

Samudra

REPORT

THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FUTURE OF FISHWORKERS



Samudra

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PROTECT WATERS. PROTECT LIFE

Hotter climate in some regions the ozone layer critically thin, deserts still spreading, rivers and oceans becoming more and more polluted: signs that the planet Earth, and life itself, are in danger...

Development models based on the profit motive alone are destroying our environment every day, unsettling fragile ecosystems, squandering natural resources.

Where the oceans are concerned, over-fishing by industrial fleets using devastatingly effective gear is jeopardising not only the future of fishworkers, but also the balance of marine ecology and consequently that of the land, too. It is easily forgotten that the oceans make up 70% of the Earth's surface and play an essential role in maintaining life on the planet.

In addition to over-fishing, which goes on in spite of the legislation governing exclusive economic zones (EEZ), there is the problem of pollution created by discharging various kinds of industrial and domestic wastes (toxic chemicals, radioactive matter, etc.) into the sea. The industrialised countries are at a loss as to how to get rid of about 300 million tons a year of potentially dangerous pollutants! It is only too tempting to look on the sea as a refuse dump and to negotiate the disposal of wastes With Third-World maritime nations in search of hard currency to pay off their huge debt burden.

As if this weren't enough, one could also mention the million and a half tons of crude oil spewed out each year by tankers on to the ocean's surface, radio-active contamination caused by nuclear tests and much else besides.

The development of super-intensive agriculture, involving excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides, has also led in recent years to the deterioration of rivers and in-shore waters, with consequent damage to the flora and fauna of many a continental shelf.

In some tropical regions, the development of aquaculture on a large scale - such as extensive shrimp culture for export - has meant the destruction of large areas of mangrove swamps which had hitherto been an essential factor in the ecology of sea-shore and the food security of local populations.

All such practices have serious consequences for marine environment and human life. The polluting effects of the growth of cities, of industry and of agriculture, are not confined to the exclusive economic zone of any one nation. They can cross oceans and spread from one country to another ... ending up sooner or later in the plate of each one of us by way of the food chain!

We live in an increasingly interdependent world. It is a matter of great urgency that we fight to protect the quality of the marine environment, as we should also do for any other part of the natural world. More and more fishworkers have shown their understanding of this by struggling to defend their common heritage and the very future of their profession. This was recently so in India where - in spite of repression by the police - a march by fishworkers brought together tens of thousands of people along both east and west coasts with an urgent appeal to the authorities: "Protect Waters, Protect Life!"

François BELLEC
Editor

Lisbon Symposium

NINE RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Some one hundred persons - fishworkers, representatives of fishworker's organisations, scientists, technicians and supporters - from 25 different countries, both from Northern as well as Southern Nations, came together for eight days in Lisbon (19- 24th of June) to share their experiences and to reflect upon the questions relating to the problems of the Marine Environment and the Future of Fishworkers.

This international encounter was made possible thanks to a joint effort from the ICSF, OIKOS (Portugal) and the Programme Mer of the CCFD (France). Many Portuguese fishermen took part in the Symposium. The Portuguese artisanal fishery sector has still a large representation within Europe (80% of the Portuguese fishermen are artisanal fishermen). It was for this reason that Portugal was retained as venue for the international meeting.

This meeting took place in the light of the global fishery crisis and the alarming situation of the marine environment endangering the future of the fishworkers and their families. The exchange of experiences between fishworkers and representatives of fishworker's organisations, both from Northern as well as from Southern countries, on the one hand and fishworkers and scientists on the other proved, to be very rich and fruitful and contributed to a better understanding of the different contexts and situations. This sharing of issues of common concern paved the way for larger international solidarity. This was, without doubt, the most positive outcome of the Symposium.

THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE

The North-South, South-South and North-North interdependence became even more evident. However, John Kurien (India) underlined that in many Third World countries, the deterioration of the environment is caused by the transfer of development models from so called developed countries. Intensive fishery activities, like shrimp fishing for example, is mainly an export oriented luxury food item for the Japanese and North American markets and not for the Indian people".

The right of fishworkers to form their own organisations, in order to counter the enormous problems of overexploitation of Southern waters by long distant industrial fishing fleets from the North, as well as the South, seems to be the most important task. This became clear at many instances throughout the Symposium and was formulated in the final recommendations below.

Marine resource management was the next important issue. The depletion of fish stocks in Northern waters in the 60's lead to the migration of the industrial fishing fleets from developed nations to the relative fertile waters of the Third World. Soon it was evident that these

intensive fishery activities would result into the depletion of fish stocks of Southern countries too. And this indeed was the case for example with the Peruvian anchovy, although other factors are also to be taken into account - the variations in the El Nino current for instance, as Gunnar Saetersdal (Norway) indicates in his intervention. The management of resources is definitely an urgent question to be solved if food stocks are to be safeguarded for the future. The Symposium stressed the need for a scientific base, but mentioned also the lack of political will from the side of the governments to put into practice such mechanisms as to ensure the application of restrictive measures agreed upon. The New Law of the Sea has shown the fishing nations as to where their responsibilities are, but the fishery agreements should, in the first place, guarantee the basic needs of the local population instead of being diverted exclusively towards hard currency returns by the respective governments.

Similarly, what is applicable to individual states is equally true on an international level. As Gunnar Saetersdal remarks, 'already in the early 50s great progress had been made in the creation of this particular science dealing with the exploitation of fish resources. Rut the international political instrument for making use of the advice from scientists lagged behind". The Symposium strongly insisted on the need for fishworkers organisations to play a decisive role in the policy making and to see that policies of stock management are implemented.

PROTECT WATERS, PROTECT LIFE

Problems of resource management, but also the protection and respect of the environment. This last aspect was also given much thought in the interventions: the importance to protect the marine environment from the onslaught of industrial pollution (dumping of chemi-

cal and industrial waste, etc...), or the deterioration of the coastal belt due to intensive aquaculture (abusive use of fertilisers polluting the surface waters and consequently the continental shelf). This type of pollution was mentioned during the Symposium by one Filipino fisherman, Sofronio Balagtas, who insisted that scientists should take notice of this grave situation endangering future life.

Many regional interventions stressed the need to recognise the important role of women within the fishery sector and that special attention be paid to the living conditions of fishworker's children. Women have no doubt an important stabilising function within the fishing community as most of them remain on shore. In addition to any economic role they may have, they also have a very essential social and political role to play. In many cases it is the women who play a key role in the fishworker's struggle for their basic rights. They are for sure the first to recognise the need to defend the protection of the environment.

The problems of trade and marketing were often debated. The issue of external debt of the Third World countries for example (the inverted cash flow of the South towards the North), it is the poor countries that feed the rich with the valuable proteins from fish products they themselves lack to feed their under-nourished population. George Kent (Hawaii) explained that "the discrepancy in supply levels was due in part to the fact that the developed countries imported more fish than they exported, while the developing countries exported more fish than they imported (shares of exports were 44% and of imports 12.2%)". It is quite evident that this has a negative impact on the nutrition status of people in developing countries.

It was also mentioned that it would be advisable if the Lome negotiations should not be carried out on an individual basis, (each individual ACP(*) country with the European Community), but rather with all concerned countries region-wise. This means, on the other hand, a strengthening of fishworker's organisations to face the challenges posed by the fishery policy makers. In general, would it not be better to reflect upon the problems of trade and marketing from a South-South angle, rather than looking at it exclusively from the North-South points of view? Such approach would mean the creation of new infrastructures for conservation, trade and price policies.

Finally the Symposium treated the question concerning the "Blue Europe" policy, i.e. the Common Fisheries policy of Europe. The development and the defence of artisanal fisheries in Europe were safeguarded by strict measures of market control through the formation of producers organisations. These organisations allowed the control of market prices. At present another acute problem arises, i.e. the need to reduce catch levels - "This is not an easy task, remarked Joseph Le Gall (France). How

to control a market, a fleet in the context of the reduction of catch levels? At present the question is being debated within each individual country. Will they come to an agreement on a European level?" Within the "Blue Europe", two controversial views exist: a European Community of big business based upon the exploitation of the South, or a "Blue Europe" where the important role of artisanal fishermen is assured. A consensus of common concern exists between the latter and organisations of artisanal fishworkers of the South, this was clearly stated during the Symposium. A cooperation to be strengthened as an urgent priority.

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION

To put these exchanges into concrete terms, the Symposium has adopted, after introducing some modifications, nine recommendations which will serve as guidelines for future action of fishworker's organisations and scientists. It is evident that these points have no meaning unless they are translated into concrete action at all levels.

These nine recommendations strongly express the will of the fishermen to actively participate in the decision making and implementation of fishery policy both, at the national and at the international level. This implies the need for recognition of the right of fishworkers to form their own organisations: associations, unions, cooperatives... The future of the profession itself can not be safeguarded unless this basic right is guaranteed. How else would the voice of fishworkers be made to bear weight upon governments or international institutions? By what other means would they be able to defend or find support for their demands and ensure that these demands are met with? The many challenges facing the fishworkers and their families today are such, that only by means of encouraging the establishment of professional organisations they may hope for a solution to their problems.

The recommendations also underline the problems related to the protection of offshore waters. The quality of marine environment today is a priority and a major condition to ensure employment, the basis to guarantee the future and food security of fishworkers and their families. The ecological aspect is also directly linked to the management of resources.

The recommendations also stress upon the need to recognise the role of women within the fisheries sector, the need for scientist to take the professional skills and knowledge of artisanal fishermen. They also treat the delicate question of access of foreign fleets into the exclusive economic zone of individual countries, the re-orientation of fish-marketing in favour of Third World populations, and finally the question of the "Blue Europe" policy and the fishery agreements with the ACP countries is dealt with.

(*) = African, Caribbean and Pacific countries

- o A brief report of the Symposium has been written by M. Bellveau (20 pages). A few issues are still available with the ICSF Secretariat and can be obtained by written request.
- o A selection of papers presented at the Symposium will be published shortly in SAMUDRA Dossier N°2. The texts will be published in their original languages. An extra issue in French will be published at a later date.

LISBON RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic right of fishworkers to form their own professional organisation must be the cornerstone of small-scale fisheries development.

Governments and international bodies must recognise fishworker's organizations and respect their autonomy.

The quality of the environment is a major condition for ensuring that employment, food and revenue are available for coastal populations.

Protection of the sea and the coast is a priority.

Fishworker's organizations and governments should participate jointly in the formulation of coastal planning and protection of aquatic resources.

Resource management must be carried out jointly by fishworker's organizations and governments.

The resource must remain a collective property.

Resource management methods should be an integral part of an overall fisheries policy that takes into account social, economic and ecological objectives.

The roles of women in the fisheries sector are recognised and must be supported.

Their capacity to ensure the defence and promotion of their economic, social and cultural interests must be strengthened. Special attention should be paid to the living conditions of fishworker's children.

Scientific research must develop a capacity to take fishworker's knowledge in consideration, and respect their culture.

Scientists who recognise the importance of the environment should commit themselves to support fishworker's organizations in order to help them defend their rights of access to aquatic resources.

Access of foreign fishing vessels to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) must in every case be approved and controlled by local fishworker's organizations.

A coastal zone must be reserved for small-scale fishing.

Foreign vessels fishing in the EEZ must be equipped with satellite detection devices so that their activity can be controlled.

The extension of this method of control to the national and international levels should be discussed within the framework of the United Nations.

International fishmarketing, should be reoriented in such a way to give precedence to the interests of fishworkers and of Third World populations.

Part of the revenue accruing from fishery agreements should be used for the organization of local and regional markets.

Blue Europe must be first and foremost a Europe of fishworkers.

Joint evaluations of the impacts of the Blue Europe policies and fishery agreements with the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) states must be carried out by the European Commission, ACP states and by fishworker's organizations in the ACP states. The same recommendations apply to the North Atlantic region.

A policy of cooperation has to be implemented in negotiation with fishworker's organizations from the North and the South in response to an interdependent world.

LOME IV

WILL THE VOICES OF THE FISHWORKERS BE HEARD?

The negotiations in the light of the forthcoming Lome convention (*) for what the fishery sector is concerned, involve some 20 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are going on for the past one year now. The final talks will be held during the months of November - December of this year. The text of the procedures will only be made known by January 1990.

The ICSF - through its European antenna—has aimed from the start of the negotiations to act as a spokesman for the fishworkers, to make their grievances be heard before the representatives of the European Economic Community and the ACP governments. Its objective: to make sure that—having learned the lessons from the Lome III agreements, which had in many instances a very negative impact on the fishworkers communities of the South - certain amendments be adopted.

With the aim of reaching these goals the ICSF had launched a Campaign at three different levels:

- informing European NGOs the important issues related to the development of artisanal fisheries in the South. Following a Seminary organised by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) some propositions have been put forward to modify the official text of the Lome convention.
- The Liaison Committee of Development NOOs of the European Communities on their side have shown their concern for the fishworker's problems by publishing the article below in their monthly review of April 89 (Lome Briefing N° 8). Representatives of the EEC and the ACP countries have taken notice of the text.
- launching requests for eyewitness accounts from African NGOs concerning the situation of the fishworkers in their region, after the implementation of the Lome III agreements: foreign investments, conflicts between artisanal and industrial fisheries, evaluation of marine resources, environmental problems, employment, legislation, etc.. Many eyewitness accounts and interesting responses have reached the Liaison Office, an analysis of these will be published shortly.
- organise a meeting with representatives of fishworker's organisations and scientists from North and South at Lisbon (Portugal) in June 1989 aiming at mobilising fishworkers of the North around issues of marine environment, resource management and the problems arising from the Common Fishery Policy also known as "Blue Europe". The recommendations made during the Symposium (see article on pg 4) will throw some more light on those appearing at the end of the following article.

INDUSTRIAL AND SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES : COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES AND OTHER CONTRADICTIONS

species such as shrimp, lobster and crab are to be found in their territorial waters-i.e. within the 200 mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) – often in the relatively shallow waters of the continental shelf. Moreover, in ACP countries, coastal fisheries provide food and employment for a large cross-section of the community, as well as great potential for local economic and technical development.

To some ACP states, coastal fisheries are an important foreign exchange earner because high-value

The capacity of fisheries to contribute to both national income and food security varies greatly among

* The Lome conventions (named after the capital of Togo, where the first series of talks had been held), are trade conventions between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The first agreements go back to 1975 (Lome I). The present negotiations are known as Lome IV.

countries and regions. In the Indian Ocean area, for instance, Mozambique and Madagascar derive substantial proportions of their foreign exchange from the export of fishery products, but fish contribute little to food security on a national basis. This is largely because these countries, in their need to earn hard currency, have concentrated largely on setting up joint ventures with fishing concerns from industrialised countries, or have offered fishing licences to foreign fleets. Consequently, the required investment effort has been channelled as a matter of course into industrial fisheries even if, in the context of economies burdened not only by debt but also by widespread malnutrition, the development potential for the small-scale fisheries sector is recognised in government plans. The attention paid to the weaker sector is prompted by political as well as humanitarian reasons in countries where underemployment, land ownership patterns, drought, desertification or war have driven substantial numbers of people out of inland areas and into the coastal zones

BROAD PERSPECTIVES: CREATING A SPACE FOR ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The marine fisheries sector is based on a fragile resource base; if mismanaged and over-exploited, it can easily become a non-renewable resource. The extent to which most fisheries in developing countries can continue to be trawled is debatable, since it is widely believed that most known fishing grounds and species are near to or have already reached their exploitable limit. Trawlers and large traditional boats - which are sometimes internationally owned - compete with the local artisanal sector for fish stocks. Well-equipped trawlers can rapidly deplete a healthy offshore resource and then move to shallow waters in search of high-value species- For example, off West Africa, it is clear that some European fleets are becoming less interested in deep sea tuna, are able to adapt themselves to new technology and move to new seas: ruthless trawling of prawn beds on the coast of Guinea Bissau is a case in point.

In many coastal fisheries, such as those of West Africa, there is a role for both large and small interests. However, the larger (and more powerful) should not be allowed to infringe on the activities of the smaller, putting at risk the viability of the smaller fishery and the coastal resource base in order to satisfy short term financial goals, which fishery agreements tend to favour. Trawlers and other industrial vessels throw overboard huge quantities of lower-value fish on which local communities depend, and also often destroy traditional fishing gear, such as fixed nets, which get in their way. Any coastal small-scale fisheries development programme will only be as successful as its ability to seek true complementary and coordination with industrial fish-

ing interests even if this means that the interests of the large boats will have to be curtailed.

Moreover, small-scale fisheries are forced to compete with much larger boats and more 'efficient' technology not only for natural fishery resources, but also for development funds and access to marketing systems under acceptable conditions for the producers. This is despite the fact that artisanal fisheries are the key to sustainable fisheries development and give a greater return on investment. They require less expensive inputs and have the capacity to employ more people in catches and resources available to them more rationally, thus providing high quality food more economically and on a more sustained basis.

Since plans for food security and financial stability compete for the same resources—fish, money and labour - they must be part of the same long term strategy if the two objectives are to be reconciled—In practice, this means that the will to develop small-scale fisheries needs to be strong enough on the part of the government to allow this sector the required conditions - in terms of training, licences, quotas, investment, research, controls, etc.—to fish for both export and for local markets.

Subsidies are certainly needed for investment in those aspects of small-scale fisheries which can hardly be viable from a financial point of view (such as local storage and marketing infrastructures) because of the low purchasing power of local people. However, subsidies cannot provide a strong economic and organisational base: it is also necessary for the small-scale fisheries sector to be in a position to reinvest some of its earnings.

Traditional artisanal fisheries hold great development potential because they bring with them a rich resource base of skill and knowledge and a stable social structure. Also, people with no experience of fishing are increasingly turning towards it for subsistence, food and income. This is especially the case where people are being displaced for economic, political or environmental reasons. These new fishing communities, which do not have a long tradition of fishing behind them, are also in need of appropriate development support. But one should bear in mind that development does not rhyme with assistance, nor with marginalisation.

FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY IN A FREE-FOR-ALL TRADING SYSTEM

The significance of the contribution of fish to food supplies in developing countries was noted by the FAG in its most recent World Food Survey (1987). In ACP countries, levels of fish consumption differ widely be-

tween some small island states and landlocked states, where fish is marginal or non-existent in an already protein deficient national diet.

Factors other than price and availability can prevent fish products from getting to where they would be most useful. A lack of adequate transport, storage and processing facilities forces fishworkers to sell to coastal traders for export abroad rather than to their neighbours inland. This process not only deprives local people of necessary food but the very low prices paid for the exported products undercut the indigenous fisherman of the region (the EEC, for example) to which the fish has been exported.

As part of an overall strategy for food security in developing countries, no effort should be spared to ensure that all the actors in the 'developing chain' seek to increase the contribution of fish to protein deficient diets and to make it more broadly available to the poor living in regions without ready access to fish. In order to do this, we must first examine the fisheries trade worldwide. It is clear from published FAG statistics that wealthy countries are buying the fish (sometimes for manufacturing animal feed) which poor countries need to eat, and that to make up the difference, poor countries are buying lower quality fish from wealthier countries. Such anomalies need to be well-analysed, documented and disseminated to engender the political will and the means for exchange.

LOME III: FISHERIES AGREEMENTS IN COMPETITION WITH FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT IN ACP COUNTRIES

Lome III took great strides forward in creating the basis for comprehensive fisheries development which would not only meet the needs of coastal and landlocked ACP states but which also recognised the role (and legitimacy) of fisheries agreements with Community fleets.

Fisheries agreements are the instruments which allow EEC fleets to gain licensed access to ACP waters. In return, ACP states receive financial compensation from the Community and the ship owners, as well as concessions covering employment and training of ACP nationals, transfer of technology, research, on-board observers and use of by-catches.

The EEC is compelled to negotiate fishery agreements with ACP states because of the widely accepted 200 mile exclusive economic zone (EEZs), the recent enlargement of the Community fleet (which nearly doubled with the entry of Spain and Portugal in 1986) and its own nearly depleted fishery grounds. To take

the most obvious example, employment in the Spanish fleet would fall sharply without agreed rights to fish in African seas. If the EEC recognises the need to preserve employment in Spanish fleets, measures could also be adopted to ensure that communities in ACP countries, which are economically even more vulnerable, do not pay the price of maintaining an European fleet.

Besides, the EEC Common Fisheries Policy does not, in practice, give sufficient recognition to the traditional role played by artisanal fishing communities in European coastal societies, although the EEC has increasing power to prevent the shores of Europe from being given up to excessive industrial or touristic development, with resulting high levels of pollution. Better management of the marine environment and natural stocks in European waters would lessen the need for European fishermen to fish in Third World waters.

Although there has been little systematic evaluation, reports indicate that the EEC/ACP fisheries agreements have not been particularly successful beyond satisfying the strictly commercial needs of the ship owners. Little training has been carried out and not much fish has been landed for local consumption because it is not in the commercial interests of the ship owner to do so. Moreover, ACP signatories of the fishery agreements do not have the means to control encroachments by industrial fleets in the inshore areas which are sometimes theoretically reserved for traditional fisheries.

In some instances - as is the case of some Spanish and Portuguese freezer-ships fishing off Mozambique 'whenever shrimp catches are not landed locally, they are not counted for. Since the catches are marketed outside its control, there is loss of income for the ACP country in whose waters the catches are made, as well as unrecorded depletion of stocks. ACP countries would therefore be justified in insisting that one of their officials should be present on board larger vessels fishing within the framework of fishery agreements with the EEC (as Canada has done in its recent agreement with France) and that fish caught by European vessels in the EEZ of an ACP country be considered as originating in that country (which the EEC refuses in the current negotiations).

As for research, programmes arising from agreements appear to have concerned mainly high-value migratory species such as tuna, destined for export, rather than local species which can best be exploited by small-scale fishermen for local markets. This is unacceptable when one considers the worsening food supply for the poorest in many ACP countries and the significant contribution to domestic and regional food supply which is made by small-scale fisheries.

A report to the European Parliament regarding an agreement with Madagascar declared that EEC/

ACP fisheries agreements should be included in a food strategy backed by the EEC. Within such a strategy, there is evidence to show that strong local fishworkers' organisations can mobilise to keep fish marketing circuits short in order to keep prices down, and to ensure that trading concerns do not favour export too strongly.

Recognising existing EEC development programmes, fisheries agreements could be linked directly to a programme of support for appropriately improved processing, storage and marketing techniques and organisation, building on already established local networks. In artisanal fishing communities, these networks usually have a strong basis in traditional social structures in which women play a central economic role. Ill-considered disruption of these networks can have a negative impact on household income and consequently on the wellbeing of other members of the family. For women, 'development' has often meant an increased work load and lower income. Artisanal fisheries projects in particular have tended towards improving the efficiency of fishermen rather than looking at the needs of all the participants in the local industry. New programmes should ensure that women's income and skill levels are not lowered by technological changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICSF would like to make the following recommendations to the EEC and ACP officials involved in the Lome negotiations:

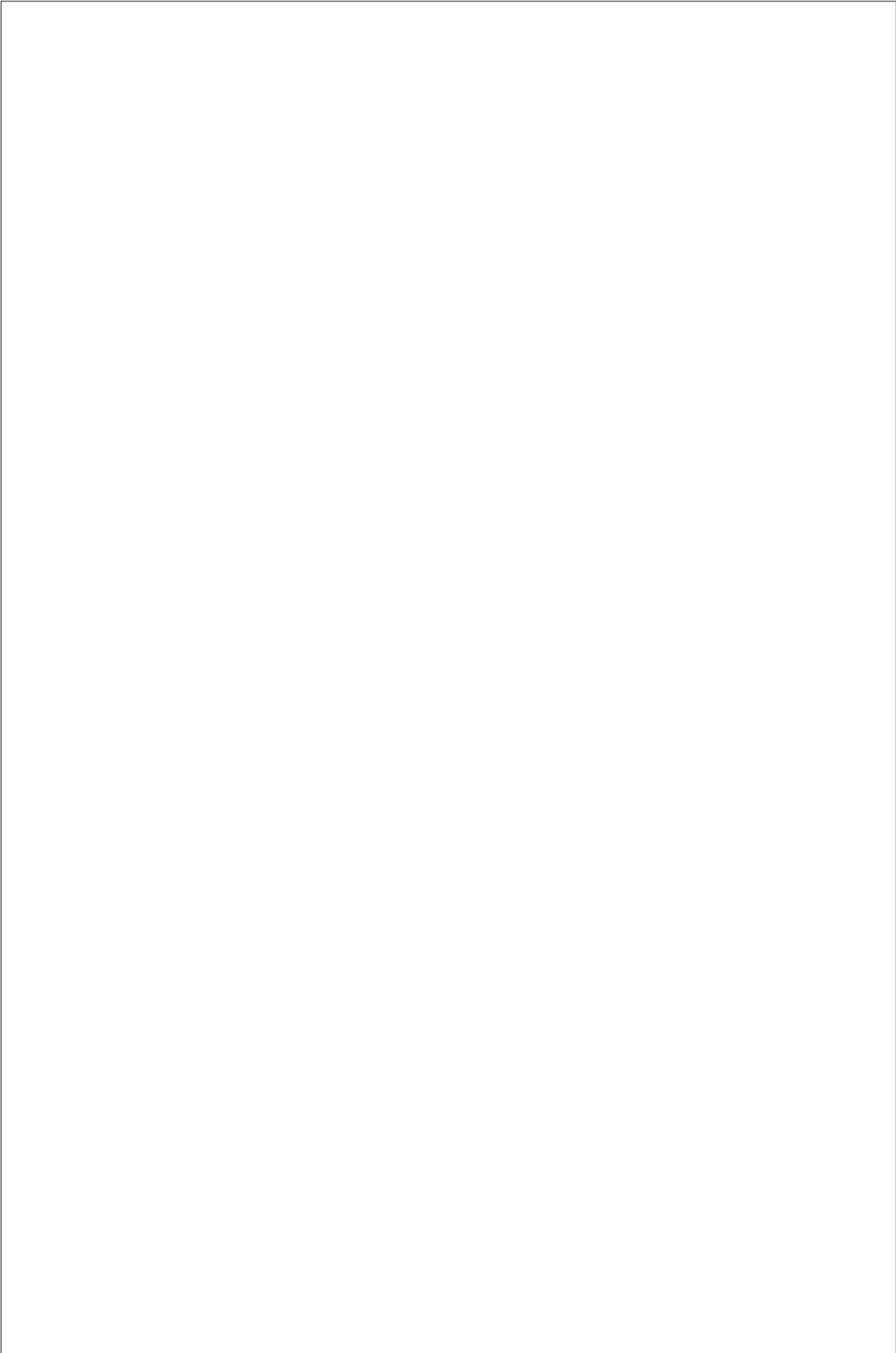
1. A partial redirection of the funds paid by the EEC in exchange for capture of tuna and other species by European fleets towards development programmes for small-scale fishing communities would greatly enhance their capabilities. Not only fishing should benefit these programmes but also all the associated local industries on which so many people depend for food and income. The Lome Convention should aim to provide an impetus to demarginalise the small-scale sector in ACP countries, by helping to make it viable. The EEC should examine ways of encouraging investment in small-scale fisheries, without reducing the foreign exchange earned by the ACP states from activity in the fisheries sector as a whole.
2. In recognising the development role of organisations of fishworkers and fishing communities, the EEC should fishworkers organisations, especially in the areas of support for basic education and local training programmes and for appropriate credit systems which encourage the autonomy of fishworkers' organisations. Grass roots participation should be both in micro-projects, which come within the scope of the Lome III Convention, and in development programmes initiated by the ACP government and administrated by DG VIII.

3. In fishery agreements, inshore zones for the exclusive benefit of local small-scale fisheries could be agreed upon, in conjunction with a programme for protection of resources within the fragile and increasingly threatened marine environment and for research on inshore resources and socioeconomic needs of fishing communities.
4. The Commission itself could hold joint evaluations by DG VIII (Cooperation and Development) and DG XIV (Fisheries) of the impact of fishery agreements on small-scale fisheries in ACP countries. Such evaluation should help the EEC and ACP countries to alleviate competition for resources and to identify other possible contradictions in their policy for cooperation in the fishery sector.
5. The Commission could also examine the ways in which fish could be used in triangular food aid to stimulate local markets and South-South trade (with appropriate investment in transport and communication means to open up fish marketing networks in inland areas).
6. Exchanges should take place between ACP countries on other levels, for instance, those involving market information and scientific and technical research, with a view to promoting regional cooperation in fisheries. But fishworkers' organisations and research institutes in EEC countries should also be encouraged to share their experience in the field of social security cover, management, fish marketing and resource management with fishworkers' organisations in ACP countries. Private joint ventures may be a means of enacting professional cooperation of this kind

DEMAND FOR COORDINATED POLICIES

A new Lome Convention must provide the means (both political and budgetary) by which the EEC and ACP states can seek complementarity to ensure that fisheries agreements signed within the terms of the Lome Convention effectively serve the dual objective of gaining fair access for European fleets to new grounds while supporting autonomous rural development for food security in ACP states.

However, within the Commission there is an administrative disjunction between these two objectives, as they are pursued by separate Directorates General (VIII and XIV). The negotiations for 'Lome IV' should address this problem and ways should be sought to coordinate and harmonise the policies which govern fisheries agreements and fisheries development as a whole.



AUTOPSY OF A STRIKE

The coastline of several thousand miles - from Quebec's Gasp6 through New Brunswick's French shore to Nova Scotia's Cape Breton and including the Island Province of Prince Edward Island - embraces approximately one thousand herring gillnet vessels ranging from 30ft to 44ft in size with two and three fishermen a vessel. In the fall herring roe fishery of the Southern Gulf, these fishermen land approximately 50.000 tons of herring. It is an inshore fishery involving scores of small communities.

Michael Belliveau, general secretary of the Maritime Fishermen's Union, describes below his reflections on the strike of the summer of 88.

In the late sixties, the West Coast British Columbia Herring Seiner fishery collapsed and many of the seiners 60ft to 120 ft ended up on the East Coast in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. They were taking as much as 160.000 tons for fish meal. By the middle and the late seventies, a food fishery, mainly to Europe, developed but the stocks were collapsing as a result of seiner overfishing.

IT ALL STARTED BACK IN 1980

The inshore fishermen organised protest and demonstration against the seiners who were destroying the stocks and plugging the market. Much of the battle against the Seinners was spearheaded by the newly formed Maritime Fishermen's Union (1977), an inshore small boat fishermen's organisation. By the early eighties the inshore gillnetters were catching only a few thousand tons per year. But they successfully drove out all but six large seiners who were confined to 20 % of the quota after 1983. In the meantime, the inshore fishermen were subjected to three years of premature closures and unequal quota distribution before they settled on a fisheries management plan that was acceptable.

During this period, from 1983 to 1986 fishermen were observing the return of the herring and had to convince scientists of the same, in order to have quotas increased -to make a point, more than once they collectively defied Government closures.

By 1987, the herring had returned, the scientists were adjusting their assessment, and a herring roe market had developed in Japan; the fishermen landed over 55.000 tons of 'fall' herring (in August and September) and received 12 cents a pound & more! There was a strong sense among the fishermen that they had won the day with their own efforts and now they were fully involved in quality improvements (slush ice, etc...)

and strategic fishing that would increase the roe yields from 4% to 9% in some instances!

THE MOST IMPRESSIVE STRIKE IN THE HISTORY OF THE ST. LAWRENCE

As the 1988 summer progressed the inshore fishermen were expecting similar catches to 1987 and while there were rumours of the Japanese planning to drop prices, fishermen expected to at least equal 1987 prices since they knew that many buyer/processors made almost wind fall profits the year before.

The Prince Edward Island fleet of 150 vessels got started August 17 without a firm price - the Canadian buyers had not yet settled contracts with Japanese interests. On August 21, the larger New Brunswick fleet of 400 vessels was scheduled to open their fishery but they were being offered 8 cents a pound by local processors! The fleet unanimously agreed to tie-up and strike began. While officially the Maritime Fishermen's Union did not call for a strike, their fishermen in New Brunswick were leaders in the strike as they had been in the long battle with the seiners and the Government.

In the meantime Island fishermen continued to fish and some of their landings were being trucked into the struck plants of New Brunswick.

The Nova Scotia fleet of 150 vessels was scheduled to begin their fishery August 25 but they voted to tie up in support of New Brunswick and on advice from their Maritime Fishermen's Union fishermen. Then on August 29, Island fishermen decided on their own to tie up.

It was now the largest mass tie-up of inshore fishermen in the recent history of Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence fishery.

The strike was partially instigated in some places by small buyers themselves who felt pressure should be put on the Japanese. Information from the Canadian embassy in Japan seemed to confirm that the market of Japan was clear of 1987 inventories, that products coming from other countries had dropped or was facing parasite problems, and that Canadian East coast purchases would probably be up. But Japanese buyers did not budge, refusing to get involved in the dispute. At the end of the season, it was learned that some West coast herring roe that goes into Japan in February and March to a luxury market had been down graded and was competing with East coast roe!

As the tie-up progressed fishermen were faced with an increasing dilemma: the fish were spawning; if a settlement wasn't found quickly they would lose the whole season. A compromise formula was found in New Brunswick that would increase the base price by 1/2 cent and then buyers would pay so much extra for each percentage increase in roe yield. The New Brunswick fleet went back fishing September 4 and other fleets soon followed, although agreements were not reached in Prince Edward Island or Nova Scotia. In the end, fishermen did not reach their quotas because of the tie-up and bad weather and in the short run there was no felt success in the strike with some fishermen blaming the Union even though no formal Union procedure was ever followed.

SOME LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The Fishermen's Union leaders were surprised by the strike, especially with the participation of the fleets of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. During the four years prior, the fleets from different provinces had been battling one another for quotas!

It was not an equal situation for all fishermen: the French speaking New Brunswickers rely on herring for a larger part of their year's income than in the other areas where the lobster catch is higher. The Prince Edward Island fleet did not belong to the Maritime Fishermen's Union, although they kept in touch during the strike. In the Province of New Brunswick, the fishermen have collective bargaining rights and some experience with bargaining; this may explain why they arrived at a marginally better settlement.

But, the strike highlighted the difficult position of the Fishermen's Union which does not have the resources and perhaps the internal solidarity to sustain such a broad-based tie-up especially when the season is so short (four weeks) and when buyer groups in each Province are distinct and when the product is all destined to the Japanese market whose importers appear able to dictate price and 'multiple-source' supply (including from herring seiner fleet in a completely different zone of the Atlantic fishery).

The inshore fishermen's strike might better be described as a spontaneous protest. There was little fore thought to it and no formal Union procedure was followed. Union and non-Union members alike joined in the tie-up and the leaders were left to bring some order to the thing, always under the constant pressure of the spawning fish and the insecurity of never knowing when the fishermen would go back fishing, having little means of imposing discipline!

Fishermen on the spawning grounds off North East New Brunswick where only vaguely aware of the fishermen in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia and no inter-provincial bargaining was attempted because the buyers refused. When New Brunswick began to tie-up, they struck a responsive chord in the other provinces hundreds of miles away.

The battles with the seiners and the Government over the years had built a sense among all inshore fishermen in the Southern Gulf that they had invested too much socially, politically and economically to go back to the poverty-type prices. But the time constraints almost guaranteed defeat; even had fishermen decided to sacrifice their whole season (perhaps 20% were willing to do this), it was not clear what their long term gains could be: the Japanese importers appeared to be untouchable.

Returning to fish with only marginal gains nevertheless provides the opportunity to plan for future years. But, some of the leaders feel a little 'set-up' by fishermen who are not regular backers of the Union, who in fact may have been instigated by local buyers, and who, when things were not instantly accomplished, blamed the Union!

Obviously, when so many of its own members were directly involved in the spontaneous tie-up the Union had to become involved and it is significant to note that violence, fishermen against fishermen, was much more prevalent on Eastern Prince Edward Island where the Union does not have a presence than in New Brunswick where there is a strong history of the Union. Still, how can the Union be expected to mold instant discipline among hundreds of fishermen who, in other circumstances, will have nothing to do with the Union. There are no laws in any of the three Provinces compelling fishermen to pay the Union dues even where the Union has a clear majority and no where were the fishermen so united as to be able to impose their will on the 'free-riders'. Under such conditions, the fishermen's organisation must be highly skillful in outlining the terms and conditions of its involvement if it is not to be burned by spontaneity that can ebb as fast as it flows!

Michael BELLIVEAU
CANADA

THE BANGKOK CONFERENCE

FISHERIES TRENDS AND THE FUTURE OF FISH WORKERS

In continuation of the Lisbon Symposium, which centred around environmental issues and Euro-African relations (see article on p.4), the ICSF is organising another international exchange program, focusing other issues bearing upon the future of fishworkers: global fisheries trends.

John Kurien gives below an outline of the main points of this Conference to be held in Bangkok (Thailand) in January 1990, where scientists, social activists and fisheries policy makers will encounter delegates of fishworker's organisations.

The global fisheries scenario has been undergoing rapid changes in the decade of the eighties. Most maritime countries extended their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) by the end of the seventies and this was legalised with the signing of the Law of the Sea Treaty in 1982. As a result the continental shelf became a mosaic of national territorial waters. Maritime countries thus acquired new rights and responsibilities for the management and development of their fishery resources.

EVALUATING THE EVOLUTIONS

In some areas fishing by distant water fleets of both industrialised and developing countries was affected by the promulgation of FEZ's. A potentially adverse situation for these countries was quickly rectified by a variety of responses. The most important of these were the new forms of fishing agreements signed with countries which had fishery resources but not the potential to make capital investments. Trade in fishery commodities between developing and developed countries also increased considerably. Aquaculture in the near shore areas of many developing maritime countries (and a few developed countries) registered a phenomenal growth concentrating on the 'luxury species' like prawns, salmon and trout.

External assistance to fisheries projects increased substantially. International banks and national aid agencies of the developed countries played an important role in this. The MO's 1984 World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development raised some hope that small-scale fisheries would receive more financial resources. This remained an unfulfilled prospect. In fact the bulk of the international aid still went into the more capital intensive large-scale fishery

which employs only one-tenth of the world's fishermen. A considerable amount is also flowing into finance the aquaculture projects. The small-scale fishworkers and their families—estimated to count at least 60 million persons—received external assistance of about one US dollar per capita. Though a small and disproportionate share, it went to finance artifacts like outboard engines, synthetic fishing gear - most of which were supplied by private companies in the industrialised countries.

An assessment of these trends in global fisheries with particular reference to their impact on the future of fishworkers is an important task to be undertaken.

In the light of this, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) is planning to organise an international conference on the theme: GLOBAL FISHERIES TRENDS AND THE FUTURE OF FISH WORKERS

This conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from January 22-27, 1990. It will be co-hosted by the Kasetsart University, Bangkok. The conference will bring together fishworkers, scientists, social activists and fishery policy makers from all over the globe to discuss these issues.

FISH TRADE AND AQUACULTURE

The conference programme is structured so as to provide a balanced view of the trends in the fisheries sector from the perspective of scientists, policy makers and the fishworkers.

There will be two keynote addresses on the theme of the conference. One will be presented by a First World social scientist and the other by a Third World fishworker. The main issues highlighted by the speakers will be discussed in workshop sessions.

Two important trends in the fisheries sector which will be considered in greater detail are:

- the changing character and composition of global fish trade
- the impact of the phenomenal growth in aquaculture

Two presentations will have specific regional focus. They will deal with:

- the impact of motorisation of fishing crafts on the small-scale fishing communities (West Africa)
- the impact of fishing legislations and conflicts in the coastal waters on small-scale fishermen (Asia)

Apart from these "input sessions", there will be a series of presentations made by Third World fishworkers. These will deal exclusively with the growth

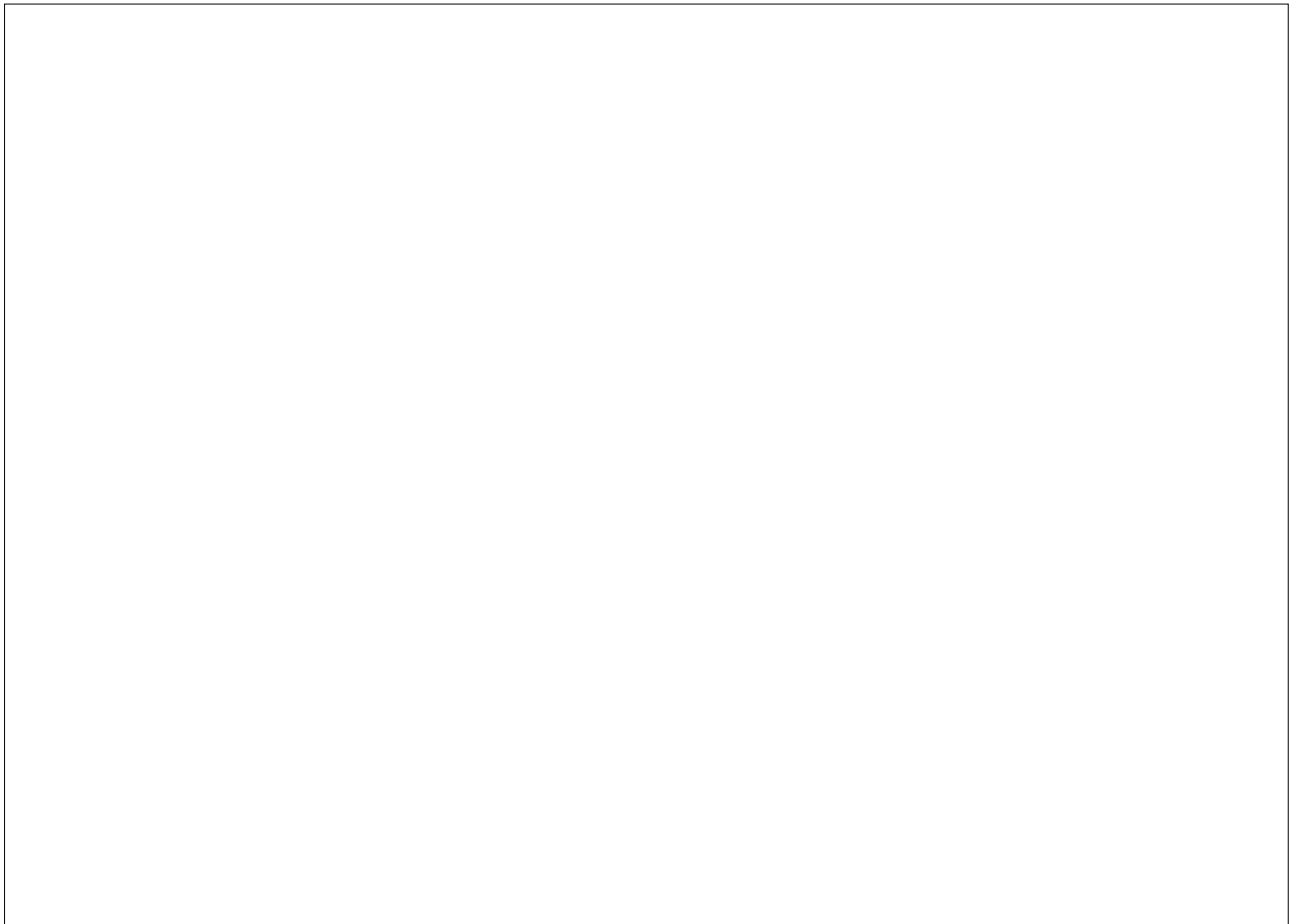
and dynamics of their organisations. They will discuss the strategies evolved by them to respond to the various trends in the fisheries sectors in their respective countries. The constraints they have to face in their organisational tasks will also be a subject of analysis. During the course of the conference there will be audio-visual presentations by the fishworkers dealing with a variety of issues concerning their lives and struggles.

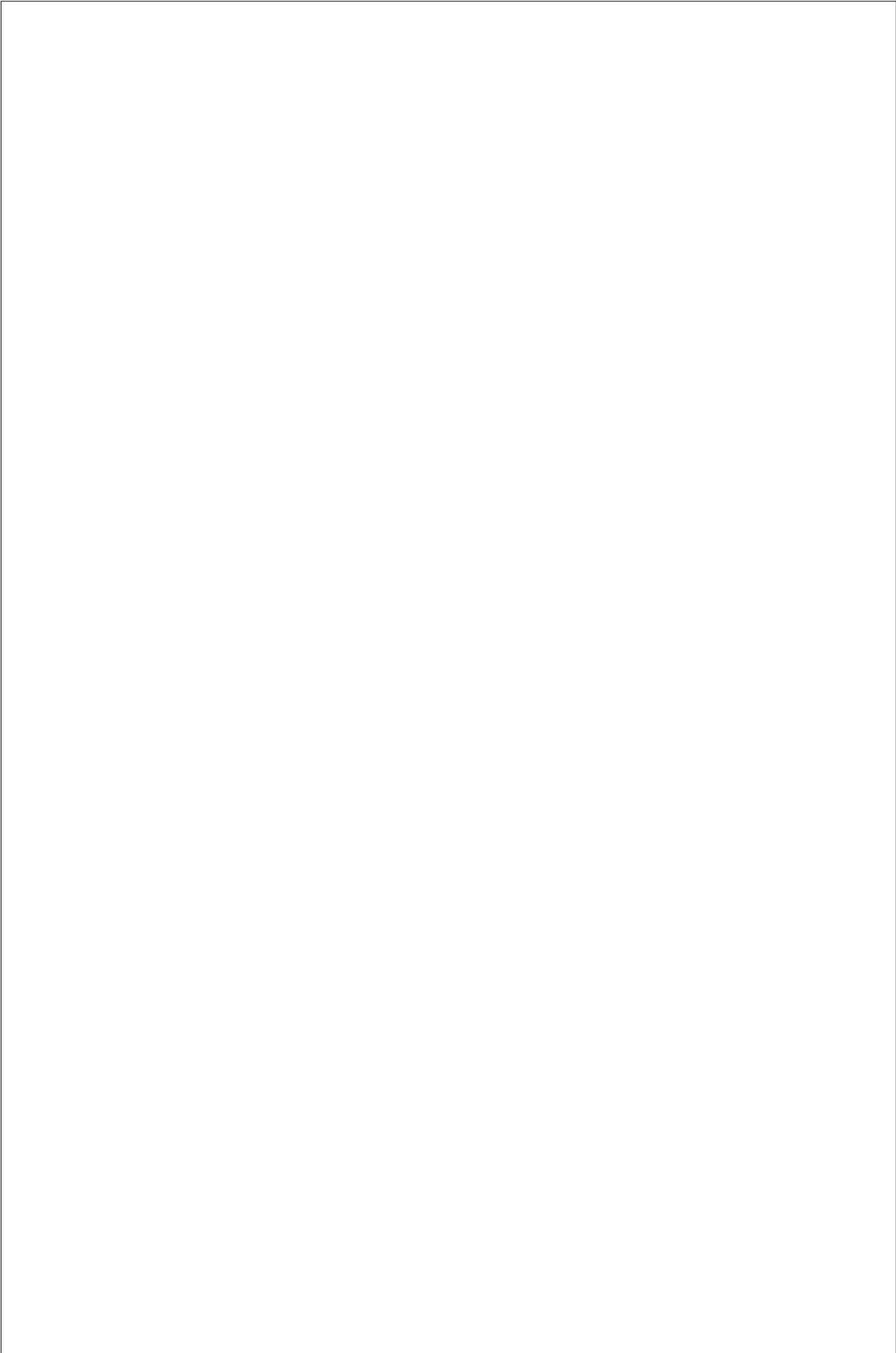
A full day will be devoted to an exposure programme in Thailand which will focus on the various types/sizes of aquaculture projects. Thailand is one of the most technologically advanced countries in this field and an initial assessment of the socio-economic potentials and risks of aquaculture as well as its ecological consequences can be made through this exposure.

The last half day of the conference will be devoted to formulation of the recommendations and conclusions arising out of the various forms of interactions.

John KURIEN

Note: Titles and sub-titles are added by the editor.





AFRICA REFUSES TO BE DUMP YARD FOR INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES

Poor countries being used as a public dumping ground does not date from yesterday. However in 1988 the African countries have said "no". An example among so many others revealed by Greenpeace and the European Agreement for Environment. Since beginning 88 three to six million, tons of dangerous waste made the object of a request for export to Guinea Bissau, The official request was made to the American Agency for Environment by an American company (LINDACO). The toxic waste was to be dumped in a coastal area where the soil is very absorbent. Guinea Bissau has a very indented coast line. With the rhythm of the tides, nearly one third of the country is regularly flooded. The risk of waters being polluted is there for very high.

The industrialised countries are at a loss as to what to do with the huge amount of toxic waste from their chemical, pharmaceutical and nuclear industries. They are ready to pay exorbitant amounts of money to get rid of it. Some 120 million dollar, more than its annual Gross National Produce (GNP) or half the amount of its national debt, has been offered to Guinea Bissau to obtain a licence to dump the hazardous waste!

The Government of Guinea Bissau has said "no", and has thereby followed the instructions given by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) who condemned the dumping of dangerous wastes on its soil as a crime to its continent and its people. The African coastal fishermen may rejoice over this decision!

It remains now to be seen if the multinational producers of hazardous wastes will also be willing to clean up the areas they already have polluted. The polluters themselves must take back the dangerous wastes (300 million tons a year) and clean up the areas they already have so carelessly destroyed for future life so that the oceans, rivers and lakes may not be poisoned further'

TAIWAN: 8000 FISHERMEN IN FOREIGN PRISONS

The plight of Taiwanese fishworkers employed on long distant fishing vessels has drawn world wide consternation. According to the Fishworkers Service Centre of Taiwan, these fishworkers are recruited from aboriginal groups from the interior mountain regions.

Unable to survive in these areas because of penetration of capitalist exploitation, these aboriginals are lured to the sea by misleading advertisements like "Sea men wanted - Age 15 to 50- No experience needed - Educational level: unimportant- Loan as advance on salary available".

Signing up a contract with absolutely no securities of working conditions, wages or tenure announced also re-

quires surrendering their identity cards. Their plight at sea is inhuman and calls for protest and action. In 10 years time, between 1975 and 1984 there where a total of 2.939 fishermen who died or disappeared by 'disasters' at sea. In 8 years, from 1980 to 1987 a total of 848 were apprehended in foreign prisons without knowing the language, charges or legal procedures. The number of detained fishermen exceeds 8.200 in various countries!

These detentions are caused by the rapid expansion of the Taiwanese fishing fleet without much regard for quality of navigational equipments, international maritime rules and regulations or safety measures, most of these vessels fish illegally in foreign waters. The shrinkage of free zones for marine fishing due to the Extensive Economic Zones (EEZ) has been added to the problem. The list of the captor countries includes:

Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Pakistan, Japan, Russia, New Zealand, USA, Burma, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, Palau, Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, Maldives and Fidji. While the vessels are confiscated, it is always the crew who face imprisonment, while the officers can return home.

While it is necessary that action groups in Taiwan mobilise the fishworkers to demand just and legal tenures and working conditions when signing contracts, the plight of the detained workers should be taken up by supporters in the concerned countries. Whenever possible, readers are requested to find out the facts about the detained workers and inform the ICSF Secretariat (Brussels) and / or

Mr. CHAN LOING HOM
Asian Legal Resource Centre
57, Peking Road 5/F Kowloon,
HONG KONG

The issue can also be taken up with Human Right groups in your own country to secure the release of these illiterate workers deprived of all legal defence!

PHILIPPINES: LAW PROJECT FOR ARTISANAL FISHERIES

The fishworkers of the Philippines finalised a global law project aiming at "revising, consolidating and codifying all laws affecting fisheries and the countries, fishery and marine resources". This act is the result of a large consultation at the base and is to be presented before parliament. The uniqueness of this act lies in the fact that it gives the artisanal fishermen and their local communities the exclusive rights to the use and benefits of "communal" fishing grounds and marine resources:

Mangroves, spawning areas, grassy sea-beds and large tracts of coral reefs are to be declared "sanctuaries".

1. "Communal" fishing areas must include all

waters with an average not exceeding more than 25 fathoms in depth and must be limited for the exclusive use of passive fishing gear, fish attracting devices and the culture of mollusks and algae.

2. Coastal fishing zones may extend seawards to a distance of 30 miles, where active fishing gears and motorized vessels may reach above five gross tons, as may be determined by the Coastal Resource Management Council.
3. Off-shore fishing zones, i.e., the area beyond the coastal fishing zones must be controlled by a National Marine Resource Management Council.

All owners of fishing boats are to be registered with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The law project outlines in detail terms of management and means of control. All destructive fishing methods are to be declared prohibited, these include: electro-fishing, fishing with explosives and poisons, etc...

The complete text contains 108 articles and can be obtained from:

Asian Social Institute
1518 Leon Guinto Str.
Malate, MANILA, PHILIPPINES.

THAILAND: FIRST NATIONAL MEETING OF SMALL FISHERMEN

On April 1988, 80 delegates from all artisanal coastal fishing areas came together in Bangkok, to discuss their problems, meet with scientists and share their concern on the destruction of marine resources along their coast.

1. They blamed the big industrial trawling business for "encroaching the shallow waters despite legal regulations. Coral reefs which are housing a lot of fishes are destroyed and the nets of fishermen are being taken away. One single big trawler may destroy in one day as many small fishes as a whole village may do in a whole year".
2. They regret that nothing so far has been done to prevent industrial pollution from destroying marine life. Aquaculture, especially the culture of tiger prawn, encouraged by the government, resulted in a rush to secure private concessions giving the investor the sole right to destroy the mangrove forests. This has led to the destruction of many species of crabs, affecting badly the fishing population of the East coast, who depend largely on crab fishing for income and food.
3. The expansion of tourism has also been responsible for uprooting many fishing villages and forcing the population of these communities to migrate inland sometimes to forest areas where they stand little chance of surviving because they lack the basic skills

for agriculture. Many of them, having lost all their possessions, did not receive any legal compensation promised by the government and remain tilt today without land or housing. The valuable mangrove areas are being destroyed in order to make place for tourist resorts and other facilities for the tourist industry.

4. As the majority of fishermen do not own land, they fall out of the boat for agricultural loans from the government. The low interest loans provided by the official "Bank for Agriculture and Cooperatives" only benefit the middle men who can provide land as collateral security. Subsequently they redistribute this money to the small fishermen at an exorbitant interest rate. In this way the fishermen are also bound to sell their catches to the same middlemen at very low prices fixed by them.
5. The fishermen also complained about the lack of critical information on government or NGO programs and' wanted to be informed about official credit schemes. Being left out in this way and having lost their access to fish resources they sink deeper and deeper into debt. They are eager to understand the mechanisms of fish marketing, fishing economy and the role of middlemen.

To note some major points of their recommendations, the fishermen request the government:

- a) to enforce strict regulations against deforestation of mangrove areas and illegal trawling, and to introduce a new fishery law taking into account the diversity of the eco-system of the coastal zones.
- b) to take adequate measures to stop industrial pollution.
- c) to stop all forms of private ownership of the sea either by individual companies or multinationals and the nationalisation of aquaculture.
- d) special credit loans on soft repayment basis, educational programs, social security and life insurance schemes, and better information regarding programs from government or NGOs should be made available to fishworkers and their families.
- e) legal guarantee against evictions and respect for the traditional habitat and landing areas of the fishing communities even in tourist zones should be enforced.

ILO: WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

There exists within the International Labour Organisation (ILO) a commission on working conditions in the fishing industry. But until now its functioning has been

very sluggish, one meeting in 8 or 10 years! Needless to say that things do change in the mean time!

Tripartite as is usually the case this commission unites shipowners, concerned governments (India, Norway, Brazil, Japan, Nigeria, Peru, U.S.S.R.) and fishworkers unions. The latter have been mainly delegates from European unions, except for one trade union worker from Ivory Coast and one delegate from Peru who, by the way, never showed up.

Not surprising therefore that the first two issues treated: remunerations for workers and adjustments to new technological developments were subject of endless disputes between ship owners and trade unions, without much result, the owners vetoing every proposal from the workers! The third chapter: "The socio-economic needs of small fishermen and rural fishing communities" brought some peace to the floor but this mainly because of the lack of interested parties present.

Third World fishworkers will most probably be most disappointed about the conclusions of this session. Nevertheless there still remains enough material for reflection on the final resolutions which demand the ILO to provide "technical assistance to contribute to the economic and social needs of small fishermen and artisanal fishermen in rural communities of Third World countries. This assistance must include the creation by the fishworkers of their own organisations, the exchange of information and know-how between countries on issues common to their profession, their status and their different conditions within their communities".

The complete text can be obtained at the following address:

Mr Bjorn Klerck NILSSEN
Chief Maritime Industries Branch
International Labour Office
4 Route des Morillons
CH-1211 GENEVA SWITZERLAND

FIRST MEETING OF FISHWORKERS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In the port of Valparaiso, Chile, from 27 June to 1 July, took place a first meeting, organised by the federations of the Peruvian and Chilean fishermen, FETRINECH, CONAPACH and FETCHAP, with the help of some local NGOs, CESLA, ECONIN, PET and IPEMIN, and of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF).

For the first time in history, artisanal fishermen, crew from industrial fishing fleets, boat owners and workers of the processing industry from Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uru-

guay, Columbia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatamala-representing over half a million fishworkers - got together and met with representatives of Italian and Spanish fishworker's organisations. Their conclusions read as follows:

1. Looking at the official figures, out of the 16 tons of fish disembarked in 1986, 12 tons were used for the production of fish meal and oil, another 3 million tons were exported, while only one ton was kept to feed the local population, and this when 70 million South American and Caribbean people suffer from malnutrition or are starving from hunger.

We as fishworkers declare, that the most elementary human need e.a. the right for food must first and foremost be guaranteed.

2. Resource management and administration do not rest on sound scientific investigation, but serve to increase production aiming at the acquisition of foreign exchange.

We will fight to defend the hydro-biological resources and see to it that correct scientific resource management is integrated into a national policy.

We, the fishworkers, want to participate in this discussion and its implementation.

3. The most important part of the fishery sector is constituted by 400 thousand fishermen and over 100 thousand boats in the region. Their activities, leaving out a few exceptions, are threatened by large industrial fishing fleets, especially tuna and deepfreeze trawlers.

Therefore we declare that for all countries an exclusive zone must be reserved not only to ensure the reproduction of species but also for the safe landing and embarkation of our boats and the safety of our companions, the artisanal fishermen.

4. We fishworkers, condemn all criminal operations that cause the pollution of our rivers, lakes and oceans by industrial waste, debris from mining enterprises, agricultural pesticides and urban sewage discharged into our waters. We most strongly denounce all nuclear tests in the Pacific.

5. Fishworkers start working at child age and carry on until their seventies, for as long as they have the strength. Most of the fishworkers of the region do not benefit from any social security scheme.

We, will fight to obtain retirement benefit, insurance against accidents, limited working hours and other social security schemes for the artisanal fishermen. These will be met jointly by the state and the fishworkers to the tune of 1% of the value of fish exported.

6. Basic human rights, union rights and the right for

work must be guaranteed, irrespective of the type of government of our country and this in relation to the actual strength of our organisations.

The meeting has nominated a Permanent Commission consisting of three deputies from each country present (one representing the industrial fishery, one from the artisanal sector and one representative of the workers from the processing sector). An Executive Committee has also been formed from among the deputies (one each from Peru, Chile and Argentina). They will be in charge of carrying out the campaign, the publication of a quarterly report and to convene a Second Meeting of Fishworkers from Latin America and the Caribbean to be held the first week of July, 1990 and will take place this time in Peru.

CHILE: 11TH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF CHILEAN FISHWORKERS

The Caletas, as the fishing villages are called vary in size. The largest have a population of about 2.000 fishworkers but the majority of them are much smaller and are very dispersed, 187 caletas along a coast of 6.000 km!

The artisanal fishworkers still use in some areas small plank built boats using sail and oar but in most places they use a 21 ft boats with outboard motor up to 45 hp. The artisanal sector comprises also of some bigger boats up to 40 ft and above. They use mainly hooks and lines and a few trawl nets. These 'advanced' crafts and gears, we came to know, were bought with government loans which is not available to all and often causes conflicts within the fishing community.

The industrial sector is highly developed, catching many varieties of fish directly destined for the fish meal plants and exported :5 million tons of quality fish are exported in this way every year!

The traditional fishworkers complain that this has led not only to depletion of resources but also to the dwindling prices of their own catch. Unlike the people in other parts of the world, the Chilean people use very little fish for own consumption. Fish, therefore does not fetch good prices at the local markets.

The vast distances to urban centres make transport very expensive and fish prices remain stagnant, while 60% of the population do not have enough income even to meet their basic needs. The "algueros" (gatherers of algae) have been driven into poverty and forced to migration due to the complete destruction of natural resources! Only two or three years back they realised their survival would depend on the re-cultivation of algae, this was an entirely new experience as it was done on a collective basis!

In the village of Tubul, where the people lived in abject poverty, the fishworkers took the initiative to ask the government for the lease of the river leading into the sea and after much hardship they succeeded in developing a system to cultivate algae. A community, which three years ago

was at the verge of starvation, has now become a centre of activity, numerous boats, outboard motors, tractors, large storage facilities, good housing, radio and telephone, transport and communication to the city, school, etc... all this was realised thanks to the profits made by their collective production effort. Seeing their success many other villages started collectivising, lease areas and started cultivation of algae. This collective action was undertaken by local unions which have taken shape after the 10th National Congress of CONAPACH (National Council of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile) in 1986.

The 10th Congress was held after a period of 13 years of union inactivity. It was the initiative of some people who participated in the 1984 Rome Conference (International Conference of Fishworkers and their Supporters). Since then, the base has grown and expanded under the leadership of very efficient and motivated fishermen. Women are active at all levels. It is mainly the women who prepare the longlines. In many areas they are involved in fish vending. In the plantation of algae they work side by side with men. But only recently they have been accepted in the leadership of the local unions.

After the 10th Congress of CONAPACH, fishworkers and associations of Uruguay, Peru and Chile met for 3 days. Jean Michel Le Ry a delegate of the Union of Fishermen's Cooperatives of France was present. This meeting was an initiative of the Collectif aiming to bring these different association together on a common platform.

INDIA: POLICE REPRESSION AGAINST LONG MARCH OF FISHWORKERS

The massive mobilisation of people in Kaniakumary (South India) on May Day 1989 was to be the culmination of the Coastal March by two groups moving down the western and eastern coast. Some ten to fifteen thousand people, three-, quarters of them women, gathered for this manifestation in peace and self discipline when, following provocations by some hooligans, the police started firing into the crowd, resulting in several people being injured by bullet wounds or police beatings.

The National Fishermen Forum (NFF) took a major initiative in the march together with its affiliated unions, voluntary agencies and ecological groups. Under the slogan "Protect Water, Protect Life", the marchers moved along to draw attention to the threat to survival caused by pollution, destruction of the environment, and the water problem in general. All along their route, the impressive mass of peaceful demonstrators was welcomed and given hospitality by innumerable local groups and in many places local people marched along with them.

As it is the case elsewhere, the pollution of its waters has reached in India an alarming stage. The threat to survival is due to excessive discharge into rivers and coastal waters of urban sewage water, industrial debris and toxic wastes. The devastation of forests and destruction of river systems by dams have added to this alarming situation.

Other major issues highlighted by the marchers were the pressing problems of the traditional fishing sector. Over-exploitation of resources due to industrialisation, the introduction of trawlers (especially shrimp trawling) and purse seiners - recent history of Kerala and Karnataka have illustrated this situation. Considerable amounts of money have been invested, all in the name of development and modernisation, adding to the misery of the artisanal fishworkers. In spite of the armed assault by the police, the march has revealed the potential of the masses to defend and protect their environment as an essential element for human survival and the future of fishworkers.

SOUTH PACIFIC: THE WALL OF DEATH

For the first time this year up to 200 fishing boats from Japan, Taiwan and South-Korea moved towards the South Pacific bringing with them drift nets that stretch over thousands of miles slaughtering marine life over large tracts of ocean and threatening the fragile economy of island nations such as Fiji and Western Samoa. "The most destructive fishing technology the world has ever seen has come", says Sam LaBudde, a marine biologist.

Sixteen Pacific countries of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in May 1989 warned in a communique that the dramatic and unregulated increase in the number of gill net

vessels from Japan, Taiwan and South Korea poses a major environmental threat. Drift net fishing increased 16 fold in the past year.

The "floating curtains" consist of a nylon monofilament net to form a wall 35 km to 60 km long and 10 m deep. Thousands of miles of fine-mesh nets are slipped into international waters every day. When a net is lost it does not degrade but continues to be a menace, floating independently, sweeping the seas and trapping any species in its path.

This type of "fishing" may destroy albacore tuna in the South Pacific within two years.

Some countries have taken draconian measures against devastating type of fishing. Hawaii, for example, has banned the possession and the use of these nets within the state's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Vessels equipped with this type of fishing gear are liable to pay a fine of 50,000 US \$ in case they use them within the EEZ. Samoa and Fiji islands refuse the handling of fish caught by drift nets. French Polynesia and Vanuatu will not service or refuel gill net boats in their ports.

New Caledonia is the only country authorising free transshipment of drift net fish. The government of New Zealand considers taking strict action against all vessels using this destructive fishing technique.

AN EXCLUSIVE ZONE OF 0 TO 20 MILES TO BE RESERVED FOR THIRD WORLD TRADITIONAL FISHERMEN

First of all, congratulations for the first issue of the SAMUDRA Report and compliments to its founders.

The article by Tom Kocherry was particularly interesting. In the article he mentions the enactment of the "Marine Fishing Act" in Kerala State (South India) under which the state imposes a ban on purse-seiners fishing within 22 kilometres of the coast and on trawlers and mechanised boats within 10 kilometres. In Cochin, the fleet of traditional fishermen blockaded the entire harbour. This merits to be made known to all Southern countries and so are the concluding notes of the article: ". . . unless the small-scale fishworkers put up a sustained fight, no law will be enacted or implemented".

Our fishing experience with the 'doris' in many Southern countries (India 1968-69, and later in Brazil, Gabon, Madagascar, Senegal...) confirm that the traditional fishery sector in these countries is doomed to disappear in the near future unless trawl fishing, by national or international vessels, is prohibited within the exclusive zone of 0 to 20 nautical miles.

The importance of traditional fisheries in developing countries should not be underestimated: it represents over ten million small coastal fishermen, with a total catch of approximately twenty million tons every year, this is one quarter of the world production! This fish is destined to feed the poor and undernourished, while the major catch of trawlers fishing along the Southern coasts goes to the production of fish meal to feed cattle and domestic animals of our developed countries!

We had demanded the proclamation of this 20 miles zone even before the World Fisheries Conference, organised by the FAO in Rome 1984, took place. Unfortunately, the response to the petitions addressed to the United Nations, the Commission of the European Economic Community and the FAO did not guarantee till today that any of these institutions would take the initiative for the establishment of the 20 miles zone. Although each of them recognised the fact that industrial trawling by developed countries would endanger the very existence of the traditional fishery sector, the proclamation of an exclusive zone reserved to traditional fisheries was, in the light of the New Law of the Sea, left to the respective coastal states to decide. On the other hand we are very well aware that these governments are likely tempted to sell their fishing licences to developed nations in order to meet their foreign debt and this even if by doing so they endanger the small fishermen of their countries who, needless to say, are never consulted!

During a debate on fisheries in Southern countries, the European Parliament made it clear and I quote the speaker M. Guermeur: "... I wish to say a few words on the issue which is looked upon with much indifference by the world, namely the outrageous - not to mention criminal - practices of over-exploitation of marine resources of developing countries by some industrialised nations, Unless this practice is put to a halt, it makes no sense to proceed with the question of technology transfer...

Because we are here talking about "the colonisation of the seas" of Southern countries, the only issue seems to me the one expressed by Tom Kocherry: "that traditional fishermen and fishworkers in general put up a fight to defend their right to live for themselves and their families'. This struggle is going on in India, in the Philippines, in Senegal... and will continue unless the governments of developed countries do not assist the Southern governments in establishing a 0 to 20 nautical miles zone exclusively restricted to traditional fishermen.

Henri Claireaux
President of the "Comite de St. Pierre & Miquelon
d'Aide au Developpement et de la lutte contre la Faim dans le monde."
(St. Pierre & Miquelon Council for development aid and against hunger in the world),

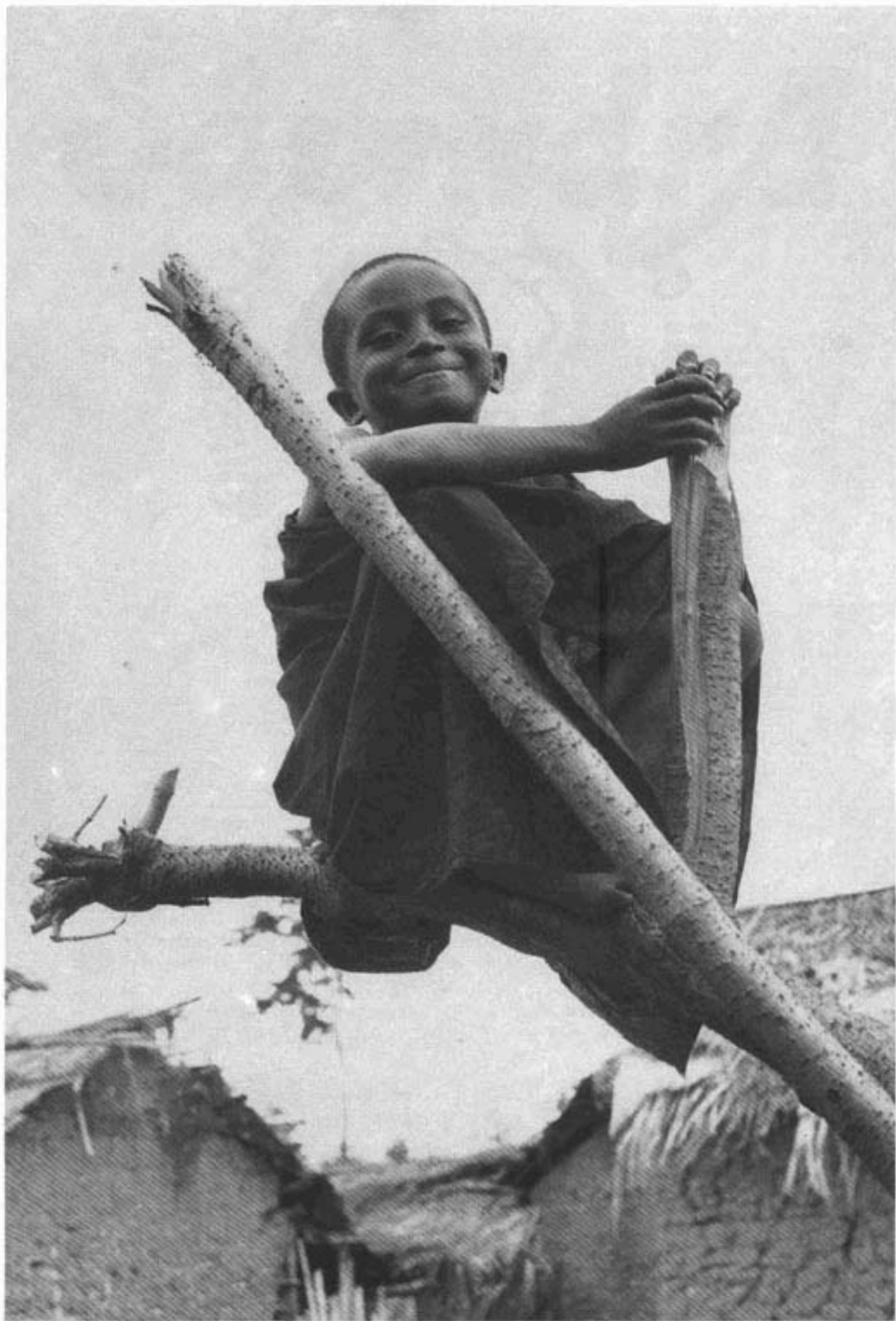
EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS FROM AFRICA

As part of the NGO campaign launched by the ICSF, the Liaison Office in Brussels received some 14 interesting responses from various individuals and organisations, 16 letters and 2 tapes containing direct testimonies in reply to its request to several African NGO's for eye-witness accounts on the question of the fishery situation in their respective countries, fishery agreements with the EEC or other nations (if any), conflicts between the industrialised and the artisanal fishery sector, actions taken, etc..

Many of these reactions bear witness to the worsening situation of the artisanal fishermen, the violation of their traditional fishing grounds, the difficulties they face in defending their rights. Some of them mention the fact that financial aid, resulting from fishery agreements, serve in the first place - if not exclusively - to reimburse foreign debt instead of being used for the development of artisanal fisheries.

A synthesis of the many contributions will be made shortly. Moreover, many of the reactions have served already as a basis for the ICSF campaign in view of the forthcoming Lome IV negotiations between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

(see the article on Lome IV, p 7)





“Why must we gamble with the lives of innocent children in order to generate plutonium for bombs? Even to contemplate dumping radioactive waste in waters that belong to all of us as part of our global heritage is an outrage. For us to make such important decisions on behalf of future generations without taking into account the morality of using international waters as an exclusive rubbish bin is an arrogant act”

Peter Wilkinson
Oslo, 24-25 June 1989