC vessels. That would be the most effective measure to ensure sustainability



of tuna resources and tuna fisheries in the world. It has also demanded that Japanese trading companies stop buying tuna from pirate ships.

The problem of FOC fishing vessels is now a growing concern in the international community. The International Coalition of Fisheries Association (ICFA) discussed the problem at its annual meeting in Fremantle, Australia, during 9-11 November 1999. Members who participated came from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Taiwan, the US and the ASEAN region. ICFA adopted a resolution requesting nations to refrain from dealing with FOC vessels and products, including denying port access, product transport, and trade and distribution. Further, ICFA urged the Government of Japan to take effective measures to prohibit the import of any tuna caught by FOC tuna fishing vessels. The resolution was delivered to the Government of Japan by an ICFA representative.

ICCAT also adopted the resolution to eliminate FOC fishing vessels at its 16th regular meeting held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during 15-22 November 1999, where 27 governments and EU participated. Each government is required to ensure that its fishing vessels do not engage in Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) tuna longline fishing activities. Trade of fish caught by IUU

vessels should also be refrained. Other measures were also included in the resolution. The important point is that the list of FOC tuna fishing vessels submitted by the US and Japan was formally acknowledged by ICCAT. The list is useful for every government to take appropriate measures.

Every effort should be continuously made until FOC tuna fishing vessels are completely eliminated from the ocean to ensure sustainability of the important marine resources for people throughout the world, both for present and future generations.



This appeal has been written by Yuichiro Harada, Staff Officer, International Division, Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Co-operative Associations, with the assistance of Alan Macnow, Telepress Associates, Inc

Fishworker Organizations' sites

Weaving the Net

Fishworker organizations need to show that they need to better utilize the power and reach of the Internet through well-designed pages

Fishworker Organizations (FOs) are increasingly realizing the potential and power of the Internet as a tool for communication. Compared to other means of communication, the Internet has greater reach and is comparatively cheaper. The majority of the FOs with a presence on the Internet are based in the developed countries, mostly in the US. In fact, in all of the North and the South, there are only a handful of small-scale FOs who have put up Websites, though more and more FOs in the North have started using the medium.

Though there are many powerful FOs and movements in developing countries, they have only a minimal presence on the Internet. There are some Latin American organizations who are now putting up their Websites. The high cost of computers and modems and the high tariffs are restricting factors that prevent FOs in the developing countries from adopting the technology. If the organizations do not have the technical skills in-house, there is the added costs involved in designing the Web pages, developing and updating their contents, and maintaining the sites.

A compiled list of resources related to fisheries and FOs on the Web is available at the Website of Gadus Associates <http://www.home.istar.ca/~gadus/links.html#index>

There must be many FOs on the Internet who are not 'visible' enough. This is especially likely of FOs whose sites are not in the English language. The popular search engines retrieve Web pages that are in English. At the most, they may retrieve French and Spanish documents too.

With popular search engines like Yahoo, AltaVista, Netscape, Excite, Infoseek and Lycos, even French and Spanish

documents are rarely retrieved. There are some specialized search engines which can get you the documents in languages other than English. Examples are Excite France and Yahoo France. Searches using a search engine which supports keywords in the local language may retrieve national and regional FO Websites. Some Websites provide icons to different language versions on the home page.

The importance given to safety at sea by the community FOs and commercial FOs in the developed countries is something remarkable. In the developing nations, especially in countries like India, the number of fishermen who go 'missing at sea' or die at sea is staggeringly high, though the exact figures are not available. The personnel and vessel safety regulations are, in general, better organized and monitored in the developed nations. In comparison, one can not but help feeling that human life has not much value in the South.

There are very few FO Websites that are actively updated and kept alive. For the majority of the sites, once they are created, nothing is done to update the information or the links they provide.

Better sites

In comparison, the Websites of commercial fishing and seafood industries are much better organized and updated. The Website of the Coastal Communities Network of Nova Scotia in Canada — <http://www.gdlewis.ednet.ns.ca/~coastal/> — is a fishworker community Website which gives information on the local fishworkers, their social status and role in the local economy, changes in the pattern of fish landings, specieswise data on yearly fish landings and quantities, and their value. There is also a small section on the role of women

in the local economy. Two reports on community-based fisheries co-management from 1995 and 1997 are available from the link to publications on the home page. The section, Community Updates, has current updates on various aspects related to local and regional fisheries, job opportunities in fisheries and news releases.

A conference report from June 1998 on coastal and rural communities is available on the Community Updates page. The Website also shares two traditional Nova Scotia recipes, M'ikmaq Eel soup and Solomon Gundy, complete with warnings on the after-effects!

The Website of CONAPACH (Confederacion Nacional De Pescadores Artesanales De Chile) — <http://www.conapach.cl/> — is in Spanish. It is an active Website, with links to its accessory bodies/programmes CEDIPAC (Corporación Para La Educación, Desarrollo E Investigación De La Pesca Artesanal De Chile) — <http://www.conapach.cl/asesoras/cedipac.htm> — CFP (Centro De Formación Polifuncional) <http://www.conapach.cl/asesoras/cfp.htm>, Unidad de Apoyo y Servicios Empresariales para la Pesca Artesanal, <http://www.conapach.cl/asesoras/unidadapoyo.htm>. On the site, there are documents on the campaigns against

Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and privatization of fisheries in Chile.

A write-up on the National Fishworkers Federation, India (NFF) is available on the URL <http://www.corpwatch.org/feature/india/interviews>. The Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association is a unique organization. Unfortunately, its Website — <http://www.gfwa.org/%7egfwa/index.html> — says it was last updated in February 1999.

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA) — <http://www.pond.net/~pcffa> — (“PCFFA is by far the largest and most politically active trade association of commercial fishermen on the west coast of the USA ...”) maintains a monthly column in the <http://www.fishermensnews.com>, a widely read, as well as the oldest, publication in West Coast Commercial fishing industry.

The World Forum of Fishworkers and Fish Harvesters (WFF) — <http://www.south-asian-initiative.org/wff/intro.htm> — gives information on its objectives, its structure, a list of members, addresses of some FOS, and links to a few other sites.

Downloadable
In the documents section, the report of the WFF meet in New Delhi (17-21 November 1997) is provided. The English version is available for downloading in

Websites

WordPerfect, MS Word zip and HTML zip formats. The Spanish and French versions are available in MS Word zip. The Website looks like it has not been updated since the November 1997 event in Delhi.

The Maritime Fishermen's Union site <http://www3.nbnet.nb.ca/mfuupm/> UPM is in English, but has French and Spanish links. It has a section which explains what MFU has done for the fishworkers. The MFU site discusses local fisheries management, policies, fishing quotas and catches.

Online fish marketing is gaining popularity in the developed countries. Fishmart at <http://www.fishmart.com> provides various commercial fishermen's marketing services in the US in various categories like fresh fish, frozen fish, shellfish as well as the commercially important species. Some FO Websites have provided links to online fishery market news and auction prices. The link Current Market Prices on the Maine Fishermen's Cooperative Association site <http://www.mefishcoop.com/> is an example.

National Fisherman online (<http://www.nationalfisherman.com>) has, besides other information, a link to the US Federal laws related to fisheries. This links up to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to access

important national laws like Magnuson Stevens Act and Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Act.

New Jersey Fishing (<http://www.fishingnj.org>) is a site maintained by the Garden State Seafood Association and FishNet US. It covers the New Jersey fish and seafood industry, harvesting techniques used by the local fishermen, the fish and shellfish they catch, along with recipes. It also discusses various coastal and ocean issues. Under Gear Effects, there is a list of links to resources discussing the effects of trawl and dredge fisheries. This section also features diagrams of some of these gears.

Many Websites give importance to detailed weather forecasts, which are updated twice a day or more. The Weather section of National Fisherman online —<http://www.nationalfisherman.com>— gives prevalent weather conditions in all the major fishing areas off the US and Canadian coasts. The area for which information is needed can be chosen from a map on the page. The information provided includes air pressure, wind speed, direction and wave height, all of which are crucial information for fishermen.

Weather info

The weather information provided by the Maine Fishermen's Co-operative Association — <http://www>

.mefishcoop.com — includes data from weather buoys in the sea as well.

LOST (Loved Ones of Sea Tragedy) —<http://www.irishmarine.com/lost.html> — is an Irish organization set up to help those who have lost family members at sea.

Women’s Fisheries Network — <http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/www/wfn.html> — is a national nonprofit network of women and men dedicated to educating members and non-members alike about issues confronting the commercial fishing and seafood industry.

North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners’ Association (NPFVOA) Vessel Safety Program —<http://www.halcyon.com/npfvoa/> — is a non-profit organization dedicated to safety education and training for fishermen and mariners. It was developed in 1985 in co-operation with the US Coast Guard.

FishFolk is a very interesting discussion group on the Internet for anyone with a serious interest in discussing fisheries management. There are sporadic discussions on the social aspects of fisheries and the status of small-scale fishworkers. The list has its own web site (<http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/www/fishfolk.html>) with information on how to subscribe, and biographical information on some list members. There is a searchable archive at <http://safmc.noaa.gov/safmcweb/library/Databases/Fishflksearch.html>, of many of the messages previously posted to FishFolk. To join, send the one-line message “subscribe fishfolk” to listserv@mitvma.mit.edu. Before you join the list, you may want to have a look at the list of frequently asked questions and their answers at <http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/advisory/fishfolkfaq.html>.

FishList is intended to cover similar ground to FishFolk, but with more emphasis on the seafood trade. It is also specifically intended for the commercially oriented messages that are often unwelcome on more academic lists, or at least inappropriate for them. FishList is run by The Fish Highway (<http://www.fishroute.com/>) or “FishRoute”

organization. To join, send the one-line message “subscribe fishroute” to fishlist@fishroute.com.

The Website of CRISLA (<http://assoc.wanadoo.fr/peche.dev/>) is in French. It provides information on industrial fisheries and the damages to artisanal, small-scale sector, fisheries agreements, women in fisheries, damaging effects of aquaculture, ecolabelling in fisheries, and the World Fisheries Day (21 November). The implications of ecolabelling is an issue which has not been adequately discussed by most FOS.

Overall, FOS have to go a long way to make their voices heard on the Internet. The technology is definitely cheaper than other conventional means of reaching out, like the print media. And the Internet provides the reach which no other technology has so far offered. So, it is desirable that we make good use of it.



This article has been written by Omkar G. Krishnan of ICSF’s Documentation Centre, Chennai, India

Beyond the sneers

The fourth instalment in the series on
the pioneer of Japan's fishery co-operative movement

After training the members of the regional federations for two years, we dissolved those federations and established branches of Dogyoren in their place in those central cities which the merchants were located, such as Nemuro, Hakodate, Hiyama, Kitami, Soya and Kushiro.

We had originally succeeded in having the FCAs jointly market scallop, squid and kelp. With this next step, however, we targeted the strong base of the merchants and attempted to set up our own base. For instance, we opened a Dogyoren branch office in Hakodate on the second floor of a bank building and made our presence known by painting 'DOGYOREN' on the windows in gilded letters.

The marine product merchants sneered at our venture, saying that if such laymen as the FCA members opened shop and tried to market their products without the assistance of the merchants, they would fail within half a year. I placed special emphasis on the Hakodate branch, and thus I sent two of the most competent and experienced men there — Shuzo Ito as the branch manager and Eio Monai as his assistant. They performed excellently in these positions, and the amount of transactions involving squid increased rapidly within a very short time period.

With the success of our venture, an anti-cooperative movement arose among the merchants. The Hakodate Association of Marine Products Traders submitted a petition to the Hokkaido government in the hope of protecting their vested interests in the trade. They contended that Dogyoren and the FCAs had an unfair advantage. They were strongly opposed to our activities, and this created various problems, so Mr Okuno, the Director of the Hokkaido Department of Industry,

called a meeting of the two sides to resolve some of the difficulties. About 100 representatives met in the Sapporo Grand Hotel.

Shortly after the meeting was opened, several merchants delegates arose in succession to criticise our activities. They accused us of having no knowledge of marine goods or trading practices, and of forgetting how much they had helped us. They questioned whether we would be able to repay our accumulated debts, and stated that our joint marketing practices should be halted and that we should leave the professional details to them.

At first, not one person from the FCAs stood up to argue with them. Okuno informed me that, since it was a government-sponsored meeting, he would not be able to close the meeting without hearing from the fishermen, so I encouraged some of the participants from the FCAs to stand up and speak. Finally, Tsutomu Takagi, who had once served as managing director of the Kitami Regional Federation, arose and spoke eloquently about the greed of the merchants. "We are only trying to sell the goods we produce with our own hands," he said. "That isn't so unreasonable, is it? We will definitely repay our debts, but how dare you use our debts as a pretext to protect your own commercial interests." The chairman of the Mitsuishi FCA stood up next and stated that the merchants had no right to meddle in the affairs of the new cooperative movement, and he accused them of appealing to the rules of an outdated commercial system.

New system

"If you want to work with us within the new system, we will welcome you," he said, "but we will not work with you if you cannot agree to change with the times".

The merchants could not respond to these well-reasoned arguments.

Okuno determined that the government must act, and he therefore nominated a certain Mr Suzuki to be the superintendent of the Department of Industry and Commerce. Suzuki said that the merchants had to adapt to the new age so that the businesses could develop. He pointed out that the government always encouraged the use of joint capital. He said, that since the fishermen were finally doing just that, it was shocking to see that the merchants continued to act selfishly and single-mindedly. Again, there was no response from the merchants.

I arose to speak at the end of the meeting. I thanked the merchants for stating their opinions, which we found to be reasonable in certain ways, as well as informative and helpful. However, I told them, it was wrong for them to insist on the commercial rights. Since squid was caught in all the seas around Hokkaido, we could see no reason to sell dried squid to the merchants in Hakodate. "I believe it is your responsibility as merchants to supply Hakodate with goods. It is not that we want to sell to merchants in other regions; we would appreciate it if you would agree to buy our prices. However, you must remember that fishermen must struggle to make a living, and if we cannot get a satisfactory price from you

merchants, we will look for other buyers. We are simply using the cooperative to escape poverty.

"You must understand that the times are changing, and the cooperatives will be established not only in Hokkaido, but throughout the nation. We will soon establish a national federation. You are free to limit the commercial areas of Hakodate or Otaru or other cities as far as they are related to your personal business, but that does not concern us. We respect you for your contributions to the development of Hokkaido, but you must keep in step with the times. We have made up our minds, and we intend to succeed, so please don't worry about us".

After this meeting, we were able to promote joint marketing smoothly. When speaking about this process, I have often described it with the term "cooperative revolution". If we had not severed the relationships between the merchants and the fishermen, we could not have developed the cooperatives. That meeting was therefore a truly significant event. The FCAs of other prefectures did not undergo cooperative revolutions as we did, so the merchants in those prefectures were still able to appeal to the feudalistic concepts of 'favours' and 'obligations'.

Joint marketing

The first step in joint marketing is for the FCA to collect the fishermen's products. In

order to do this, we have to instruct the fishermen regarding the cooperative ideals and have them unite. Then we have to negotiate with the buyers to determine the prices. To do this, we have to collect at least 50% of the total Hokkaido catch so as to gain some control over the market. From my experience, I knew that we would thus change the conditions from those of a buyer's market to those of a seller's market.

When negotiating the prices, we have to determine in advance the estimated cost and the potential supply and demand. At certain times, we must keep the prices down, such as when the buyers have retained stock or if the current year's harvest is good.

The FCAs and the Dogyoren can succeed in joint marketing only if they negotiate properly. If this is done by tender, the merchants will engage in speculation and we will fail, as was evident from so many cases. In 1965, for example, the price of salmon was 40% higher than in average years, since large canning companies were buying up all the salmon. We warned the FCAs that they had to keep the prices low, since selling at such an extraordinarily high price was too risky.

The cooperative must not sell at such high prices simply to satisfy the producers; it must take into consideration the demands of the consumers. The entire society would benefit if prices were kept stable and reasonable. Furthermore, we had to remember that the cooperative was an ongoing venture, not simply a one-time effort, and that we had to rely on continual dealing with our customers.

At the time we were developing the FCAs, the military came to have more and more influence on the central government, particularly after the colonization of Manchuria.

It therefore became difficult for us to export marine products to China, which had been the largest market for such products as dried squid, kelp, scallop, and abalone. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was forced to find a way to export marine products through one channel to China. It established the Japan Marine Products

Trading Company, a venture which consisted of three major companies, along with the National Federation of FCAs (Zengyoren), and Dogyoren.

Miyozo Takakusa, the chairman of Zengyoren, was appointed president of this company, and I was appointed the Sapporo branch manager, while retaining my position as managing director of Dogyoren. We recruited Mr Kagato Matsuo, of one of the participating companies, to be managing director. He was not only well-versed in marketing, but he was also very knowledgeable about the role of cooperatives.

All marine products which were to be exported were collected by this company, and the government's control of trade therefore became stronger. Not long after the company was established, I went to Tokyo, and while there, I was surprised to see in the newspapers that the government had applied an 'Official Price Control System' to marine products.

I was shocked by the news. I had never thought that our joint marketing would have to deal with a system of price controls, and I did not know how we could operate under such a system. It was unthinkable that the government would set a price for the various marine products, since the production level fluctuated yearly due to natural conditions. The government seemed to be preparing for the coming war by controlling the economy as well as repressing freedom of speech and the media.



This instalment is excerpted from *The Autobiography of Takatoshi Ando*, translated by Naoyuki Tao and James Colyn

Chinese puzzle

Despite devolution of power, only better co-ordination between the central and provincial/local governments will save Chinese fisheries

With a seaboard of 320,000 km and a continental shelf of 374,000 sq km, China is the largest producer of fish in the world. In 1997, its marine fish production amounted to over 20 million tonnes. Most of the marine production is taken from the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea. The most commercially significant species are hairtail, small yellow croaker, large yellow croaker, filefish, round scad, Japanese anchovy, chub mackerel, Japanese Spanish mackerel, golden thread fin, pomfret, blue crab, conger pike, Chinese herring and various species of shrimp.

According to Chinese sources, the notion of fisheries management in China can be traced back to the Xia Dynasty (2100 to 1600 BC), which prohibited fishing during the summer spawning season. There is reference to the finite nature of resources of the lake and the sea in a book titled *Guanzi, baguanpian*, written during the time of the Chun Qiu Dynasty (770 to 476 BC). This is interesting because, until recently, the world at large believed in the inexhaustible nature of the sea. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1369-1911 AD), fisheries management-related activities were specified — perhaps the earliest attempt in the world to manage the fisheries.

In spite of this hoary past, the marine fishing industry developed in China mainly after the 1940s. Bottom trawling, introduced from the US and Japan, has been the principal fishing method, accounting for over half the current fish production. The open-door policy of the Chinese Government led to privatization of fisheries since the 1980s, which led thousands of new entrants into the marine fisheries, many of whom are not even

licensed. Worse, the price liberalization policy of 1985 allowed fishers to sell their catch anywhere, even at sea.

There are basically three kinds of ownership structure in Chinese fisheries: ownership under the State; under the private sector; and under collective units. 'Collective' is the generic name for communes. Since the introduction of the open-door economic policy, the collectives have, in fact, become small-scale private fishing companies. So, essentially, fishing vessels operate under either State or private ownership.

The State-owned enterprises are operating at a tremendous loss because of decline in production and high operational costs of large fishing vessels. More and more fishers are becoming owners of fishing vessels, and, increasingly, smaller and smaller vessels are replacing large vessels in Chinese fishing grounds. This puts tremendous pressure on the enforcement machinery, which is basically designed to cater to fisheries with large vessels. The authorities also have problems in controlling indiscriminate fleet expansion. There is, for example, a marked increase in vessels under 20 m length. There is a tremendous growth in the sales of outboard motors, which are numerous — there are no reliable statistics on how many are, in fact, operating.

Unreliable statistics

Chinese fisheries statistics, which were fairly reliable about 15 years ago, are no longer so accurate because of the difficulty in keeping track of the fishing effort of smaller vessels. There are reportedly about 300,000 fishing vessels in China today, most of which would be less than 24 m in length. The vessels, however, are classified according to horsepower (HP).

China

Most of the boats in operation are the small ones (below 20HP) and they have been growing at an annual rate of about 15 per cent.

Fisheries managers are acutely aware of the need to reduce capacity, but they do not know what to do with the large fishers population, about five million in the marine fisheries sector. There is a smattering of labour migrants to Taiwan and countries like Korea and Japan but there are certainly more people moving into the marine fisheries than moving out.

The Chinese fisheries management currently relies mainly on input control measures, which are perceived to be inadequate by the fisheries authorities themselves. The most significant management measure currently in use is the closed season. Since 1978, there was a two-month closed season, which in 1998 was extended to three months. During the closed season, it is illegal to even have your fishing gear either in the water or on board a vessel, irrespective of whether you are fishing or not. Although this is the most effective Chinese fisheries

management tool, it does not really take care of the overcapacity problem: fishing power continues to exist; it is not reduced as a result of the annual closed season. According to official sources, Chinese fisheries managers would actually like to see a combination of input and output control as well as technical measures to resolve the problem, but the political will at, and below, the provincial level is still not strong enough.

One of the political means to reduce fishing pressure in Chinese waters has been to encourage distant-water fishing (DWF) operations. The Chinese have been in DWF since 1985 and about 1,200 Chinese trawlers are currently operating in DWF. About 15,000 Chinese work on board these vessels, which operate in the EEZs of Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau (for octopus and fin fish), Morocco (squid and octopus), Senegal (fin fish and octopus), Sierra Leone (shrimp and squid), Yemen, Argentina (squid) and some South Pacific countries (tuna).

Capacity limits
Capping capacity is an important policy consideration and there is a moratorium

Inside view	
<p>A small-scale fishing unit that I visited in San Yan town, Jinsan District, Shanghai, mainly operated 10-m set-net units. Crews of three, at a depth 10-20 m, operate these units. The catch composed mainly of trash fish. Another collective fishing unit operated larger fishing vessels.</p> <p>My visit was at a time when the fishery was closed. Most of the boats that I saw were over 20 years of age. They looked really dilapidated and old. Some of them had heavy stone weights; none was painted and those that were, had the paint all peeled off. It was said that some of the boats were, in fact, over 60 years old.</p> <p>An average fishing trip reportedly lasts 10 days. There are about 180 fishing days in a year. During the closed season, no financial assistance is made to the fishers by the State. On an average, a fisher earns about us\$100 a month. For State-owned companies, however, the Government pays the minimum wage during the closed season.</p>	<p>The investment in fisheries is made, in most instances, from own or family savings. There are, however, instances when bank loans are taken. There is no auction of fish. The fish is sold according to prevailing market prices. The captain of the boat receives a payment about 20 to 30 per cent above the crew.</p> <p>Stock declines due to increased fishing effort is a major problem. In the past, women were involved in making fishing nets. None of the women who belong to the commune is involved in fishery-related activities now; they all work in industries owned by the commune that produce textiles, shoes or car safety belts.</p> <p>The fishers above 50 years of age are often illiterate; however, those younger than that have mostly completed secondary education. To join fisheries, you should be at least 17 years old and should have completed secondary school. The fishers have to be licensed but there is no licence fee. Fishing without a licence can lead to the confiscation of the craft and gear as well as the imposition of a fine.</p>

<div>China</div>	<div> <div> <h2>A company in trouble</h2> </div> <div> <p>The Shanghai Marine Fisheries Co. Ltd. used to be one of the biggest in China and is owned by the municipal government. Once it operated 238 fishing boats, mainly trawlers and purse-seiners. Now only 23 fishing boats are operating in the Chinese waters.</p> <p>The largest vessels owned by the company are factory trawlers fishing in the northwest Pacific, which have a capacity ranging from 2000-3000GRT. These vessels were imported second-hand from Germany. Large squid jiggers, about 63 m long, are also operated.</p> <p>Due to the decline in fish production, 10 big trawlers that belong to the company have been tied up in the wharf. The resources are declining very fast. Collective fishing operations, which are small-scale, make it difficult for the vessels to effectively compete. The company has ceased its trawling operations in, for example, the East China Sea, because of competition from collective fishing operations, which operate much smaller fishing vessels with lower capacities.</p> <p>As a result, since 1985, the company has been diversifying into distant-water fishing operations and factory trawling. Distant-water fishing operations take place in Yemen, Argentina, Mauritania, Morocco and the South Pacific. The company operates 69 vessels under 17 joint ventures with local companies. Thirty-three of these vessels are in squid jigging.</p> <p>Three reasons were attributed to overfishing of Chinese marine fisheries resources: first, there</p> </div> <div> <p>was too much capacity built into the fishing companies under State control; second, the emergence of smaller fishing vessels under the collective ownership; and third, marine pollution from industrial activities. It was observed that the stocks will not recover in the short run and that controlling fishing effort is very important for stocks to recover, which means many fishing units should withdraw from fishing.</p> <p>About 1,900 workers were laid off as a result of fleet restructuring. Those above 50 years of age were given compulsory retirement although some were absorbed into non-fishery jobs. Some went back to their villages. And some were retrained to participate in the distant-water fisheries.</p> <p>The workers on Chinese vessels are paid salaries linked to production. Although a basic minimum is guaranteed, the ceiling is not fixed. There are labour unions in fisheries, and their representatives participate in management decisions. All policies of the company have to be discussed and approved by the labour union. The company provides housing, health and schooling facilities to its workers.</p> <p>Faced with overfishing and overcapacity, the company wants to decrease its participation in fisheries. The main problem they face is with the big vessels, which are less amenable to diversification. The alternative options they are considering are marine transportation, starting mariculture/aquaculture operations and concentrating on shore-based fisheries-related business.</p> </div> </div>
	<div> <p>on building new vessels, except to replace existing ones. There was a ceiling, for example, in 1981 on the total number of vessels, but the provincial and local governments would not comply with it. The ceiling is periodically revised and observed mainly in its violation. There is even a thriving market for old vessels between the provincial government and the collective fishing units. Now, with the collapse of several stocks, the market for second-hand vessels is poor.</p> <p>Any planning for better fisheries management in China has to overcome the most pressing problem of the lack of co-ordination between the Central and provincial/local governments. While the</p> </div> <div> <p>Central Government is interested in effective fisheries management, the provincial and municipal governments are still concerned with recovering their investments in fisheries. The local governments apparently have an investment protection policy. They are primarily interested in protecting the short-term interests of their fishing industry. The management measures proposed by the Central Government are often not implemented.</p> <p>Devolution of power in the case of China seems, sadly, to have led to a situation of overfishing and overcapacity. The Centre is concerned about these problems but it has yet to find a positive response from the</p> </div>

provincial and local governments. Several of the controls introduced by the Central Government are apparently violated. The total quantum of fish production has a significant proportion of lower trophic-level species and juveniles.

Although, for instance, a potential collapse of green filefish stocks was predicted as early as 1988, no action was taken to prevent their collapse, which finally happened in 1991. The output of hairtail is now high, but the size of fish caught is getting progressively smaller, which makes scientists fear a repetition of the green filefish collapse.

In the national waters, the Bureau of Fisheries is responsible for implementing both the central and provisional fisheries legislation. The enforcement capacity of the Bureau is, however, rather weak. It is beleaguered by lack of financial resources, a dearth of trained staff and a shortage of patrol boats. Retired army hands often man the enforcement activities.

To make matters worse, there is a large influx of peasants into marine fishing operations. About 10 to 20 per cent of fishers are believed to be formerly agricultural peasants. There is migration of peasants into fisheries in Sichuan, He Nan, An Hui and Guanzhou Provinces.

Most of these farmer-turned fishermen are in the small-scale sector and work as crew for fishermen who own boats. Since the labour is cheap, owner-operator fishermen hire workers from the hinterland.

On the whole, it is reported that the quality of life of a fisher is better than that of a farmer, even in the prosperous coastal belt.

The Chinese capture fisheries are increasingly beleaguered by overfishing and overcapacity. How long China will be able to maintain its high production levels in relation to capture fisheries is open to question.

Unless quick measures are implemented, China will lose its primacy in marine capture fisheries to other countries. Although attempts are being made to diversify into distant-water fisheries, the

Lobsters and King Cobras

Shanghai Chaoan Siping Aquatic Market is the biggest fish market in China. Its frozen fish market is more than 30 years old. In addition to fishmeal, which goes entirely to the aquaculture industry, it imports an amazing variety of fish, ranging from hairtail to Patagonian tooth fish, which is sold at us\$150 a kg in some fancy restaurants. The high-value fish are all consumed in restaurants. The most expensive fish caught in Chinese waters is the golden-coloured large yellow croaker, which fetches about us\$100 a kg. The main market for high-value species is big businesses that buy expensive fish on entertainment expense accounts. The Chinese love to take their guests out to restaurants, as part of their tradition. In the restaurant where I was taken out for dinner, there were live lobsters from Australia, New Zealand and Norway, and stone crabs from the US. Of course, there were also live King Cobras in cages!

One of the marketplaces that I visited was recently set up and managed by a woman. It is now in the process of developing facilities to handle imported live fish. The market is owned by a co-operative that has a variety of businesses, including tea. The market not only handles fish, cephalopods and crustaceans but also farmed snakes and turtles.

future prospects in these fishing grounds look rather bleak, since they are also increasingly overfished. Unless the problems of overfishing, overcapacity and underemployment in fisheries are effectively managed, the Chinese fisheries will face a major crisis in the near future.

This article by Sebastian Mathew, executive Secretary of ICSF, is based on a recent visit to Beijing and Shanghai

News Round-up

Baywatch

Massive pollution in the Bay of Bengal is threatening the stock of marine fisheries, and the volume of fishing in **Bangladesh** has declined alarmingly in the last few years, the official BSS news agency has recently reported.

Experts fear that fisheries resources might dwindle further, and fin fish and shellfish could become extinct if pollution in the Bay of Bengal's water continues. The Bay is enriched with nutrients, supplied by a network of rivers and their tributaries

The present problems spring from industrial toxic waste, oil spills, dumping of trash fish, illegal and overfishing, siltation and flood water

stagnation, increase in inland wastes, artificial hatcheries, fishermen's ignorance of the bay's fish stock and mismanagement of the marine sector.

A survey by the Fisheries Resources Institute of the Department of Fisheries, Chittagong University, revealed that the use of pesticides has increased by 400 per cent since 1977.

Giant needs

In **Sweden**, giant shrimps are a relatively new product, not a traditional fare for which well-established eating habits have evolved. This fact is working to the

advantage of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), which, since 1995, has been trying to draw attention to the problem of the production of giant shrimps. The SSNC believes that it will be possible to persuade consumers and the trade to manage without giant shrimps.

The SSNC is working with several environmental organizations in the South — in Ecuador, Honduras, Malaysia,

Thailand and India — which are in various ways heavily involved in the problems associated with the demand for giant shrimps. The problems concern both farmed supplies and natural shrimps caught in the open sea. The SSNC is part of an international network that consists of members from producing countries as well as consumer countries.

Mangroves forever

The rapid depletion of the mangrove forest area that once covered the entire coastline of Orissa in **India** is being cited as one important reason for the recent cyclone lashings that have been plaguing the coastline area.

Several times in the past, ecologists have warned that the Orissa coast was headed for major disaster. The first warning was issued in 1971, when a severe cyclonic storm battered the shores, claiming more than 10,000 lives, a number far surpassing previous records. Although the Orissa coast was subject to two devastating cyclones in 1885 and 1892, the 1971 cyclone was far more damaging. Several villages and

hamlets close to the sea near Paradip were swept away by waves and the toll was officially recorded at more than 10,000.

Citing these instances, ecologists claim that the

frequency of cyclones has registered an alarming trend since the 1970s and attribute it to the large-scale exploitation of the mangrove vegetation. Remote sensing pictures taken by Salyut-7 during the 1970s revealed that every year, nearly 2.5 sq km of mangrove vegetation has been depleted or cleared in the Orissa coast.

Virus at large

A strange new virus is attacking the larvae of shrimp aquaculturists in the State of Sinaloa, **Mexico**, raising the mortality of Sinaloa's farmed shrimp. Mexican officials believe that the appearance of this new shrimp disease could give international environmental groups that are opposed to the industry a pretext to call for a boycott of Mexican seafood.

This new affliction, which some are

calling ENH virus, is said to be under control now, according to official Mexican sources, but the final diagnostic would not be known for another couple of weeks. Nevertheless, the president of the Aquaculture Chamber, admitted that in Nayarit and in the central zones and south of Sinaloa, there has been a high incidence of this new virus strain.

Reserved for good

The Islamic Republic of **Iran** has designated Govater Bay and Hur-e-Bahu as its 19th Wetland of International Importance. This 75,000-ha area comprises the

riverine and estuarine wetlands of the lower Sarbaz River, including permanent freshwater pools and marshes, mangrove

swamps and intertidal mudflats, and also the sandy beach of the adjacent Gulf of Oman coast in the extreme southeast of Iran (Persian Baluchistan) right up to the border with Pakistan. The site is important for *Crocodylus palustris* and wintering waterfowl, notably *Pelecanus crispus*, shorebirds, gulls and terns.

World Fisheries Day

Fishworkers all over the world celebrated the World Fisheries Day on 21 November under the banner of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), which has a member representation of 23 organizations from 21 countries from all the continents of the world. Although many countries have officially declared 21 November as World Fisheries Day, the day still remains an occasion for celebration by the workers.

The main idea behind the celebration, according Thomas Kocherry, Co-ordinator of the WFF, is to build transnational solidarity among the fishworkers of the world. Just as their seas do not have any boundaries, so too their love and solidarity find no boundaries. Apart from the celebratory aspect, it is also a day of thanksgiving and

affirmationthanksgiving to our mother sea who is the protector and sustainer of our lives, and affirmation to protect her from all kinds of exploitation.

Customary owners

Indigenous fishermen of **Fiji** will soon be able to claim ownership rights to their customary fishing grounds or qoliqoli. Fiji's Cabinet has recently approved the drafting of new legislation to bring this into effect. The Cabinet says that the decision honours a long-standing request from the Great Council of Chiefs and on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and Minister for Fijian Affairs.

Until now, the Fijians' customary rights of usage of their qoliqoli have been provided for in the Fisheries Act. The ownership rights to these areas are vested in the State under the Crown Lands Act.

The Cabinet has been quick to reassure other communities in Fiji that their rights of access to the waters and fisheries will continue to be respected. Commercial fishing activities will still need to have a licence to continue.

Pay, no pay

The Government of **Kiribati** has agreed

on a revised working contract as well as new wages for Kiribati seamen employed on German ships. The seamen will now enjoy the same ratings as their German counterparts.

The agreement also

has a financial benefits component that will provide aid in the event of accidents and deaths. Those seamen who work on board ships plying in a war zone will now get 100 per cent of their salaries as bonus.

Meanwhile, Kiribati seamen employed on Korean fishing vessels are sore that they have not been paid salaries since June. Following the Kiribati government's takeover of the management of the seamen's employment conditions aboard the Korean ships, the families of the seamen were expecting the remittances to be paid regularly. The Kiribati government is said to be investigating the matter.

The strong, unstaggering breeze abounded so, that sky and air seemed vast outbellying sails; the whole world boomed before the wind. Muffled in the full morning light, the invisible sun was only known by the spread intensity of his place; where his bayonet rays moved on in stacks. Emblazonings, as of crowned Babylonian kings and queens, reigned over everything. The sea was as a crucible of molten gold, that bubblingly leaps with light and heat.

—from *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville



ICSF is an international NGO working on issues that concern fishworkers the world over. It is in status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN and is on ILO's Special List of Non-Governmental International Organizations. It also has Liaison Status with FAO. Registered in Geneva, ICSF has offices in Chennai, India and Brussels, Belgium. As a global network of community organizers, teachers, technicians, researchers and scientists, ICSF's activities encompass monitoring and research, exchange and training, campaigns and action, as well as communications. SAMUDRA REPORT invites contributions and responses. Correspondence should be addressed to the Chennai office.

The opinions and positions expressed in the articles are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily represent the official views of ICSF.

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Sebastian Mathew for
International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
27 College Road, Chennai 600 006, India
Telephone (91) 44-827 5303 Facsimile (91) 44-825 4457
E-mail: icsf@vsnl.com

ICSF Brussels Office:
65 Rue du Midi, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Telephone (32) 2 - 513 1565 Facsimile (32) 2-513 7343
E-mail: gilletp@skypro.be

Edited by
SAMUDRA Editorial

Designed by
Satish Babu

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