

# SAMUDRA

A woman wearing a bright orange sari and a matching headscarf stands in the center of the frame. She is smiling and has her hands clasped in front of her. The background consists of a large, shallow pond or lagoon surrounded by tall, dry grasses. In the distance, there are some small structures and a clear sky.

THE WORK CONDITIONS  
AND  
THE RIGHTS OF FISHWORKERS



# SAMUDRA

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# Fishermen's rights

Filipino fishermen have suffered a great deal on Taiwanese boats. Living conditions on those boats were denounced at the international seminar held in Manila last February. All over the world, unknown fishermen undergo the same or worse treatment and have no way to defend their basic rights. International agencies and governments do little or nothing to solve these problems.

Industrial fleets have hurt small artisanal fishermen in numerous countries, either directly by fishing in their waters, or indirectly, by negotiating with governments to obtain larger fishing quotas. Many national organizations aspire to have a zone reserved for artisanal fishermen, and we can see the day when that right will be universally accepted as a norm.

Women do not participate in organizations and are generally kept in an inferior position. Even though they always participate in the task of processing the catch, they are not allowed to occupy leadership positions. Also, governmental decision-making agencies do not accept the participation of fishworkers' leaders, who are therefore forced to use pressure tactics to be taken into account.

We can see some signs on the horizon that allow us to hope for a better day for fishworkers who lack basic rights. Chile has promulgated a law for fishing and aquaculture, which provides for the participation of representatives of fishermen's organizations in fishing councils. It also establishes a five-mile zone reserved for artisanal fishing, a fisheries development fund, and priority access to aquacultural concessions. Fishermen from Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Senegal, the Philippines, India, Norway, France and other countries are active in their organizations to achieve better living and working conditions.

This progress marks the beginning of a long and difficult road that fishermen's organizations will have to travel to ensure that their members are respected as human beings and can defend their sources of work threatened by pollution and plunder. Fishermen and fishworkers of the entire world should raise their voices to make room for the participation of women and demand from their governments reserved fishing areas. Credit and technical assistance should be channelled through projects that are elaborated with the active participation of fishermen themselves at every step of the process.

Since 1984 the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers has carried out numerous actions to defend those brothers who live and work at sea. At every event and in every publication, we have always called attention to violations of the human and professional rights of fishworkers. SAMUDRA today denounces the bad treatment that many Filipino and fishermen from other countries undergo in the Taiwanese fleet. We are sure that a response of solidarity will come to their support from every corner of the globe. The Collective is also working on a proposal for the next United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, so that the basic rights of fishermen and fishworkers are recognized.

For that reason, the "2001 Award", granted to the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers by the European coordinating body for non-governmental organizations accredited by the European Communities Commission, is a recognition of efforts made and a demand for more responsibility in the future.

Finally, we would like to thank Francois Bellec for his collaboration in launching our review as its editor in Brussels, Belgium. His work allowed us to move our message across borders. Pierre Gillet, after five years of dedicated service, has turned over his position as ICSF's executive secretary to Sebastian Matthew, headquartered in Madras, India. This edition brings you the salutations of the new team. We need your collaboration and news.

Héctor Luis Morales  
Editor-in-Chief

# FISH WORKERS AND TAIWAN'S DISTANT-WATER FISHING INDUSTRY

*Yvonne Met Jung Lit*

## Introduction

Taiwan is an island surrounded by seas. Traditional and local inshore fishing has all but disappeared, due to Taiwan's industrial development and overzealous economic policy. The natural order of taking from and returning to the sea has been destroyed. Owing to overfishing and industrial pollution, the island's marine resources have been significantly depleted. Because of this, Taiwan's fisheries sector has over the past 30 years steadily developed a highly mechanized distant-water fleet.

Painful setbacks have occurred along with the growth of this distant-water fishing industry. Powerful big business concerns control Taiwan's fishing industry. These companies are motivated by an economic greed, which has little regard for the value of marine life or even human life.

Aggressive fishing practices and extensive use of driftnets reflect these boat owners' greed. Abusive and unjust conditions for fishworkers, Taiwanese as well as foreign, are also products of this greed. I briefly describe here the conditions fishworkers face on Taiwanese distant-water vessels.

## Profile of a typical Taiwanese DWV fishworker

According to government reports, the majority of Taiwanese DWV fishworkers are between the ages of 35 and 40. This statistic appears to be rather high, given the additional datum that 98% of first-time fishworkers are junior high graduates or young men recently discharged from the country's mandatory military service.

Government statistics also reveal that over 62% have worked on fishing boats less than five years. Given the high turnover on the boats, it is perhaps difficult to get accurate data. A figure of 600,000 is given as to the total fishworker population.

I have found the majority of fishworkers to be younger than the official statistical average. Many of them go on one or two voyages, discover the long and dangerous working conditions, low wages and other inequities and never sail again. A high percentage of them are Aborigine, a small non-Chinese minority in Taiwan. Due to racial discrimination, poor education and lack economic

opportunities in their home villages, many Aborigines are channeled into the won jobs when they migrate to the cities.

There is also a growing percentage of foreign workers on Taiwanese DWVs. The nationalities most often represented are mainland Chinese, Filipino, Thai, South African and Mauritian. While the government now allows 30% of crews to be composed of foreigners, we have many reports that sometimes as high as 50% to 75% of some crews are foreign.

Aborigine as well as Taiwanese fishworkers generally have a low educational level; many of them are illiterate. The Aborigine fishworkers come mostly from agricultural backgrounds. About 10% of the Taiwanese are from fishing families. The majority of them do not know how to swim and possess only a minimal knowledge of life-saving techniques, first aid and emergency fire procedures. They receive no training in operating equipment prior to their first voyage.

Over 60% of Taiwanese fishermen work more than 12 hours per day, according to information gathered in 1989 by the National Kaohsiung Institute of Marine Technology. In the case of trawler workers, fishing time takes between five and six hours a day, with 12 hours required to bring in the nets and sort the harvest.

Squid longer and six fishermen work through the night with hours. Fishworkers sleep between four hours a day and cannot rest by turns.

The following is a typical day for squid fishermen:

08:00-09:00 breakfast

09:00-12:00 mend fishing nets, repairs, chores

12:00-13:00 lunch

13:00-15:00 rest

15:30-17:30 put out nets

18:00-19:00 dinner

19:00-06:00 raise nets, process the catch and load it into refrigeration hold; repeat process through the night.

The work is monotonous and repetitive. Much of it does not require special skills. Given the lack of sleep and overwork involved, this kind of mechanized fishing produces boredom, which increases the chance of injury. Communication difficulties among the crew also produce safety problems—Aborigine and Taiwanese fishermen do not speak the same language; the presence of foreign fishermen also complicates communication.

Taiwanese ships are unsafe. The Kaohsiung Fishing Association reports that over the past 10 years more than 2,000 ships have been lost at sea and that more than 3,000 men have died, an average of 24 men per month. There are several reasons for this record: a large proportion of Taiwan's fleet is old (over 20 years); safety equipment is lacking (life rafts, life preservers, etc.); many vessels purchased from Japan at cheap prices are substandard; officials are bribed to falsify safety inspection of ships; crews are untrained.

Over the past 10 years, more than 6,514 fishworkers on Taiwanese vessels have been detained in other countries. While the crews have no part in decisions about where or how fishing operations will be carried out, they are viewed as criminals by the countries that detain them, often under poor conditions. The fishworker's contract does not even mention detention, and usually all family support is stopped. Because the voyage ultimately loses money, fishermen return to port deep in debt to the company. Since his documents are in the hands of the company, there is no way to repay the boat owner except to sign up again for another voyage.

Distant-water voyages last between one and three years. Sometimes the men are gone as long as five years at a time. These long time periods often cause difficulties for the men, their wives and their families.

Fishworkers experience a great deal of loneliness and isolation during their long-distance voyages. Many rely on alcohol as a distraction. Tensions have a way of mounting among the crew, especially when there is pressure to work harder and harder: Reports of fights, violence, mutiny and murder are growing more common.

## The economic factors

Only 70% of Taiwan DWV fishworkers are guaranteed a fixed wage for their labour. In fact, the majority of fishworkers in Taiwan are not seen as employees but as "partners" of the fishing company. The "bonus system" in Taiwan is deceptive. The fishworkers take all the risks and the fishing companies take all the profits.

Monthly support payments are issued to the family after the ship leaves port. While these payments are supposed to total US\$400, case work by the PCT Fishermen's Service Center reveals that this is seldom

the case. These payments, however, are not a "salary" but in fact a "loan".

At the end of the voyage, all expenses (like food, fuel, repairs, insurance, etc. which are often calculated by the company at two or three times their actual cost) are subtracted from the sale of the catch. The company then receives 60% to 65%. What remains is divided among the crew of 17-20 men, with the captain and officers receiving two or three shares. If the fishworker's "share" of the catch is less than the total amount of family support payments, then he owes the company the balance.

There is also the problem of introduction brokers. Currently, there is a serious labour shortage on Taiwanese ships. Many crew members are recruited by crime syndicates and often in league with the fishing companies. They especially prey upon Aborigine youths, luring them onto the ships with alcohol, false promises of big salaries and women. Introduction fees range from US\$1,400 to \$3,200.

These agencies will also take the fisherman's chop (official name seal), ID card, fishing license and other important papers and turn them over to the fishing company. Boat owners have been known to take out loans using fishermen's documents. Using these papers, the agency controls everything and the fisherman never even sees the terms of his contract; 85% of all fishermen never sign their own contracts. Those who do sign their contracts usually do not understand what they are signing.

While government statistics released by the Kaohsiung Management Department claim that fishermen average between US\$480 and \$840 per month, these figures are grossly inflated. Based on five years of case work, Fishermen's Service Centre (FSC) data disclose that the current monthly income earned by fishermen is between US\$260 and \$300. Conversations with foreign workers docked in Kaohsiung reveal that they normally earn roughly half that amount, but sometimes they are not paid at all.

Taiwanese fishworkers are entitled to Fishermen's Insurance, but this plan is inadequate. In case of death, US\$4,000 is awarded. Other money provided by the Fishery Union totals less than \$800. If the fishworker has participated in the programme of labour insurance for more than two years, additional benefits are available. A personal safety insurance is also available, but is not compulsory.

Fishworkers are insured only for risk at sea. Once the boats enter the port for repair, maintenance, etc., or prior to sailing, expenses incurred by any injury or accident happening on land must be borne by the fishworker himself. Labour insurance does not cover

medical expenses if the illness or injury is considered to be unconnected to a fishing operation. When fishworkers are ill or injured, they are often treated with only patent medicines. Many fishworkers suffer irreparable handicaps because of postponing emergency medical treatment.

Retirement benefits are available but rarely received. A fishworker must work at least 15 years with the same company before receiving retirement funds, beginning at age 55. Fishermen who fulfill that condition may receive between US\$14,000 and \$16,000.

### Concluding remarks

In my opinion, the abuses of Taiwan's fishing industry occur because of the capitalistic greed of the fishing companies, lack of government regulation and failure of fishworkers to organize. Companies feel justified in using cheap labour, local or foreign, if it turns a profit. They are allowed to do whatever they want by a government driven by the same capitalistic goals and powerless to regulate an industry growing more are more unjust.

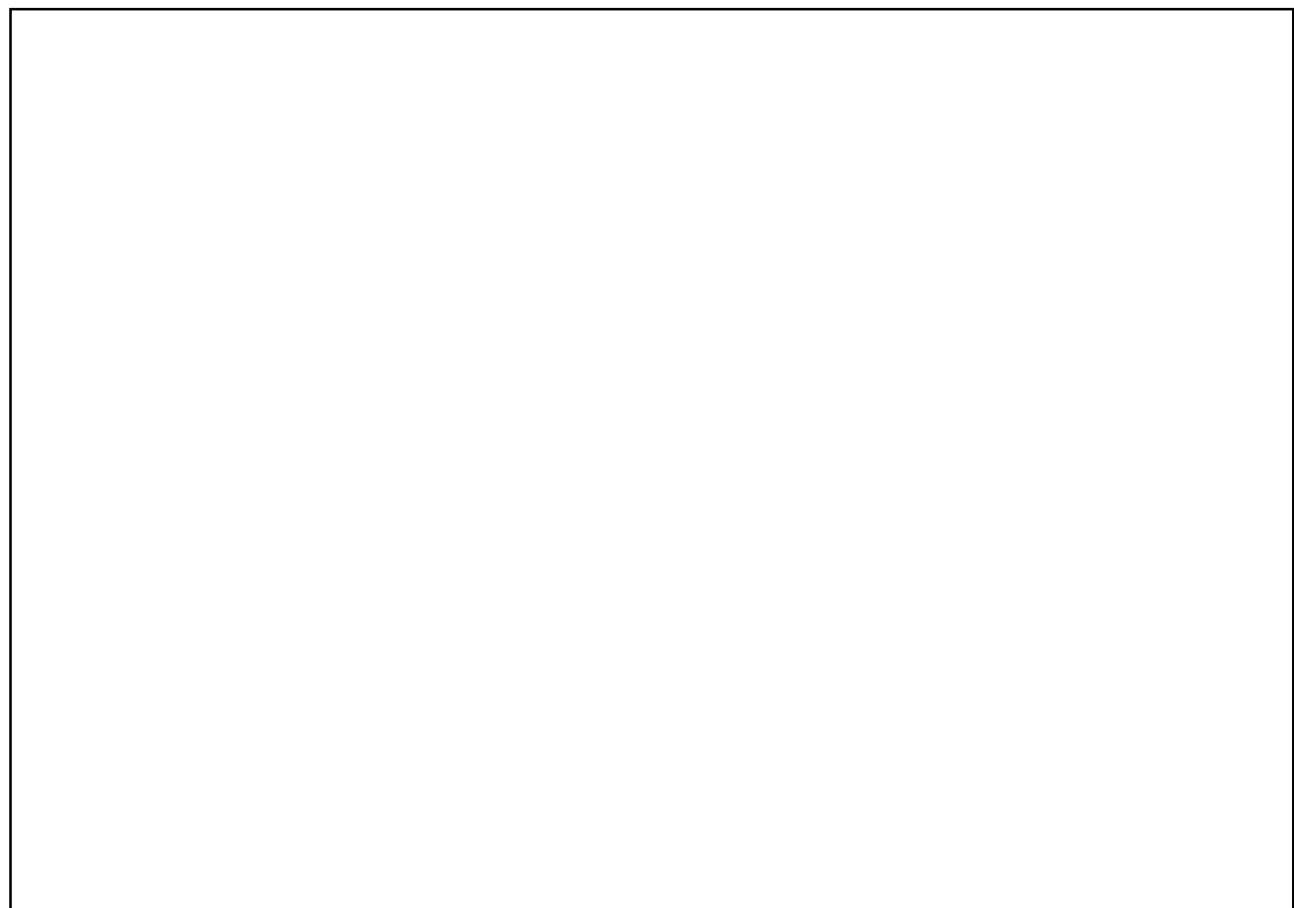
Moreover, given Taiwan's unique political isolation from the world community, there is little motivation to observe world standards of behaviour.

The highest fishery administration unit is the Council of Agriculture (COA) of the Executive Yuan, It is indica-

tive that in 30 years of distant-water fisheries development, the COA has yet to enact a body of laws governing the industry. Fisheries regulations in Taiwan are based on Japanese laws dating back to 1920. Known as "administrative orders", fishery regulations amount to "suggestions" at best and do not carry of the force of law.

There are also local Fishing Administrations located in Taiwan's major ports. The Kaohsiung Association is a non-governmental body which processes insurance and provides a limited number of services to fishworkers. Unfortunately, it is totally dominated by boat owners and is not representative of fishworkers' concerns. When a fisherman makes a claim against a company, there is no tribunal where his case can be heard. If a company refuses to negotiate, it cannot be compelled by law to address the issue.

The failure of Taiwan's DWV workers to organize is a serious but understandable problem. During the 38 years of martial law on the island, unions were forbidden. Fishworkers, on the whole, lack confidence that they can change the system. Due to the long periods of absence from home and quick turnover of personnel, attempts to form a truly representative union have failed. One such effort of deep-sea fishermen was immediately co-opted by government officials. The FSC staff is now making progress in forming a more representative fishworkers' group to ensure greater benefits and safer working conditions for all crews.



# CRUEL TAIWAN

Pierre Gillet

“Working on a Taiwanese tuna boat is like being in prison,” says deliberately Alberto de Ledn, a 34 year-old Filipino from Perez Island. Like thousands of other young Filipinos, his dream was to leave the fishing commonly practiced in his village, which provided him with barely enough to live on, and work “abroad”. With long waiting lists, they had to pay a high price to work. Once on the boats, they were subject to killing work, 12, 19 and sometimes 21 hours nonstop, in a sometimes two years trip. A hellhole for miserable pay. Their contract said that after six months they would receive 30,000 pesos (around US\$1,000) and a percentage of the take for overtime. The contract seemed to be in order, but in the case of Alberto and the others, the crew was robbed when they got back to shore, receiving only 18,000 pesos (US\$600). When they demanded full pay from the agent who recruited them (and had signed their contract), he sued them, knowing full well that these village youth would not get very far with the administration of “justice”.

There are thousands like Alberto and his friends who provide submissive and cheap labor. Taiwanese, Korean and Japanese captains can recruit up to 400/0 of their crews from among foreigners. They do not even bother to divide to conquer. Picking up long lines while keeping up with the winches calls for teamwork and constant concentration. Any slowdown or mishandling of the line is punished with a beating. Nobody even speaks the same language. The Chinese officers cannot even communicate with their Taiwanese crews, who are usually aborigines who speak one of the 17 tribal languages of the island. Therefore they express themselves with their fists and the steel rod, even more so with the Filipinos, Indonesians and Mauritians.

Jean Vacher, from the Island of Mauritius, himself a retired seaman, has documented more than 240 cases of Filipinos beaten or disabled by this barbarian treatment. “The atmosphere’ on board”, he says, “is constantly tense. People don’t understand one another. The different nationalities are suspicious of one another and they are constantly fighting.” In mid-January 1991, one of these battles degenerated into a mutiny. The captain and four Taiwanese were killed on board. Some Filipinos were also killed. The survivors are in prison on the Island of Mauritius.

Mung Ho, a Taiwanese fisherman, also experienced hell. He lost one eye “on the job”, but he received no medical attention or compensation (it was in a fight,

“assured” the insurer). He has no recourse. The Taiwanese government has signed no international convention governing work aboard (e.g. ILO Convention, etc.).

Mung Ho had to go back to work with a glass eye and he dreams like all the deep-sea fishermen that one day he can fish with artisanal fishermen. Unfortunately for him, overfishing and pollution have emptied out the fishing areas and the industrial fleets travel to pirate far-away seas from Chile to Senegal.

These boats are regularly caught flagrantly breaking fishing laws without any authorization. They are intercepted and seized. In Kaohsiung, their main port, they speak of some 3,000 seamen detained abroad. Officers (often ex-military) have gotten out by paying the necessary bail. They abandoned their crews to go home on the first flight available. The ordinary seamen, who are uneducated and speak no English, rot in jail.

In Taiwan itself, a center for fishermen run by the Presbyterian Church has courageously denounced the causes of this drama: the lack of a law to protect fishermen, the deplorable state of safety on board and the repeated violations of human rights. The center estimates that 200 boats have been lost over the last 10 years. According to this same center, the Taiwanese fleet has averaged 24 deaths a month over the last few years. A scandal!

The association of ship-owners in Kaohsiung speaks of a “Welfare Fund” (for whom?). They do not hide the fact that fishing companies are making huge profits. As for violations of human rights, what can they do? “The only language these brutes understand is the fist.”

One would think he is dreaming. Here we are at the end of the 20th century, back to the galleys; rich countries ensuring their supply of cheap labor, mocking the law. The ICSF collective calls for its members and sympathizers to document and denounce these abuses.

After a three-day working meeting in Manilla, support organizations from Taiwan, the Island of Mauritius (the Apostolate of the Sea) and the Philippines are going to coordinate their action.

We would be grateful for any further information sent to the Liaison Office in Brussels or to the office of Samudra.

# ICSF INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR / WORKSHOP

## The conditions of fishworkers on Distant-Water Vessels

*Manila, Philippines, February 1-3, 1991.*

### Recruitment and working conditions

- International and national pressure be put on governments to control recruitment activities in their countries so that proper contracts are signed and employers' liabilities are clearly defined, wages, rights and obligations of fish-workers are clearly stated, and copies given to them and their families in the language that they understand.
- Governments put an end to illegal recruitment by private agencies and ensure that illegal recruiters are prosecuted in accordance with the law of the land.
- Countries adopt better recruitment policies, which should include providing fishworkers with training to enhance their skills help prevent accidents and facilitate encounters with other cultures.
- The basic right of every fishworker to have access to full information on the catch and to control its first sale be firmly upheld and crewmembers be informed about the real catch value as the basis of their earnings.
- We ought to denounce the injustice done to fishworkers who are supposed to be paid their overtime work by percentage of the catch, but are never informed about the tonnage and value of the catch.
- Proper action be taken to curb the unjust salaries given abusively to third world workers taking advantage of their numbers in the labour market; the desire of fishing companies to include in their crews different nationalities order to maximize their gain, divide the crew and avoid all legal obligation.
- The necessary steps be taken to ensure fishworkers proper and adequate accommodations, medical facilities, protective clothing and safety equipment while aboard DWVs.

### National and international laws

- National governments be asked to implement existing ILO standards and other conventions pertaining to the safety of fishworkers S.O.L.A.S. and other conventions, such as a Tremolino.
- Each country be urged to pass a fisheries act and fisheries code, taking into account the interest of all inland fishworkers and sea-going workers; the welfare of fishworkers and their families be given due consideration.
- The Taiwanese government be pressured to take suitable action to stop inhuman treatment aboard Taiwanese fishing fleets and ensure that proper contracts are signed and honoured those responsible for violations of human rights aboard ships be punished; and proper compensation be given to families of those who are injured or killed at sea, be they national or overseas workers.
- To ensure a sustainable development, all governments be encouraged to regulate fishing activities so that proper management of resources may be established, and destructive methods like pacific gill-nets and abusive trawling be banned. Fishworker organizations be involved in designing, controlling and managing their marine resources.

### Organizing fishworkers

- Wherever there are national fishworker organizations, they be encouraged to look into the conditions and problems of fishworkers aboard DWVs and carry out actions to remedy their problems.
- National fishworker organizations present DWV fishworkers' conditions to immigrant workers organizations and human rights groups for appropriate action.



- ICSF bring to the attention of recognized international trade unions like ITF and people's organizations the plight of third world fishworkers on DWVs.
- Linkages and exchange of information be established among fishworker organizations of different countries.

## Social and legal services

- ICSF identify and involve professional groups, social agencies and lawyers interested in helping fishworkers.
- ICSF explore the possibility of operating funds for legal and emergency needs of detained fishworkers and their families.

## Research and documentation

- ICSF begin to collect basic information on fishworkers and the DWV industry. This information which is already available in some institutions and organizations shall include the listing of industries, countries supplying/demanding labour, number of boats, systems of recruitment, accreditations, recruiting agencies, etc. This resolution also calls for an exchange of information among organizations.
- In-depth and continuing studies be conducted on the problems and conditions of fishworkers by national fishworker organizations.

## Training

- In-country and out-of-country programmes be drawn up by governments and institutions in areas pertaining to the development of fishing skills including the cultural, economic and political circumstances fishworkers are likely to encounter.

## Communication/education

- Extensive harnessing of media and other communication systems, be promoted. Specific groups and institutions that are already actively involved in communication work be identified and linkage with them be arranged. Examples of these organizations are the Apostolate of the Sea and PCT Fishermen Service Center (Taiwan).
- An exchange of instructional, informational and training materials be instituted. These materials must include subjects on technical information concerning fishing, accident prevention, intercultural conditions, human rights, political situations, etc.
- A regular ICSF publication be put out.
- Education and information put emphasis on value formation especially with respect to human rights and the promotion of relationships among individuals, sectors and countries.
- Environmental concerns and conservation of resources be stressed in the education and training of fishworkers.
- Fishworkers be given more opportunities to reflect and express themselves in meetings, fora, outings and training sessions.

# ARTISANAL FISHING IN BRAZIL

*Eduardo Schiavone Cardoso  
Antonio Carlos Sant'ana Diegues*

Brazil's catch during the 1980s was between 800,000 and 900,000 metric tons a year, according to official statistics. At least half of it was taken by small scale fishermen, for both subsistence and small commercial production (table 1).

In 1988 (IBGE, 1989), some 625,000 metric tons were recorded. Of the total catch, artisanal fishermen caught approximately 25% in the southeastern-southern region (around 118,000 metric tons), 85% in the northeastern region (94,000 metric tons), and a bit more than 85% in the northern region (37,000 metric tons). Artisanal fishermen took close to 92.8% of the recorded catch in inland waters (190,000 metric tons; see map 1). The criterion for distinguishing artisanal from industrial fishing in the official statistics is the tonnage of the vessels: up to 20 tons of gross tonnage is artisanal, above that, industrial.

The main resources exploited by maritime artisanal fishermen are estuarine species such as mullets, catfish, white mullets, some species of shrimp as well as crabs and mollusks. The coastal stocks most caught by these fishermen are species like sardines, sea bass, swordfish, hake and sharks, as well as species associated with rocky bottoms, such as lobsters, porgies, groupers and red groups, among others.

Fishing methods include long-lines, driftnets, circular nets, wicker traps, small nets pulled in from the beach and fixed traps such as corrals and circles. A variety of vessels are used: canoes, skiffs, whaleboats and catamarans, among others. Resources exploited, as well as the methods and type of vessel used, vary significantly from region to region, given the length of the Brazilian coast, the physiological differentiation of the shore, the unequal distribution of resources and distinct coastal and marine ecosystems.

The National Confederation of Fishermen estimated in 1986 that there were close to 553,000 artisanal fishermen (see table 2). In some areas of the country, artisanal fishing is the main activity of innumerable communities with an invaluable cultural heritage. The coastal populations of Amazonia, the Caipiras and Azorians of the southeastern and southern part of the country, and the catamaran sailors and collectors of the northeast are some examples of the tremendous

cultural diversity that exists among Brazilian artisanal fishermen. These cultures possess knowledge extremely important for the preservation of the environment, the adoption of technology and the sustainable management of natural resources.

However, a series of factors are having a negative impact on artisanal fishing. In general, the development model put into effect by the Brazilian government, based on the concentration of wealth, leads to greater exploitation of artisanal fishermen, both on land and at sea.

The advance of speculative building on the sea shore, serious conflicts over land throughout the whole country, the establishment of industrial complexes (petrochemicals, mining and metallurgical, et al.) alongside of highly productive eco-systems, the expansion of coastal cities and tourist centers, and the increasing deterioration of water resources through urban, mining, agricultural and industrial pollution are problems found along the whole coast and factors that ruin artisanal fishing.

For example, some areas like the estuary of *the Santos-Cubatao* (Sao Paulo), the bays of Guanabara (Rio de Janeiro) and Todos os Santos (BA) and lakes like Lagoa dos Patos (Rio Grande do Sul) and Mundaii-Manguaba (AL) are already extensively polluted, causing a loss of quality in the fish taken and in some cases a reduction of the standing stocks exploited, and forcing the artisanal fisherman to diversify his activities, establish new survival strategies, or, in certain cases abandon fishing altogether.

The Brazilian development model in general excludes large sections of Brazilian society, including artisanal fishermen. The government's fishery policies do the same thing.

The creation of SUDEPE (Office of Fishers Development) in 1962 and the policy in effect since 1967 to give tax incentives to industrial fishing companies (Statutory Decree 221167) led to an unprecedented increase of capital formation in the industrial fishing sector.

An increase in the number of vessels and processing units has put more pressure on the stocks harvested

by the fishing industry and created serious conflicts between artisanal and industrial fishermen. The invasion of areas traditionally fished by artisanal fishermen, the deterioration of the environment produced by the use of predatory fishing methods and the destruction of artisanal vessels and fishing apparatuses are some examples of the conflicts produced by the uncontrolled amplification and modernization of the industrial fishing sector.

At the same time, there is some integration between the two subsectors where artisanal fishermen reinforce the labour force (including with their fishing know-how) in the fishing industry, and when they sell part of their catch to processing plants, which is then included in the statistics for the industrial sector.

The artisanal fishermen of Brazil face still another kind of problem in connection with the organizations that represent them. Created by the government between 1919 and 1923, the organizations that represent artisanal fishermen consist of fishermen's colonies at the local level, federations at the state level and a confederation at the national level. Given the paternalism and authoritarianism that has been characteristic of these organizations from the very beginning, most of the movements of artisanal fishermen operated and still operate outside the sphere of the official system of representation.

The early 1980s saw the first struggles by authentic representatives to take over the colonies and turn them

into organizations for the defense of artisanal fishermen. The movement of fishermen in connection with the drawing up of the new Constitution also began in the 1980s, when artisanal fishermen organized themselves to have their rights guaranteed by the Constitution of 1988.

The agencies that support fishermen were important in this process, especially the Pastoral Council of Fishermen, which began its activities during the 1970s.

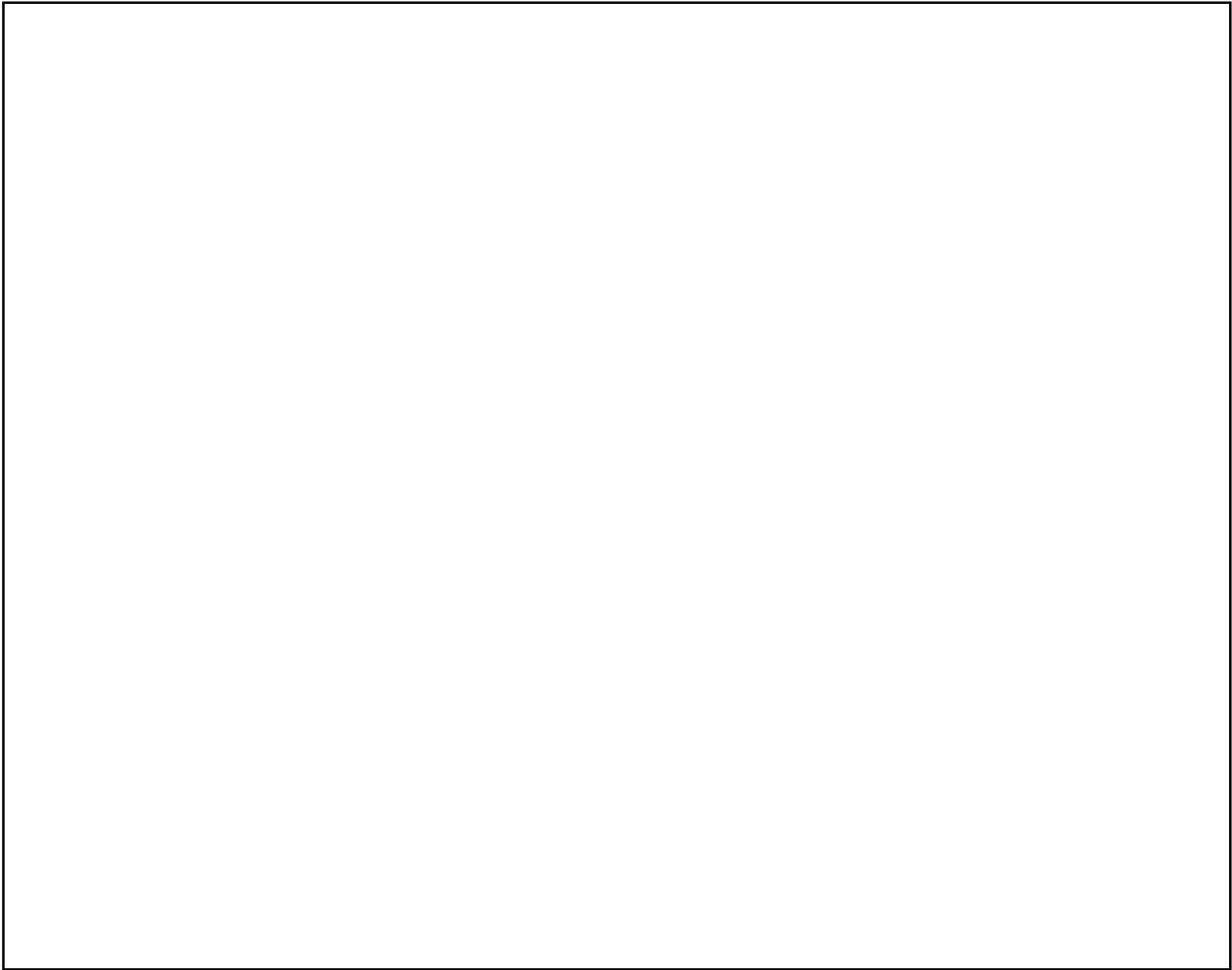
The continuation of these struggles of artisanal fishermen up to the end of the constituent process which finally guaranteed the right of free association, and the granting to fishermen's colonies the same rights as those enjoyed by urban trade unions, among other conquests, were carried out in different ways. On the one hand, there was the discussion of the question concerning which kind of organization provided better representation, colonies or trade unions. On the other hand, there was the struggle to extend the advances of the new Constitution to the whole system of representation, including the federations and the confederation. And finally, along with the other struggles of fishermen, the movement still continues to democratize the colonies and federations that are still in the hands of non-fishermen.

It was in this context that MONAPE was born in 1988 - the National Movement of Fishermen-whose first steps were to spread and strengthen the movement of artisanal fishermen at the national level.

**Table 1**  
**OUTPUT SHARE OF THE ARTISANAL AND INDUSTRIAL SYSTEMS**  
**BRAZIL, 1980-1988**  
**(thousands of metric tons)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Output</b>	<b>Artisanal</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>%</b>
1980	822,677	404,287	49.1	418,395	50.9
1981	833,164	427,621	51.3	405,543	48.7
1982	833,933	445,533	53.4	388,401	46.6
1983	880,696	451,571	51.3	429,126	48.7
1984	958,908	467,754	48.8	491,153	51.2
1985	971,537	491,891	50.6	479,647	49.4
1986	941,712	460,729	48.9	480,984	51.1
1987	934,408	472,186	50.5	462,224	49.5
1988	829,491	439,764	53.0	389,727	47.0

Source: IBGE, Anuario Estatístico do Brasil, 1988 and 1989, Estatísticas da Pesca, 1988, vols I and II



## ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF ALIOU SALL

*ICSF Representative for the 'Award 2001*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the Liaison Committee of the nongovernmental development organizations, national and international organizations, nongovernmental organizations from the North and the South, the Parliament and Commission of the European Community, before thanking you for choosing the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) as the recipient of the 'Award 2001.', allow me to introduce to you cur project and its accomplishments in a context as difficult as the one facing fisheries on an intercontinental scale.

ICSF is an international network created for the purpose of allowing fishworkers (men, women and children) to make their voices heard at the international level, so that governments and international agencies will take into consideration the problems they face both on land and at sea.

In its search for cooperation and solidarity, ICSF is close to fishworker organizations and trade unions. What

particularly characterizes the collective is that it provides the basis for close cooperation between scientists and social workers on the one hand, and between fishworkers from countries in the South and North, on the other.

To fulfill its mission, ICSF has elaborated four objectives, to develop programs of:

- studies and research
- training and exchange
- action and campaigns
- communication

The last three development decades have ended in failure, despite the innumerable efforts made in the name of development. That failure is evident in the increase of famine and in the deterioration of ecosystems in the North and the South. The survival and the dynamism of economic practices of the poor were com-

monly called 'Informal', while credit systems bear witness to the failure of the technocratic approach to development.

This notorious failure brings out the limits of the stages of economic growth theory which governed the efforts and initiatives taken in the name of development, on the one hand, and the marginalization of the target populations who were supposed "to develop", on the other hand. Speaking of the stages of economic growth theory, it is two wars behind the times, at least with respect to fisheries, which is our area. Indeed, even today the development efforts carried out by that sector are limited to transferring financial, human and technological resources from the North to the South, ignoring the situation of a sector which is involved in a whole process of internationalization.

The fisheries of the South are overexploited today by industrial fleets, which also waste resources with their system of selective fishing.

In Mozambique, for every kilogram of shrimp caught, 10 kilograms of fish are thrown back into the water. Besides these problems which are already bad enough, there are problems connected with the insecurity of millions of coastal fishermen, the ever more alarming pollution of the seas, and the monopolistic control of international fish markets by countries in the North like Japan and the European Economic Community. This monopoly casts a shadow on the outlook for fish as a food alternative that could provide a cheap source of protein to coastal populations.

Tourism, considered a source of foreign currency in many countries of the South, also continues to produce victims, such as fishing communities (mainly the women who process the catch), threatened with being "cleared away" to make room for tourist facilities.

Under the pretext of development, the countries of the North sign fishery agreements with the South, which allow industrial fleets to operate in the South's waters. These modern fleets, especially when they do not respect the boundaries of the fishing areas, cause enormous damage—invisible for the industrial countries—on the material level (the boats destroy traditional fishing gear as they cruise) and on the human level (fatal accidents are caused by collisions between industrial and traditional boats). Under this same pretext of development, the developed countries also finance an occasional project which allows them to camouflage the serious problems of coastal fishermen.

The serious problems that traditional fishermen have today, which escape the classical theory of development (i.e.. the states of economic growth theory) based on materialist considerations led volunteers from the South (mostly from India) to organize an international meeting of artisanal fishermen and their supporters in

July 1984. That meeting, which was held in Rome at the same time as the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, made it possible for some 50 fishworkers and 40 scientists and supporters to come together for an authentic consideration of the situation of fishworkers.

Before leaving Rome, the national delegations of artisanal fishermen expressed their desire that their supporters provide the means to organize at the international level in order to follow the evolution of the increasingly unified world fish market and help them organize at the local level.

Thus the Collective was founded in 1986, under the impetus of the organizations of Indian fishworkers, to follow up on the recommendations and desires of the fishworkers who attended the 1984 Rome meeting.

Today, there are several national organizations of Fishworkers. These organizations are stronger; and more structured among fishermen than among women who process the catch. Besides the Indians already organized, ICSF has helped found national organizations of fishermen in Latin America (Chile, Brazil), Africa (Senegal, with more than 4,000 members) and Asia (Thailand, Philippines). We at ICSF do not want to take the place of fishworker organizations. We try to make it possible for scientists and fishermen to collaborate, as well as facilitate exchanges between fishermen and scientists from different continents. Thus the day fishworker organizations can organize themselves, the Collective will disappear.

In the name of the International Collective, I could not end these remarks without expressing how happy we are to be encouraged in a work that calls for energy and passion, but one also full of political risks because of governments who often see us as upsetting the status quo.

The political problems we have had these last few years, simply for having committed the crime of being in solidarity with fishworkers, has often led us close to despair.

The award you are giving today to We International Collective is for us priceless encouragement, but it is also recognition of the work accomplished since 1986.

Let us hope that this is only the beginning and that the non-governmental organizations of the North are ready to become even more involved in the responsibilities demanded by the processes we have begun.

Thank you for your attention.

Brussels, April 9<sup>th</sup> 1991.

# TRUTH IS LIKE SHADOW IT CANNOT BE BURIED

*Malic Gueye*

## Organizational strategy and problems

I cannot express the immense joy and great honour I feel today, for we fishermen of Senegal never thought that one day we would be able to put forth our ideas and make our voice heard.

One of the priorities of the national collective is to establish a solidarity network with fishermen's organizations on all the continents with the support of an international collective. We in Senegal are encouraged by the fact that our organization is young, but with its political weight we have begun to see some results in the government's attempts to improve its policies and carry out some projects. That shows us that in order to meet our objectives we have to be solid and representative. For this reason we have for two years concentrated all our efforts on working at the grassroots level by holding series of meetings. I would like to take advantage of this occasion to express my gratitude to the International Collective, which has encouraged us with all kinds of support, especially by facilitating the exchange of experiences among fishermen from different villages, regions and countries.

The International Collective's approach to the exchange of experiences has given us the idea of working at the West African regional level in order to then share our experience with unorganized African fishermen. An organization has to move in one direction or another; if it does not advance, it goes backward: We have been inserted into Senegal for 20 years, and, if we look at our results, we have not progressed. For that reason, since 1987 we have begun to run our organization ourselves. The process has gone through the following stages:

- October 1987: First national meeting of Senegalese fishermen. At this meeting a standing committee was elected to prepare the assembly of November 1988.
- November 1988: General Constituent Assembly and inauguration of the National Collective of

Senegalese Fishermen, with its headquarters at Hann Pechures. Today, our organization has some 1,800 members. We have published documents in the Woloff language and two issues have already come out. After government agents evaluated our officers, we created our own organization for the following reasons:

- First, the organizations we had belonged to the government, which could dissolve them when ever it wanted. That is what happened to the cooperatives.
- Second, we should have a trade union to represent the interests of a sector as large as fishing, because serious problems exist such as credit.
- Third, the government's policy works against us fishermen. To understand that, one only has to look at the government's system of credit for artisanal fishermen, which is managed largely by the agricultural credit system. This system exploits the fisherman who in the process is reduced to someone who merely uses equipment. In order to get credit, the fisherman must make a down payment of 20% of the cost of the equipment ordered and then make monthly payments. By the last payment, the fishermen are in a situation in which the equipment (usually a motor) is used up and they cannot save another 20% for a new motor, without paying an interest rate of 14.5%.

The present system is horrible as far as we are concerned, but when a person does not have what he sees, he is content with what he has. Indeed, the fishermen who wish to avoid agricultural credit have no other chance, because the government refuses to pardon the debts of fishermen taken on after agricultural credit.

The motorization program has had enormous financial problems from the 1980s up till now. Perhaps for this reason and the country's economic problems, the leaders of the country have been led to put into effect a

policy so harmful for fishermen. The present interest rate on credit of 14.5% is too high. For some officials of the program and even for the Ministry, the problems of the motorization program are due to we fishermen not paying back our loans. The government is largely responsible, since by not paying attention to what the real actors say, it puts these fishermen in such a difficult situation that they cannot pay back the loans. Moreover, we have been good payers.

Take, for example, the sudden rise in the price of motors in 1984 and 1985. During those years, prices jumped, according to the horsepower, from 168,000 to 260,370 Senegalese francs for an eight horsepower

motor (64% rise); from 255,600 to 394,370 for a 25 horsepower motor (54% rise), and from 425,000 to 550,290 for a 40 horsepower motor (29% rise).

The motors whose price rose were for fishermen who had already had made down payments in their cooperatives. Once the motors arrived, besides raising their price, the motorization program obliged the fishermen, after having made down payments to their cooperatives, to pay the remainder in cash in order to receive the motors. This has led to a slowdown of activities since 1984 on the part of some of us who had only two choices: become a crew member on a boat belonging to someone richer, or stop working.

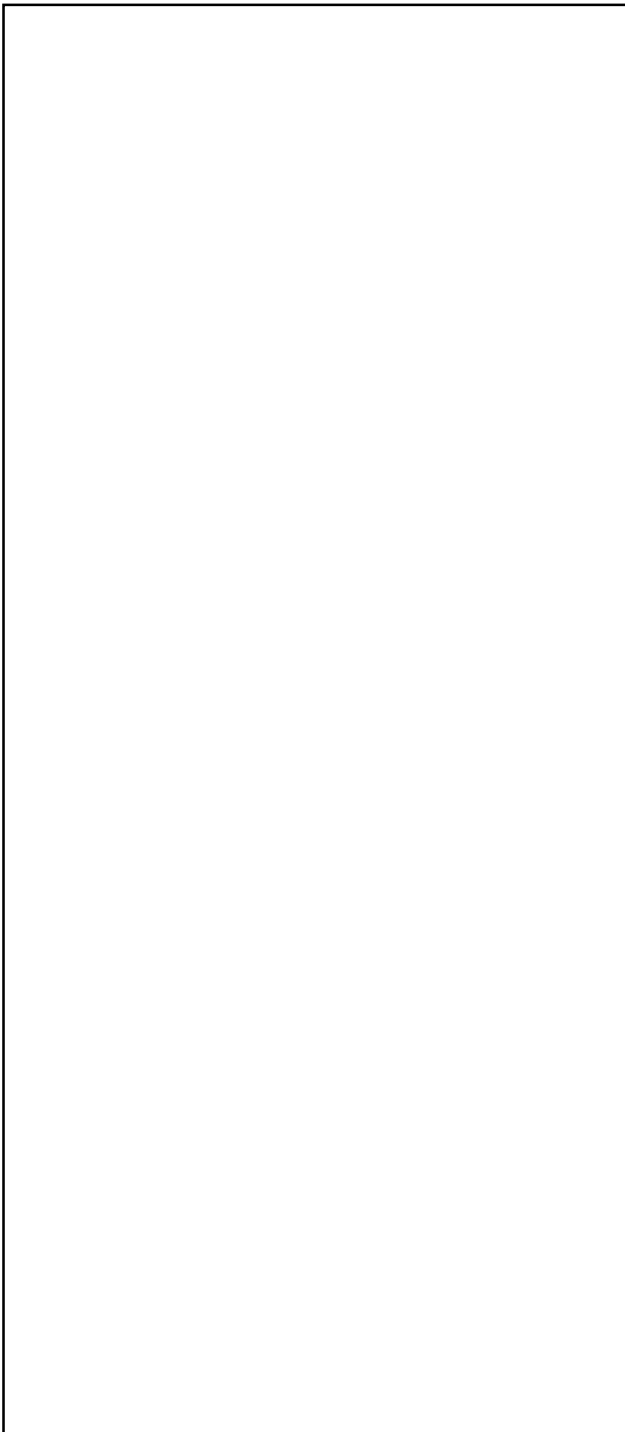
Moreover, the government owes money to a lot of fishermen who never got their motors, because their down payments were never returned to them. I was named by our organization to assess the government's debt to us. The results of my study will come out in the newsletter we publish in the Woloff language.

Besides the problems we have in obtaining the equipment we need, we face the damage caused by industrial fishermen. The Senegalese government presently allows certain small, medium-sized and large vessels to fish illegally in areas reserved to artisanal fishermen. Allowing these boats into our area poses several problems. They exploit resources, which are the very sustenance of our lives. They destroy our nets. Fatal accidents are caused when dug-out canoes collide with industrial boats. We have begun a study on the accidents at sea in collaboration with Aliou Sall, which should give us the basis to plead our case to the government.

These problems give rise to our organization. Only fishermen are allowed to belong; no one else.

Our objective is unique: build an organization on the grassroots and the rest will be easy. We are sure we can accomplish a great deal if we have a solid organization. For example, with our experience and perhaps the help of experts in the field, I am sure we will be able to create a popular bank for fishermen located in the fisher villages.

We hope to take advantage of occasions like this to inform those who fund projects in our countries. They should know that our governments make demands in our name but work against us. I would like you to listen to me carefully, because I am a fisherman from Guet Ndar, Saint Louis. I know what I am talking about and what I have experienced. I was sent by the government during the 1960s as part of a group of some 20 fishermen to train fishermen in Benin. The government no longer remembers that. Worse still, I have been forbidden to attend meetings of cooperatives for the last three years because of my ideas. Now I can once again put forth my ideas through our own organization. Truth,



like a shadow, cannot be buried. Since we have the truth, nothing today can discourage us from organizing for a better tomorrow for fishermen.

### Our capacity to mobilize

Our organization mobilizes fishermen through a campaign based on our newsletter, which has widespread circulation. The main thrust is to make fishermen aware of the problems we have in common: exploitation by banks, problems caused by industrial fishermen, and especially our safety at sea. This work of grassroots organizing is made possible by planned regular on-site visits in fishing areas by a delegation of our members. There are also monthly meetings of the officers to guide the activities of the organization.

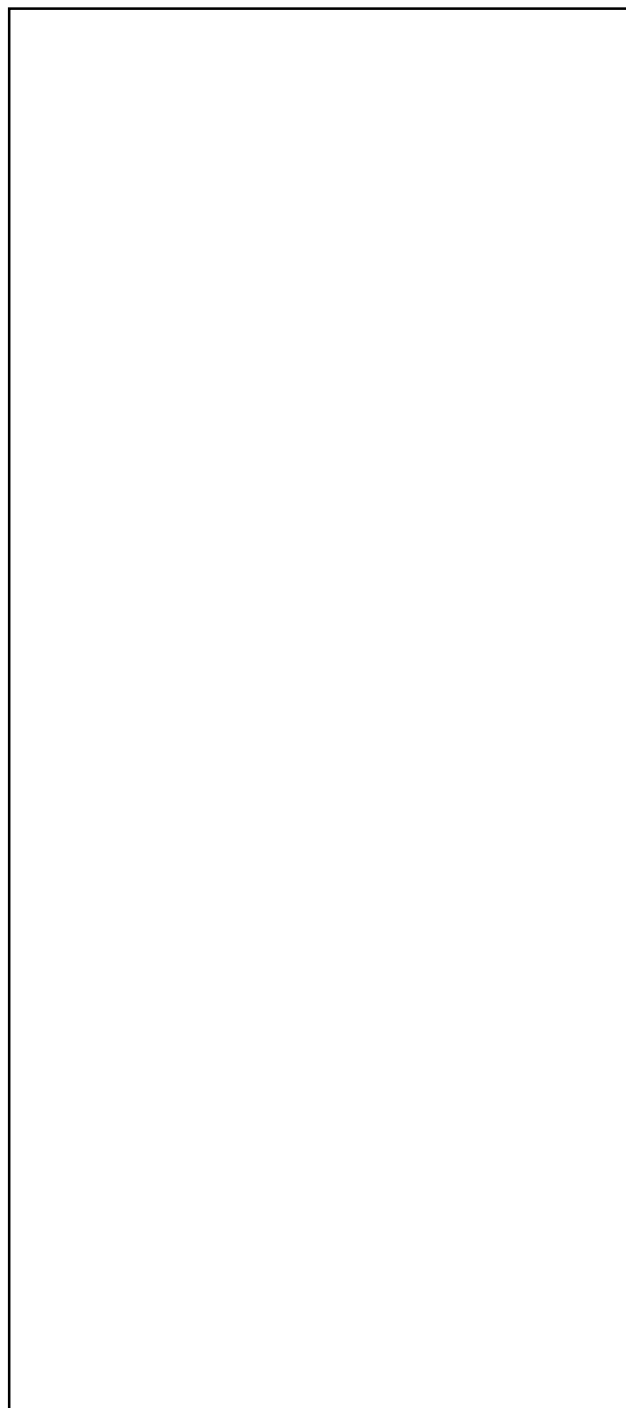
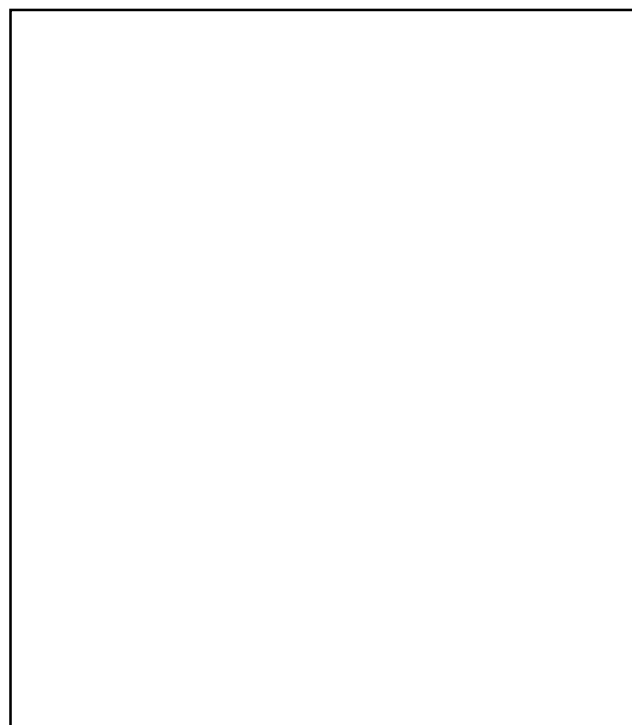
### Actions carried out besides presenting grievances to the government

Assistance given to returnees from Mauritania: more than 80% of the fishermen working in Mauritania were Senegalese. After the conflict between these two countries, these fishermen were thrown out of the country. Since we have members licensed and operating in Mauritania, when they returned to Senegal, the National Collective of Senegalese Fishermen went to their respective families to provide them with foodstuffs.

### National reconciliation between fishermen from Guet Ndar and Kayar

The villages of Guet Ndar and Kayar are the foundation of artisanal fishing in Senegal. For reasons con-

nected with access to resources by two communities with different fishing techniques, these two villages were in conflict for many years. The government took advantage of this situation to further divide these two communities which its fears. The National Collective of Senegalese Fishermen tried to reconcile the two villages and succeeded on October 21st, 1989. This national meeting was historic. Participants included the Minister of Fisheries, the chief fishery inspector, the chief of police, and the prefect and the governor of the region. This meeting, held at the initiative of and organized by the National Collective of Senegalese Fishermen, was the only meeting of fishermen at which the Minister of Fisheries participated, even though it was held around 90 kms from Dakar.





# SEAFARERS FISH WORKERS, AND SUPPORTERS UNITE IN MAURITIUS

*L. Petrucelli & G. Hoff*

Solidarity was a constant theme during the 4th Regional Congress at the Apostolate of the Sea held in Mauritius on December 7 – 12<sup>th</sup>. The gathering brought together 38 participants from nine different countries. Southwest Indian Ocean Regional reports were given by delegates from Mauritius and Rodrigues, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Madagascar. Other international supporters from the Vatican, Great Britain, and Taiwan also attended. The France-based Catholic Commission Against Hunger and For Development (CCFD) and the Institute for Development and Progress (IDP) in Mauritius participated as well.

ICSF member Robert Fleurot briefed the Congress on the Collective's action against Johnson Motors. He also made available issues of SAMUDRA and reported on other ICSF advocacy and lobbying efforts. Fleurot emphasized ICSF's commitment to provide a platform for fishworkers to make their concerns known at the international level.

The Congress affirmed the important roles played by seafarers' wives, mothers and family members. Not only do they share in the struggles of their men, but they are also vital in protecting the dignity and human rights of fishworkers. A powerful symbol of family suffering was the presence of three wives of Mauritian fishermen who were lost at sea while fishing the banks off Nazareth.

Proposals for future work stressed spiritual nourishment, human development, technical training and strengthening of solidarity through ICSF and other NGOs. The Congress also encouraged ecumenical cooperation to safeguard the rights of all maritime workers.

Jean Vacher, Co-Director of the Apostolate of the Sea, Port Louis, reported on the plight of refugees of the

sea. He explained that such refugees are foreign fishworkers -Filipinos, Thais, Burmese, South Africans, and others- working primarily on Taiwanese industrial fishing vessels. Since 1988 large numbers have sought shelter at Port Louis from the economic exploitation and physical abuse suffered at the hands of Taiwanese captains and crews.

Vacher and his colleague, Raymond Gauvrit, provided powerful documentation of Taiwanese brutality: bamboo poles used to beat fishworkers, enlarged photographs of lacerations, bruises and X-rays of broken bones suffered while on board. There were also pictures of the blackened fingers and toes of a young Burmese fisherman who was forced to work in the refrigeration hole of a Taiwanese ship without sufficient protection against the subzero temperatures. Several of his fingers and toes were subsequently amputated. The Apostolate of the Sea handles over 200 cases of abuse yearly.

A representative from the Presbyterian Fishermen's Service Centre in Taiwan was invited to attend the Congress. Linda Petrucelli provided background on the exploitative nature of Taiwan's fishing industry. She explained the stresses of life on board, linguistic and cultural differences among the multiethnic crews and the lack of training, which create explosive conditions. Representatives from Apostolate of the Sea and Taiwan pledged continued cooperation in the struggle for all fishworkers.

The Apostolate of the Sea, founded in the 1920s, is a support organization of the Catholic Church and functions throughout the world. The movement includes a large number of lay people on land and at sea, dedicated to guaranteeing the human rights and dignity of all people of the sea.

# FISHWORKERS MOVING FORWARD ARM IN ARM

## PHILIPPINES: Bays closed

In May 1989 the artisanal fishermen of Lamon Bay got their municipal government to close their bay to industrial fishing.

This bay, 40 kms long and 15 kms wide, harbours more than 5,000 coastal fishermen. Today, they point with pride to the results of the collective management of their resource: sizes have increased and the total catch is much larger.

This was not accomplished easily. All the trespassers and trespassers were systematically confronted by the fishermen with the support of the local police and *saggundian bayans* (neighborhood leaders). The transgressors were made to sign a document recognizing their offense and pay a fine stipulated by the Fishing Administrative Ordinance.

One other bay has been closed since that time, *Polilio* (Quezon), in December 1990. A third bay will also be closed under orders from the local Fishing Administrative Ordinance. On March 22nd, 1991, Batangas inau-

gurated its "ban" with a good deal of fanfare. It proves that coastal fishermen are efficient and can control their fishery resources.

However, the law has still not been passed by the Philippine parliament. The fishermen hope that will not take too long.

## BRAZIL:

### The tortured fishermen of Anon in the upper Amazon basin

The lakes of the Amazon, as spawning grounds, are essential for guaranteeing the diversity and abundance of fish in that extensive region. The survival of the local human population depends on conserving those resources. Today, however, other men are waylaying the Amazon dwellers by devastating the lakes with fishing trawlers.

Some communities have organized themselves in order to monitor and control access to those biological sanctuaries. Tension has reached a critical point as a result of atrocities committed. Action against those atrocities is urgently needed, along with the solidarity of fisherman from Latin America and the world.

We would like to tell the story of the fishermen, who are also lepers, of Lake Puku in the Upper Amazon who denounced the depredatory at of the trawlers. Instead of punishing the aggressors, the leprous fishermen themselves were tortured, hung by their ankles and fists, only to be then beaten on their limbs already ulcerated by their disease.

These tortured fishermen need our support. We can help by writing to the fishermen of Puku, c/o Prelado Apostolico de Coazi, Municipio de Anori, Alto Amazons, Brazil.

## CHILE:

### Fisheries and aquacultural law

On 28 September 1991 the President of Chile signed the decree promulgating the new law governing fisheries and aquaculture. This law resulted from a discussion begun in 1988 of a proposal of General Pinochet's Government, which was questioned by all the sectors connected with fishing. The democratically elected Government decided in 1990 to postpone the promulgation of the law approved by the junta in 1989 and open the discussion of a new draft law in the national parliament. Fishermen and fishworker organizations were active participants in the discussions, seeking to defend their rights and acquiring new responsibilities for the management and protection of resources.

This is the first organic body created as the basis for legislating on all aspects of fishing: ways of access to resources; kinds of fishing and aquaculture; forms of control and closed seasons; fisheries councils on the national, area and regional level; participation of those active in fisheries in these councils; funds for investment, scientific research, etc.

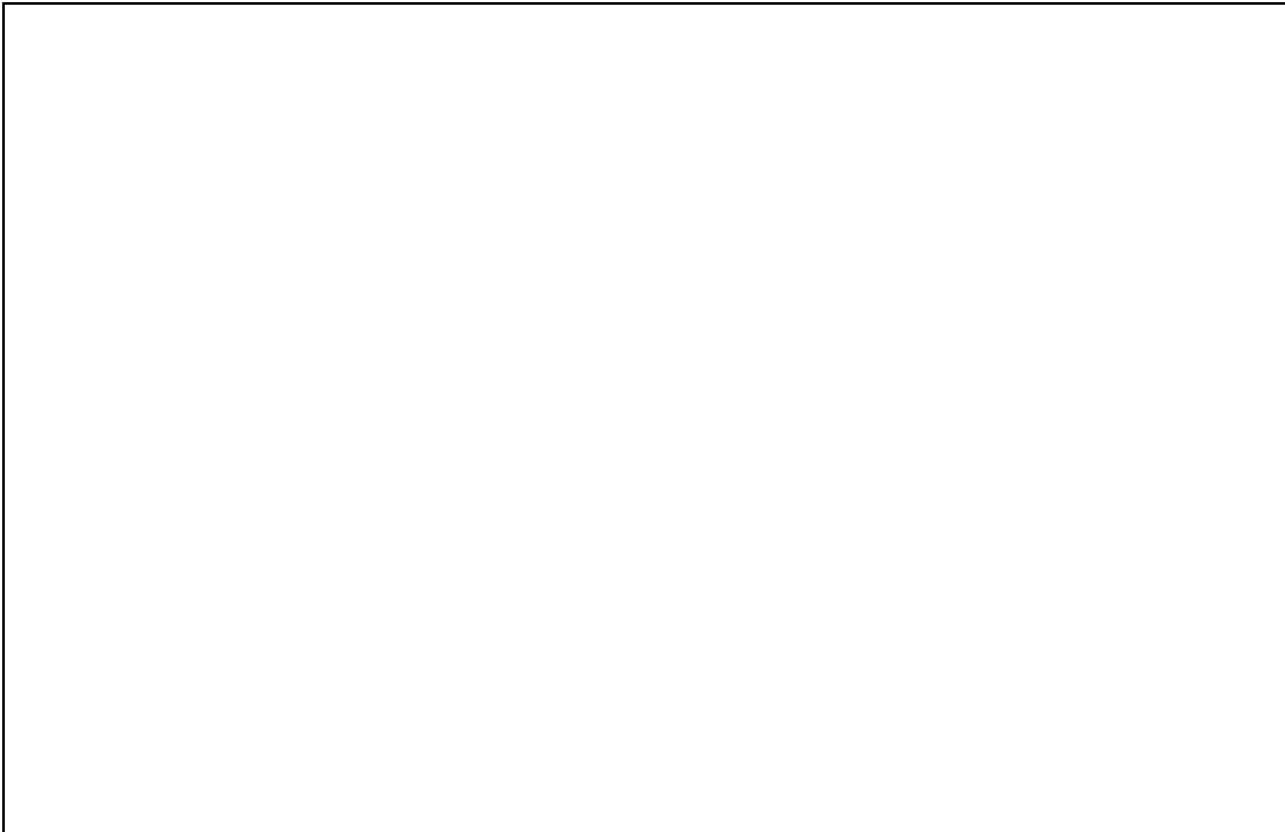
The law's fourth heading deals with artisanal fishing, reserving for it an area of five miles from the normal base lines, from the northern border to parallel 41, southern latitude around the islands in the ocean and all inland waters. Areas will be established for managing resources, to be selected by legally constituted organizations of fishermen. Individual quotas will also be established for the extraction of benthic resources and

will be given to duly registered artisanal fishermen, especially in the case of fully exploited fishing grounds.

Fishermen will have to register on a regional basis, according to their proven domicile. Only at certain times will they be allowed to move to contiguous or neighbouring regions, if they frequently fish there. Only exceptionally, in the case of highly migratory species, will artisanal fishermen be allowed to extend their operations to more than one region. Vessels for artisanal fishing cannot be longer than 18 metres nor have a gross registry of more than 50 metric tons.

The law creates a development fund for artisanal fishing, in order to promote the development of infrastructure, training and technical assistance for fishermen and their organizations, replenish hydrobiological resources, market seafood and administer production centres. Three representatives of artisanal fishermen will participate in the administration of the fund.

Finally, the law recovers national control over resources, by determining that only Chileans or permanent residents can be fishermen. Organizations will have an active role to play in the regions, since they will have to name their representatives, apply management norms, and be capable of formulating and administering projects that should be financed by the Fisheries Development Fund.



# The place where the Earth ends

The basic daily living components of the Escuela de Lenga on the shores of the South Pacific on the Chilean coast, are comprised by games, songs, animation of objects and dramatizations, being the classroom and the beach the most familiar background, and the objects of daily use, the ball and the world map.

Because everyday things are so obvious to our eyes, we end up by not perceiving them, so their significance is often disregarded; this is the case of the ocean and the litter, elements of the daily landscape of the children of Caleta Lenga.

In order to create a space in the surroundings, and leave our imagination to fly free, we used a blue cloth to dramatize the different moments in the story we wanted to tell. Blue is the ocean and blue is the sky covering it cloak.

In an attempt to unify all these elements within a structure of audio-visual images, in keeping with a model of

popular culture and always through improvisation and intelligent use of the forms the Comedy of Art, we tried to tell a simple story instilling in the children of the Escuela de Lenga awareness of their part in the responsibility of environmental care and the concrete menace to ocean resources and also to all inhabitants of this Planet, of the pollution of sea and ocean water as explained by professionals Ernesto Malbran Rodrigo Malbran, and Ellie Nixon, authors of the guideline and responsible for this ecological Project in defence of the marine environment, carried out in June, July, and August 1990. It was sponsored by the International Research Centre for Development of Canada and the Department of Ocean Sciences of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile headquartered in the city of Talcahuano. "We are considering the possibility of extending this Project to schools in other craft fishing communities." This example can be imitated in other countries. The ICSF can establish the necessary liaison among authors and collaborate to enhance and diffuse their works.

## BRAZIL:

### United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development

The United Nations has convened a second international conference on problems of the environment and development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. The first such conference took place in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972, and led to a series of important agreements for the protection of the environment and actions against sources of pollution and the degradation of our planet

The next conference is planned as a summit meeting about the earth. Countries, international agencies and civil organizations have been invited to participate in the preparation of this event. Protection for the oceans will be a key issue, and it is expected that measures will be adopted and recommendations made for the extensive care of this area of the planet and its resources.

The International Collective in Support of Fish-workers has been accredited by the preparatory commission of the conference and is petitioning all the fishworker organizations of the world and their associate members to send in their recommendations in order to prepare a working document on the basic rights of fishworkers, especially the right live in a clean environment, to sur-

vive as workers on the seas, to participate in decision-making and to actively integrate women into production representation activities.

The recommendations deal with the following points:

- It is indispensable that countries integrate at artisanal and inshore fisheries into the development and management of coastal zones, creating and stimulating the representation of fishermen and fishing communities in planning and administrative agencies.
- Countries should support traditional coastal fishing communities and women's and indigenous groups in exercising their rights and responsibilities, equitably allocating fishing resources manner in relation to industrial and sport fishing (especially granting an exclusive zone for artisanal fishing and aquaculture), creating systems to protect the labour and social rights of fishworkers.
- Coastal States should develop technologies for artisanal fishing that would respect the environment and the self-sustained replacement of marine re-



sources, prohibiting those technologies that are harmful in this regard. They should also create training services in coordination with relevant credit and rural development programmes.

- States should develop systems to recover, record and apply traditional knowledge about fishing resources and ways of managing them, and move to prudently modernize that knowledge.

- The International Collective in Support of Fish-workers is preparing a special document to present to the United Nations conference. Its contents will be taken from proposals made in congresses, seminars and meetings of national fishworker organizations and their support agencies. Suggestions can be sent to ICSF headquarters in Brussels or to SAMUDRA's offices.

## **PARIS:**

### **The law of the sea and the protection of marine resources**

The International Collective in Support of Fish-workers (ICSF) organized a working session in Paris, France on 13 February 1991 to study the scope and defects of the law of the sea and its impact on the protection of marine resources. The Foundation for Human Progress warmly welcomed the delegates to its headquarters in Rue Saint Sabin. Participants included delegates from French fishworker organizations; university researchers from France, Canada and Belgium; representatives of non-governmental organizations and members of the International Collective. The initiative was proposed by Nalini Nayak and Tom

Kocherry of India during a visit to France in July 1990.

- Fishermen expressed regret that the sea is used as a dumping ground. An example of this is the irresponsible act of polluting the seabed by launching deadly barrels of toxic and radioactive wastes into the ocean, as is done in the English Channel. Breton fishermen denounce the lack of reaction on the part of legislators. They look the other way and fail to enact severe prohibitions of such actions. They are content with drawing up "black, gray or white lists" of dangerous products, allowing the sea to continue

to be treated as a dumping ground. We should demand that the precautionary principle be recognized, especially in the more dangerous areas where storms can produce harmful spills. Strict controls must be established, certifying the containerized cargo of each ship that passes through those areas.

□ Some coastal communities defend the marine environment by establishing norms or having recourse to courts of law in order to punish polluters. Such was the case in the port city Chanaral, in the north of Chile, where the Supreme Court ordered the National Copper Company (CODELCO) to repair the damage caused by the wastes it discharged into the bay. Another case took place in the Dominican Republic, where a judge ordered oil companies to pay for the damage and repair of a mangrove swamp.

□ The seas regulate many of the earth's different equilibria. They are the common heritage of mankind; we need them for our survival and that of future generations. Given this fact, Cassiope Beaud of France's Vezealy group raised the question of why we should protect this common heritage. He recalled that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is still not

ratified by some countries. Public opinion and governments must be mobilized to ratify this agreement so that this universal heritage can be rigorously protected.

□ Dumping at sea is forbidden by the London Dumping Convention, with a restrictive clause that makes an exception for the "case of bad weather, which could be taken advantage of to save costly investments. The Convention does not mention the impact of war and other military actions. The Persian Gulf War shows the terrible consequences of war for the ocean, atmosphere and marine resources.

□ The session insisted on the need to protect wetlands from disappearing, due to the destructive effects of human action. Special mention was made of tropical mangrove swamps and temperate estuaries that serve as refuges for migratory birds. The main dangers affecting them come from industrial and urban pollution, as well as pesticides used in agriculture.

□ Finally, special attention was called to the problem of the right of access to the resource. Different forms of access and property exist, in accord with local customs or traditions, regional agreements, quotas per boat or country. Unresolved conflicts exist between industrial and artisanal fleets, and between national and foreign fleets. A distinction has to be made between economic zones (which include all resources) and fishing areas (involving only fishery resources). It is important to recover traditional practices and project them into new formulations of the right of access to the resource, thereby respecting artisanal fishermen and their communities.

## Blue Europe in European fishing and in north-south relations

Delegates of fishworker organizations from France, Holland, Spain and Portugal, together with delegates from Namibia, Chile and Senegal, spent two days discussing the impact of structural changes in European fishing on artisanal coastal fishing and on North-South relations.

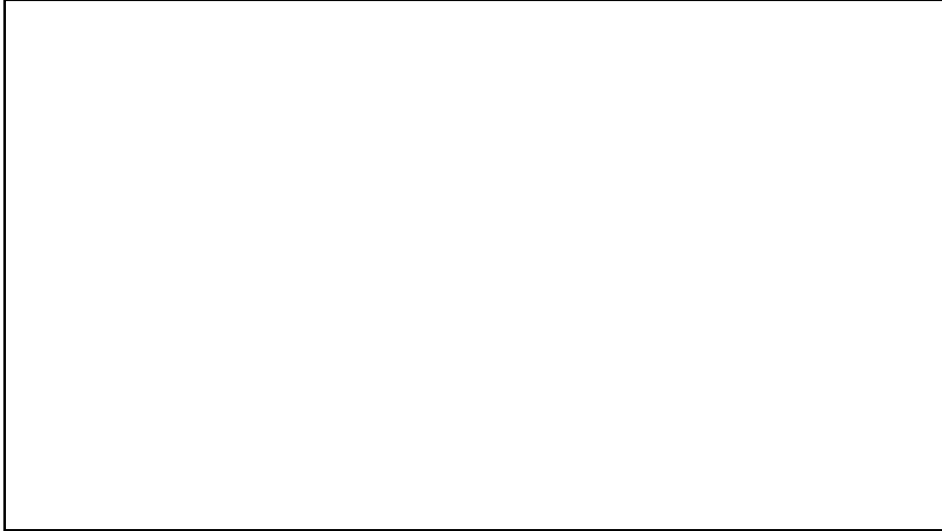
They first looked at the impact of Blue Europe on small artisanal fishermen in Europe, especially in France, Portugal and Spain. These artisanal fishermen comprise a large part of the fleets of the European Economic Community, but they have organizations. For that very reason, they are not well known to the European

bureaucracy in Brussels. ECC investments go to outfit fleets for deep-water fishing. In Portugal, the question is whether or not coastal fishermen will wind up as crew members for the deep-water fleets. Real investments are needed for the coastal sector, not only subsidies. There are 84,000 boats of less than 150 kw in Europe, comprising 80% of the total European fleet.

They then took a close look at the impact of fishery policies in Spain and Namibia. Spain sent oversized fleets to fish the Namibian coast. But Namibia caused unemployment among Galician fishermen by recovering its rights over its exclusive economic zone. Paul Godison of Namibia expressed the challenges at stake in negotiating agreements with the EEC, especially how to deal with the needs and problems of Europe's artisanal fishermen and those of the Namibian people at the same time.

It was recommended that organizations for European coastal fishworkers be promoted, benefiting from similar experiences in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The impetus should come from those fishworkers themselves. The dynamism of women in fishing communities should also be taken advantage of in searching for new forms of struggle

and organization. Women provided the impetus in Brittany, France, Holland and Spain, setting up groups to make their message known and carry out social action. North-South relations can also take on a human dimension if grassroots groups of fishworkers set up normal channels for communication and discussion of their problems.



The meeting was organized by Rene Pierre Chever, of the fishing committee of Guilvinec in Brittany, and by James Smith, of the CCFD, with the participation of delegates from the ICSF and the hospitality of the Foundation for Human Progress.

## **The International Collective in Support of Fishworkers**

The ICSF Animation Team held its annual meeting in the northern part of the island of Luzon in the Philippines during the second week of January 1991. It was agreed to designate Sebastian Mathew (India) as the new executive secretary, headquartered in Madras, India. Sebastian Mathew is a member of ICSF and car-

ried out his activities together with John Kurien in the Centre for Development Studies, in Trivandrum, Kerala (India). The new coordinator of the Animation Team is Hector-Luis Morales (Chile). The meeting enjoyed the friendly collaboration and warm welcome of the Asian Social Institute, of Manila.

### **CHILE:**

#### **Latin-American artisanal fishermen in action**

CEDIPAC and the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers organized a seminar in Vina del Mar in September 1990. Thirty representatives of Latin American countries attended, especially the leaders of The Federation of Fishing Cooperatives of Ecuador (FENACOPEC); the National Movement of Fishermen

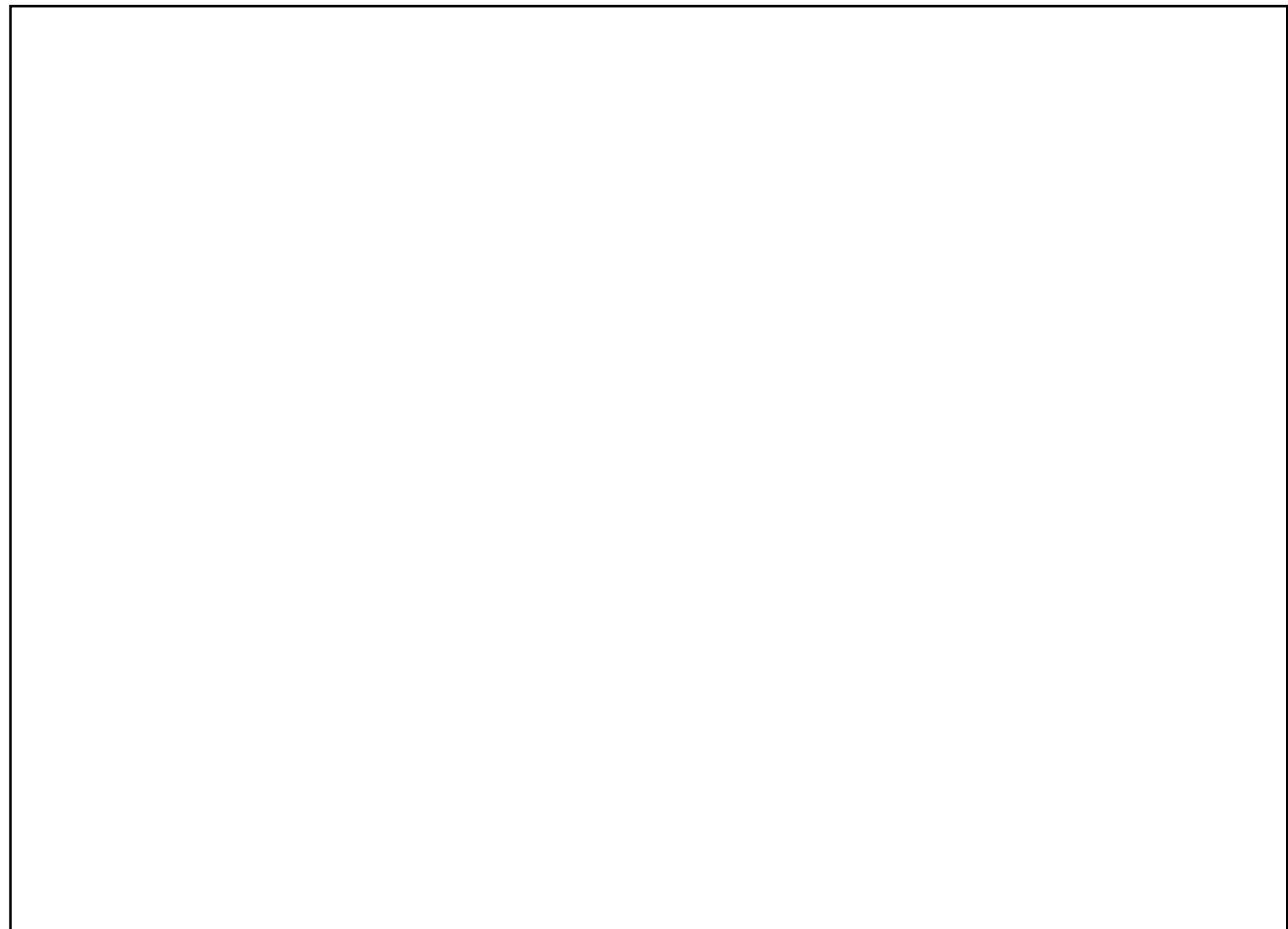
of Brazil (MONAPE); fishing cooperatives of Aserradoes, Nicaragua; cooperatives of Tabasco, Mexico; the National Federation of Uruguayan Fishermen and the National Federation of Uruguayan Cooperatives; fishing cooperatives of Oruro, Bolivia, and the National Association of Fishermen of Colom-

bia (ANPAC). Aliou Sall of Senegal and Francisco Gutierrez of Colombia were also present, representing the International Collective. Hector Luis Morales, Carlos Toro, Ernesto Malbran, Nadia Fontecilla and Claudio Bluck represented CEDIPAC during the course. The leaders of CONAPACH participated actively by giving classes on how work is organized and carried out in Chile. Maria Angela Barbieri and Eleuterio Yanez, professors from the Catholic University in Valparaiso, also collaborated, along with Professors Alberto Arrizaga, Luz Cereceda and Guillermo Wormald of the Catholic University of Chile.

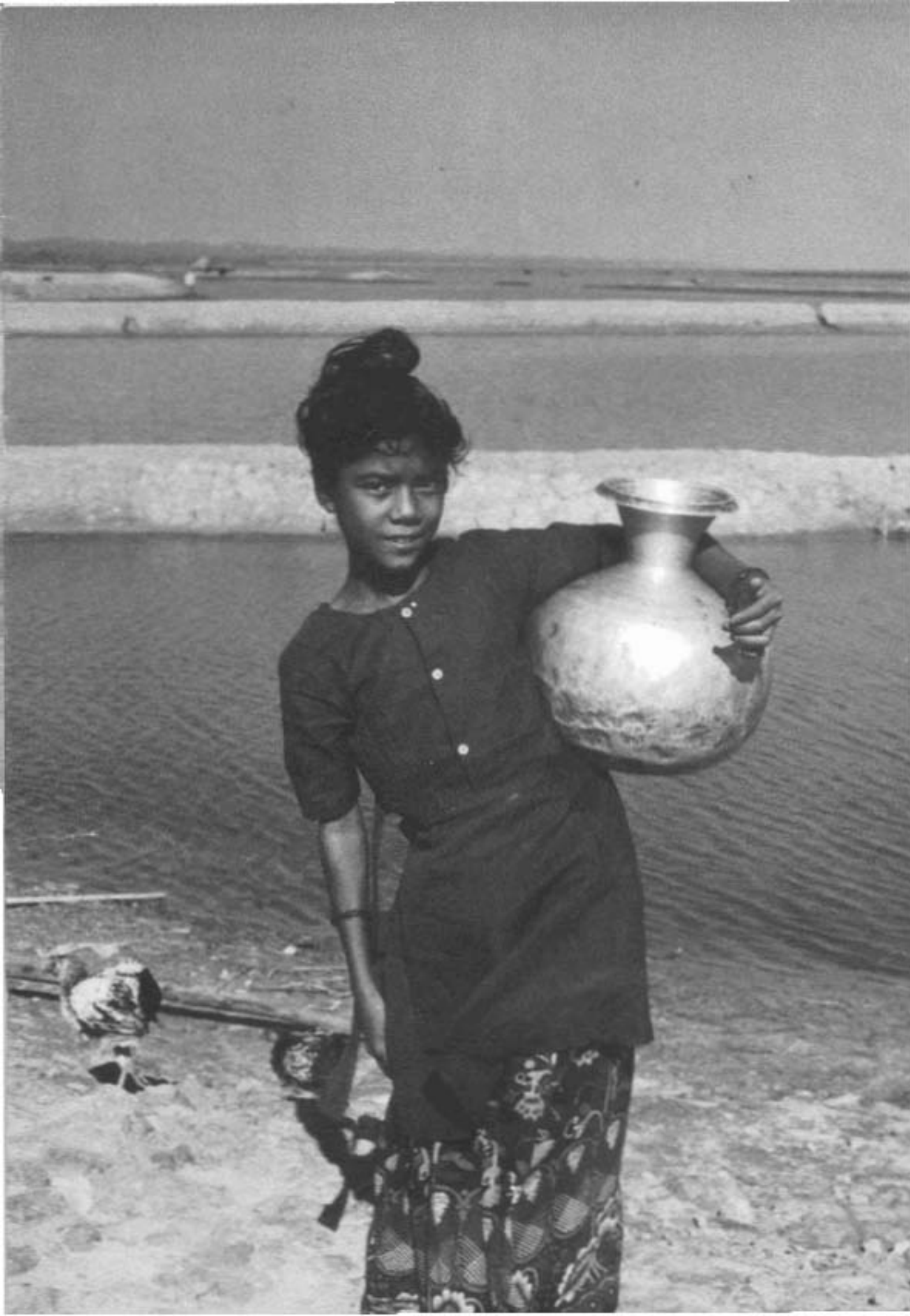
This course was followed by an international seminar on movements of artisanal fishermen in Latin America, with the collaboration of the School of Marine Science of the Catholic University in Valparaiso. Cases were presented during the seminar, such as that of algae gatherers in Chile, by Adriana Gallegos; fishing in Colombia, by Carlo Tassara; the Committee for the Development of Peoples, of Rome, Italy; fishing in Brazil, by Eduardo Schiavone, of the University of Sao Paulo; fishing in Mexico, by Miguel Chavez, of the University of Tabasco; fishermen's movements in Canada, by Zoel Breau, of the Union of Maritime Fishermen; fishing in

Senegal, by Aliou Sall, as well as other contributions from the fishermen themselves.

This course has made an impact on the activities of the organizations of different countries, for example, in Ecuador, where FENACOPEC organized a seminar for leaders of cooperatives, inviting Carlos Toro of CEDIPAC as professor, and held at a time when the movement was being restructured. In Brazil, MONAPE is organizing its national congress for October 1991 in the city of Recife, which will consolidate an important stage in the growth process of a new organization of Brazilian fishermen. In Tabasco, Mexico, river fishermen are making progress in consolidating a regional federation, which will serve as a basis for seeking solutions to problems of marketing and resource management. Peru's artisanal fishermen have expressed the degree of misery and underdevelopment in which coastal communities live, and the urgent need to create a more solid and efficient organization. Finally, the leaders of Chile's fishermen received high marks for their willingness to assist their Latin American brothers, as in the case of CONAPACH of Chile working together with MONAPE of Brazil to prepare the congress for Brazil's fishermen.







## Lamentation of a fisherboy

He Stands alone  
On the surf-beaten shore  
In rags, gazing.....  
His ninah has set out to sea  
In the early hour of the dawn.  
Laments he, no amma do I have!  
Even before I wake to see the break of day,  
He's gone.... my ninah to the sea,  
On his kattumaram,  
Battling the waves,  
Braving the ruthless sea, he's gone...  
What will he return with this time,  
His net weighing down with a harvest catch,  
Or will it be yet another day we'll go hungry, his mind queries,  
He tosses a coin in the air,  
A strong wind blows and he screams aloud with joy,  
Ah! it's heads  
My ninah sure will return with his net full  
And we'll make merry again!  
His hopes soar high.....  
As he sights a Kattumaram tossing on the rough waves,  
He claps his hands with joy,  
Ah! my ninah is coming!  
In a flash his destiny is changed;  
Cruel fate has struck again,  
Where is my ninah? rants he in fury,  
Have the merciless waves swept him away?  
The other fishermen return.  
Hide not the truth from me, he cries,  
A deep gloom fogs his mind  
As the fishermen drop down their heads in sorrow,  
His heart sinks in despair  
As he stands there on the surf-beaten shore gazing.....  
Gazing..... at the empty sea!

*Catherine Joseph*